



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General for Education and Culture  
Youth and sport  
Youth policy

## **Youth cards: What is needed to increase the mobility of young people?**

### **A survey on the Youth on the Move card initiative**

## **1. SUMMARY**

The European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture, carried out a survey to receive input from stakeholders on existing youth/student cards, and receive input on the Youth on the Move card initiative. 3027 stakeholders responded in a period of two months (April 2011 – June 2011). This survey is one of the first steps of a wider consultation process that the Commission is carrying out in light of preparations for one of the top 10 targeted actions of the Youth on the Move flagship initiative: the Youth on the Move card.

This survey shows there is great enthusiasm among stakeholders for the YoM card initiative, and notably towards the development of a YoM label on existing youth/student cards. Four particular fields of focus have been identified for the Youth on the Move card with an overarching goal of communication provision:

- Transport
- Culture
- Education/Employment
- Social needs

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

Youth on the Move (YoM) is one of the seven flagship initiatives to support the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The aim of YoM is to "raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity, by promoting student mobility and trainees' mobility, and improve the employment situation of young people." All these represent key components of Europe's future prosperity.

One of the top 10 targeted actions of the YoM flagship initiative is the introduction of the Youth on the Move card. The Youth on the Move card, possibly in the form of a label on existing cards, should facilitate both the mobility and participation for all young people in Europe. The added value of the YoM card (in comparison with existing youth/student cards) is that the YoM card will speed up the integration process for mobile learners when moving abroad, provide other European advantages in line with national youth or student cards and increase access for youth to culture and information on mobility and European educational/professional programmes.

The first EU Card Consultation meeting was held on 10 December 2010 and attended by representatives of card organisations (EYCA, ISIC, ESN) various youth and student unions (ESU, EYF, ERYICA), and a random selection of youngsters. During the meeting, the current state of play with regard to youth/students cards was drawn and attendees provided critical information on the added value of the YoM card initiative. A significant part of the time was dedicated to brainstorming on the possible features and benefits of a card.

Suggested benefits were travel privileges (discounts), non – formal education, skills training and work-shops (e.g. building on initiatives such as the Youth Pass), potential health benefits (cross border discounts and coverage on insurance), products and services related to employment and traineeships and an online platform for young people to meet peers when abroad, providing practical info for newcomers such as information from local authorities to give a sense of security and belonging.

### Basic principles

- The YoM card should be open to all young people (13 yrs – 30 yrs) residing in Europe, not only to young people participating in EU programmes.
- The YoM card needs to have a clear EU identity and pan-European coverage of benefits, while fully integrating - and if feasible, supporting - the local/regional/national dimension.
- The YoM card should, in addition to providing pan-European discounts, have its main focus on benefits to promote mobility (added value of being mobile) and learning opportunities for young people.
- The YoM card needs to establish a clear added value for youngsters in comparison with or in addition to, the existing card initiatives.

In line with the Youth in Action programme, the target group are young people between 13 and 30 years old. Young people include students, pupils, apprentices, trainees, researchers, volunteers, young professionals etc. The YoM card would cover any young person residing in the EU Members States, and could possibly extend to any European country.

The core challenge for the Youth on the Move card initiative will be to identify the specific needs of Young people at EU level and to obtain a clear overview of the current situation and added value required, as well as to prevent the duplication of existing initiatives.

The expert meeting was organised as a follow up to the first stakeholder consultation meeting on 10 December 2010 and the EYCA/Young Scot conference on 23 March in Edinburgh. The aim of the expert meetings is to assess what can be achieved for the Youth on the Move (YoM) card on an operational level, in a 2-3 year timeframe. The focus of the meeting was on the

implementation of truly European discounts and technology. Experts from various sectors were represented, including youth/student cards, youth groups and potential business partners.

The expert meeting clearly served as an impetus to bring all partners together in a "consortium" backed up by the Commission to negotiate the European dimension of discounts with potential partners. It became evident, that a YoM label on existing cards is the most feasible and realistic target for the YoM card initiative.

In order to further develop the initiative further, the Commission decided to launch a stakeholder survey to get a clear view on their experiences with existing youth/student cards, information on mobility, youth participation and their expectations of the YoM card. The results of the survey are summarized below.

This survey is intended to collate input from all stakeholders, in order to get feedback on the use of existing youth cards, to hear about users' experiences with current cards and to learn about expectations for possible new features and challenges for the future Youth on the Move card.

The survey was open from 4 April 2011 until 4 June 2011, to individual citizens, young and old, public and private bodies, local/regional authorities, ministries and to all stakeholders active in the youth sector. The survey was widely distributed among different stakeholders in Europe and beyond, via university networks, Eurodesk, European Commission Delegations and Permanent Representations and others.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

Since the White Paper in 2001, "A new impetus for European Youth", where the idea of a European mobility card was first suggested, the past decade has seen several actions at EU Level. The European Commission undertook a feasibility study on a European Mobility card in 2005 which showed 90% of respondents would like such a card. Furthermore, the European Parliament adopted a motion for a resolution suggesting the introduction of a single European Student Identification card and the Commission issued a Green Paper on learning mobility for young people in 2009. The 2011 Council Recommendation on Youth on the Move "promoting the learning mobility of young people" emphasizes that in spite of progress in the past decade many obstacles to mobility remain.

The Treaty on the European Union (TFEU) introduced a new, civic dimension in article 165(2), by encouraging "the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe". Youth participation entails stimulating young people to get involved in societal activities such as volunteering, participation in youth organisations and involvement in politics. The Treaty article moreover calls for a European dimension in education, and stipulates Union action should encourage the mobility of students.

#### **3.1. EU context**

The youth unemployment rate of young people in Europe is about 20%. Countries such as Spain, 44.4%, Greece, 36.1% and Slovakia, 35.6%, score high above the average, whereas other MS such as the Netherlands, Germany and Austria face much lower rates of youth unemployment with 6.9%, 7.9% and 8.7% respectively (Eurostat Q4 2010).

Both mobility experiences and participation in societal activities foster young people's skills and abilities such as leadership, initiative and ability to adapt to change. When asked, young adults who stayed abroad identified as the most important benefits of their time abroad, improved foreign language skills and greater awareness of another culture. Other issues mentioned were a greater ability to adapt to new situations, new professional skills, better interpersonal skills, better employment opportunities or better academic knowledge. With more and more large companies becoming increasingly global, a survey suggested that working abroad would help young people's long-term career prospects. (Eurobarometer survey 319 B). Furthermore, better opportunities for mobility can tackle the imbalance of unemployment, skills and available jobs in certain countries.

### **3.2. Education**

Eurobarometer survey data (No 319 A) shows that students with higher levels of education were more likely to have participated in organisational, cultural, voluntary and international activities. Also 50% of those who had left the educational system before completing lower secondary education had voted in an election in the past three years, whereas 88% of those with a higher education qualification voted.

In light of the aforementioned statistics, encouraging mobility and participation can help young Europeans broaden their skills, hence their scope of opportunities and help them find a suitable professional occupation. The most commonly cited reasons by young people for wanting to move abroad are better educational opportunities and language skills, as well as the chance to better understand other cultures.

In connection with other initiatives to foster mobility in the context of Youth on the Move, the YoM card initiative can alleviate the financial burden of being mobile and further supports the other EU policy developments supporting youth mobility as part of YoM.

Despite the strong emphasis on mobility in the political context, social and financial pose challenges to the mobility. The concept of mobility has moreover changed. There is a stronger emphasis on employability on the one hand, and on youth participation on the other hand.

While travelling, studying or moving abroad, young people face a number of hurdles. Eurobarometer survey data (No 319 B) show 53% of young people in Europe are willing or keen to work in another European country. However, there is a large gap between the desire of young people to work abroad and the actual workforce mobility: less than 3% of Europe's working population currently lives outside their home country. Only one in seven (14%) of young Europeans have been abroad for education or training.

The large gap is mainly caused by a lack of available funding for mobility purposes and poses a significant hurdle to increased education and employment mobility of young people. Roughly two-thirds (65%) of respondents who had stayed abroad for education or training purposes, said they had used private funds or savings to finance their longest stay abroad. When young adults who had never stayed abroad for education, training, working or volunteering purposes were asked to select the most or second most important reason for not having spent time abroad, a third of respondents answered that they had no access to funding or that it would have been too expensive to stay abroad. A slim majority of respondents in Romania (51%), Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria (all 55%) said that a lack of funding was the most or second most important reason for not having spent time abroad.

The same Eurobarometer data (No 319 B), as well as the conclusions of YoM card expert meetings, show additionally that young people face personal and social challenges to moving abroad. The lack of a social network abroad, difficulties to obtain local information and language barriers prevent young people from moving elsewhere to pursue education or employment opportunities. The data show that a lack of foreign language skills and a lack of information about mobility opportunities were selected as the most important reasons for not having spent time abroad by 14% and 13%, respectively, of the young adults that never stayed abroad for education, training working or volunteering purposes. Moreover, the existence of social barriers implies a direct negative effect on the participation of young people in environments abroad

The YoM card initiative shall be complementary to other actions contributing to Youth on the Move, which will be developed in parallel, such as "Your first EURES job", the Mobility Scoreboard and the European Skills passport.

### **3.3. Youth/student cards**

There are several initiatives at the European and international level that offer cards to students and young people.

The European Youth Card Association (EYCA) offers the EYCA card. The European Youth Card Association (EYCA) is a non-profit organisation that represents 40 youth card organisations in 38

countries issuing the European Youth Card to more than 4 million young people. EYCA has one member organisation in every country/territory where it is represented; this member develops the card and provides young people with benefits in the fields of culture, mobility, accommodation, services and products. EYCA member organisations are mostly NGOs and private foundations as well as state and public institutions and private companies. Everyone under the age of 30 (or 26, depending on the country or region) can become a cardholder. The person does not have to be a student or a resident of a European country. The card costs between EUR 5 and EUR 19. At the moment, there is no EYCA card available for young people in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, England, Denmark, France, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Kosovo, Malta, Monaco, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Turkey and Wales.

Volunteers on the European Voluntary Service (EVS) receive a personal European Youth Card through a partnership between the European Commission and the European Youth Card Association which includes the same benefits as the regular EYCA card. The volunteers receive a special limited edition for EVS Volunteers provided by the European Commission.

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is an international Student ID card available to any full-time student aged 12 years and over, at high school, college or university. The card is used by 4.5 million students from 120 different countries for discounts on travel, shopping, museums and others, worldwide. Young people under 26, who are not enrolled as a student, can get an International Youth Travel Card (IYTC), which gives access to similar offers as the ISIC card. For full-time teachers or professors, the International Teacher Identity Card (ITIC) gives similar discounts and services.

The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is an interdisciplinary student association in Europe which supports and develops student exchange and offers the ESN card to about 150.000 students. Students can become an ESN card owner if; they have been an international student (e.g. Erasmus or any other exchange programme); they are currently on exchange; or they are an active member of an ESN section. The ESN card was created with the principle idea to be used as a membership card, but depending on the student's section / country it may also be used to offer discounts. The validity of the ESN Card is 12 months.

Apart from these initiatives, there are several EU card initiatives in place / under development:

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The European Health Insurance Card makes it easier for people insured in one of the 27 Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland to access healthcare services during temporary visits in one of these countries. The card ensures equal access to public sector healthcare as people insured in the country they are visiting and reimbursement of their expenses. Close to 185 million cards are in circulation.

The EU Health Professional card intends to ease the free movement of health professionals in Europe whilst ensuring patient safety and to explore other usages such as the validation of continuing education, or the access to medical records. The need for such a card was first established in the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC). An innovative project funded by the Commission investigated whether professional cards would improve and facilitate mobility by accelerating the exchange of information concerning professional careers.

The Free Movement card, proposed in the Monti Report would contain "information a European citizen may require in another Member State in addition to identity and nationality: including work permit status, social status and the right to social security" and would be modelled on the European Health Professional Card.

The aforementioned youth/student cards provide benefits at various degrees for young people at the Member State level, and in some cases beyond. However, at the European level, fragmentation of benefits and inconsistent recognition of youth/student cards pose a barrier to the mobility of young people. More specifically, certain cards are not offered in some Member States, and, in addition, the benefits offered vary strongly per country. The result is that the benefits for young people vary strongly per Member State and not every young person in Europe has access to the same level of services and discounts to engage in mobility activities.

## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

The online survey has been open from 4 April 2011 until 4 June 2011 and has been published on numerous websites varying from direct stakeholders such as Eurodesk, Erasmus Student Network, European universities, to the EU representations in the EU Member States and EU delegations beyond.<sup>1</sup> In this period, 3027 responses have been received online. In addition, several stakeholders submitted position papers in response to the survey. The sections below will deal with the answers received to the survey questions, whereas the conclusion also takes note of the submitted position papers.

The overall profile of the respondents conforms to the target group of the Youth on the Move card initiative. 91.5% of all respondents are younger than 30 years old. The vast majority of respondents are between 19 and 26 years old. Whereas most of the respondents are a student or following educational training (2188 – 72%), the survey has also been completed by 524 employed young people, 35 entrepreneurs and 185 job hunters. A small majority of the respondents are a member of a youth organisation, but the remaining 38% says not to be a member of a youth organisation.

### 4.1. Experience with Youth cards

Almost 92% of all respondents indicate they have had a student or youth card at one point in their lives. Being asked which cards they had exactly, it turns out that almost half of the respondents had more than 1 card.

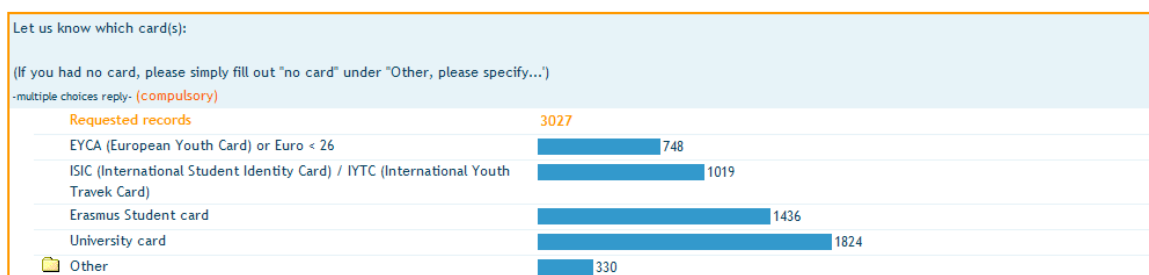


Figure 1: Which card do you have?

Evidently, the university cards are the most used among the respondents. The Erasmus Student card and the ISIC card are very popular too followed by the European Youth Card.<sup>2</sup> There was no clear difference in frequency of use, or in area of use among respondents. Some use the card weekly, while as many use their card hardly at all. Although most benefits enjoyed are local (39%), about 29% indicate using their card across Europe. Overall, the vast majority of all users (85%) were very happy with the benefits their card offered. Discounts on travel and discounts on culture were mentioned as the most "liked" benefits. Interestingly, 28.2% of the respondents indicated that their card was stimulating them to go out more. About 12% indicated to be disappointed with their card. All respondents indicated, as visible in the figure below, what the disadvantages of their cards were. Limited benefits, limited validity and differences in benefits across the EU are given as the main complaints.

<sup>1</sup> The European Commission has not promoted the survey to a particular target group. The group of respondents is therefore considered to be at random.

<sup>2</sup> These data are a summary of the respondents' answers and do not necessarily represent a realistic reflection of the actual distribution in Europe of cards.



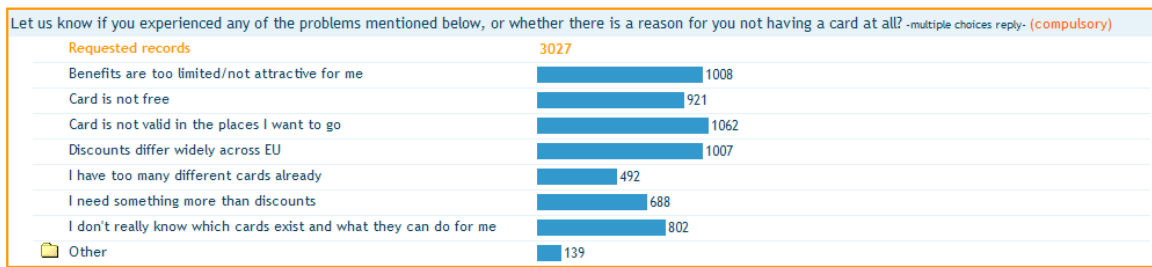


Figure 2: Do you have any problems with your card?

## 4.2. What makes young people move?

The YoM card is an initiative to stimulate mobility among young people in Europe. According to 75% of the respondents, a student/youth card definitely supports the mobility of young people. When it comes to defining mobility, it seems that for the stakeholders, travel, exchanges and studying elsewhere are the most important activities to them. Very important factors stimulating mobility were travel, employment and culture. Housing and participation were generally viewed as less important.

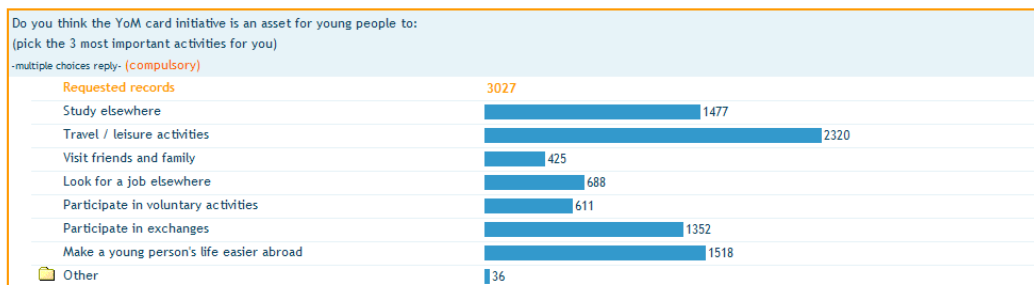


Figure 3: What is the YoM card an asset for?

## 4.3. Youth Participation

Youth participation in politics can be promoted through the YoM card. In response to the question on how this can be achieved, respondents answered that to enhance connections between young people in Europe, more travel benefits should be promoted, as well as access to social networks for young people. E-participation was widely recognized as one of the ways to better connect young people with politics and policy making. To enhance participation, young people should also gain better access to Youth Policy makers at all levels, EU, national, regional and local.

## 4.4. Technology

The technological features of the YoM card are very important for its success. The respondents found a strong virtual/online dimension to the card essential, but also viewed smart-phone applications and a microchip card as important features.

## 4.5. What do you think of the YoM card?

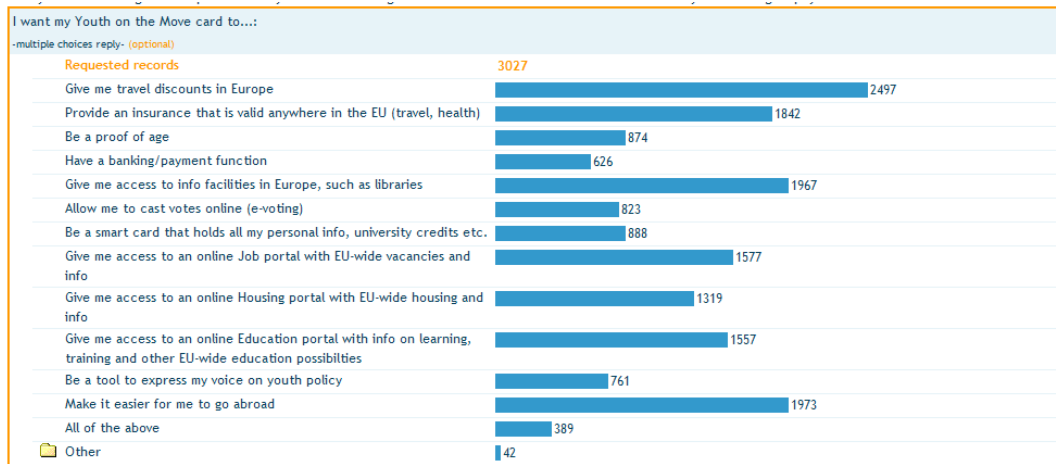


Figure 4: What do you want from the YoM card (nr of respondents)?

This is your chance to give us input on what you would like to get from the YoM card initiative and how much you're willing to pay for these benefits.

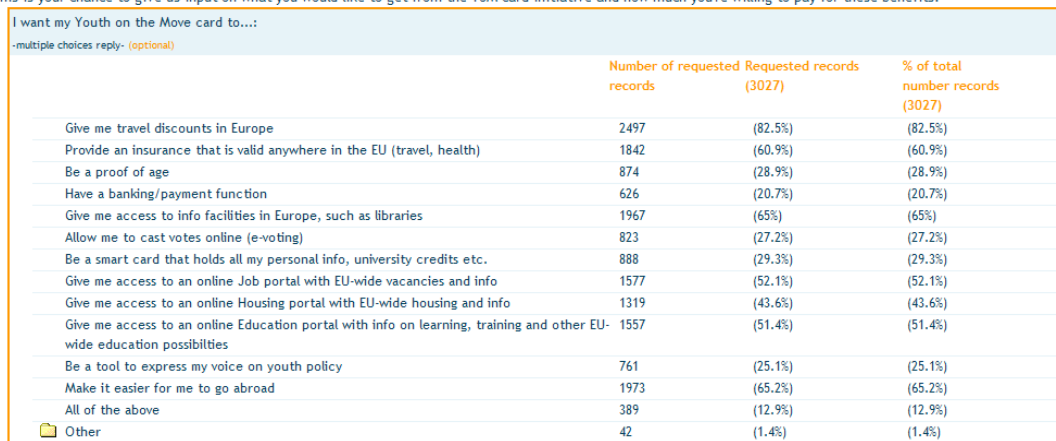


Figure 5: What do you want from the YoM card (% of respondents)

All respondents were given the chance to tell the European Commission what they would want from the Youth on the Move card. The selection of proposed benefits is based on the input from stakeholders, such as card-experts and young people, given during the stakeholder-meetings. The results show a very clear preference of the stakeholders towards travel discounts in Europe, EU-wide insurance, access to information facilities across Europe, access to EU employment information, access to EU wide education and learning opportunities and simply making it easier for them to go abroad.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This survey shows great enthusiasm among stakeholders for the YoM card initiative, and notably towards the development of a YoM label on existing youth/student cards. The fact that the majority of respondents already holds a youth/student card and 84% of those find these cards generally useful, furthermore suggests that a YoM-label on existing cards, instead of creating a new card, could be a (cost)-effective way to reach out to those interested. Nonetheless, 33% of the respondents state the current benefits offered are too limited and that discounts vary widely across the EU.

The added value of the YoM card to existing initiatives lies in its cross-border, European-wide, value to the holders. For instance, the YoM card should offer equal opportunities and benefits to each young person in Europe, no matter where they are or where they are going to. It aims to stimulate mobility, and then speed up the integration process for mobile learners when moving

abroad. The card should provide other European advantages in line with national youth or student cards, by increasing access for youth information on mobility and European educational/professional programmes, but also benefits on transport and culture, herewith tackling the economic and social mobility challenges that young people face.

The results show that students, entrepreneurs, job seekers but also employed youngsters show interest in the YoM card. As 23% of the respondents are over 26 years old, the YoM card should be available to anyone between 13 – 30 years old. All respondents indicated that the provision of information on mobility is pertinent to the success of the YoM card. In this respect, four areas of focus for the YoM card can be derived from the survey results:

- (1) Transport: discounts on international and local travel, insurance, information on housing abroad, internet access, mobile phones
- (2) Culture: Information on cultural events, access to libraries, discounts on culture
- (3) Education/Employment: Information on learning, training and EU-wide vacancies
- (4) Social needs: social support network, local information, exchange of experience.

This ambitious project requires a well-coordinated effort between many stakeholders. There are several challenges ahead:

- Fleshing out the Realms of Possibilities according to the survey results, including a timeline (see annex I)
- The Commission is currently undertaking an Impact Assessment on the Youth on the Move card.<sup>3</sup> The Impact Assessment helps to explain why an action is necessary at the EU level and why the proposed response is an appropriate choice. The Impact Assessment process is envisaged to be completed by the 1st quarter of 2013.
- Work with Youth Portal developers to see which possibilities exist to link the YoM card with the revamped Youth Portal.
- Develop Marketing strategy: strategies for pricing, distribution, promotion, advertising and market segmentation. Consider factors such as profit margins, budgets, financial analysis, capital investment, government actions, demographic changes, emerging technology and cultural trends.

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<sup>3</sup> Before the European Commission proposes new initiatives it assesses the potential **economic, social** and **environmental** consequences that they may have. Impact assessment is a set of logical steps which helps the Commission to do this. It is a process that **prepares evidence for political decision-makers** on the advantages and disadvantages of possible policy options by assessing their potential impact. [http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index_en.htm)

# The YoM card: REALMS of possibilities

## 2020 Strategy

