

GETTING THERE...

working together to

'establish **a common ground** for a medium and long-term coordinated strategy **toward** recognition of youth work and non-formal learning in Europe **with** the involvement of actors and stakeholders from the various sectors of policy concerned'.

STATEMENT & PLAN OF ACTION

by participants of the

SYMPOSIUM

'RECOGNITION OF YOUTH WORK AND
NON-FORMAL LEARNING/EDUCATION
IN THE YOUTH FIELD'

14-16 November 2011

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

The symposium 'RECOGNITION OF YOUTH WORK AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING / EDUCATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD' took place 14-16 November 2011 in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. It was co-organised by the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth, by JUGEND für Europa – the German National Agency for the Youth in Action programme and by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, in cooperation with the European Youth Forum

Disclaimer:

All views and opinions expressed in this statement are those of the participants of the symposium "RECOGNITION OF YOUTH WORK AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING / EDUCATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD", and, as such, do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The European Commission and the Council of Europe do not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this statement and accepts no responsibility for any consequences of their use.

1. Introduction

Youth work aims at empowering and supporting young people in their transition from childhood to adulthood. It offers non-formal learning opportunities and equips young people with skills needed at work and in civic or private life. It provides space and opportunities for young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities, to shape their own future. However, it lacks attention and understanding of its role and of its value for an individual and for our societies.

The Symposium on Recognition of Youth Work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field took place from 14 to 16 November 2011 at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. It was co-organised by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field, by JUGEND für Europa – the German National Agency for the Youth in Action programme, and by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, in cooperation with the European Youth Forum.¹

The symposium took place 11 years after the first Symposium dedicated to non-formal learning/education in Strasbourg, and it sought to connect past, present and future developments of recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field. It built on the Working Paper 'Pathways 2.0 – towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe' (the *Pathways paper*), published by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth in early 2011. It describes the current state of play of recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field, and its development in Europe over the last decade. Recognition of non-formal learning/education in the youth field plays an increasingly prominent role, both in regard to policy development and in practical terms.

The growing recognition process was accompanied by a number of key activities and events that contributed to creating a common ground among the key players.² Also a range of recognition instruments for non-formal and informal learning have been developed at local, regional, national and European level as well as in different sectors of the youth field.³

The *Pathways Paper* highlights characteristics and impact of non-formal learning/education in the youth field and outlines 10 elements for a renewed strategy.

We, more than 100 participants of the Symposium coming from 35 countries, discussed challenges regarding recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field and proposed recommendations and ideas for further action, outlined in this Statement and the accompanying Plan of Action. The Statement is addressed to the European institutions, to the ministries responsible for youth and to other ministries concerned with the topic of recognition in the Member States of the European Union and

¹ The symposium was prepared by the ad-hoc European Expert Group on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education consisting of representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Advisory Council on Youth and the Steering Committee on Youth in the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, the National Agencies and the Salto Resource Centers of the Youth in Action programme and the Pool of European Youth Researchers.

² First Pathways-Paper 2004, conferences 'Bridges for Recognition' 2005 in Leuven and 'Continue the pathways towards recognition....', 2008 in Prague, 1st European Youth Work Convention 2010 in Ghent.

³ Most prominent are the tools existing today at European level, the Council of Europe's Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders and Youthpass, the recognition tool for the European Union's Youth in Action programme.

the Council of Europe, as well as to other structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local level. Secondly and with equal importance, it is addressed to youth organisations, youth work practitioners and young people themselves. Thirdly, the statement addresses all other stakeholders, mainly education providers, employers and social partners, the academic and research community and our partners in civil society.

2. Challenges

While evident progress has been made since recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field has been on the political agenda, many challenges remain. The Symposium identified the following as key:

2.1 The challenge of making the concept of 'youth work and non-formal learning/education' better understood

Youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field are not sufficiently understood by broader society, and their concepts differ greatly between countries. The challenge is how to effectively define and communicate the added value that youth work has to individuals and to the society.

2.2 The challenge of keeping all dimensions of recognition in balance

Recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education has four dimensions: a. *social recognition*: recognition by society, valuing the positive impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education on young people *and* on societies; b. *political recognition*: recognition by policies, taking the value of youth work and non-formal learning/education into account in political strategies and decisions; c. *self-recognition*: recognition by the learner, understanding his or her learning and using it in different situations and contexts; and d. *formal recognition*: recognition by tools and instruments, valuing the individual learning outcomes of a learner. All dimensions are similarly important. Depending on the context, these different dimensions of recognition need to be taken into account and developed.

2.3 The challenge of risking formalisation of non-formal learning/education

Not every activity within the scope of youth work is measurable and ought to be assessed and certified. Formal recognition of learning in youth work activities could lead to over-formalising of youth work, i.e. the application of formal standards from other fields. Furthermore, youth work has many purposes and focussing for example "only" on the labour market or the education system, can devalue the other aspects of youth work. Non-formal learning/education in the youth field is contributing to the preparation of young people for the knowledge society and civil engagement.

2.4 The challenge of assuring quality in youth work and in non-formal learning/education

Quality assurance is a prerequisite for a better recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education. The development of quality in the youth field means increased professional support to those working in the youth field on voluntary and professional basis

(and e.g. not replacement of volunteers by paid staff). Therefore training and capacity building measures are essential to meet quality standards as set in the youth field.

2.5 The challenge of maintaining and cultivating diversity

The youth field is very diverse in its approaches, aims, methodologies and structure. This diversity is a value as it allows the field to address the very diverse needs of young people in Europe. This diversity is also a challenge as we need to develop structures to work together that don't lead to a disappearance of diversity. The huge difference in support for the youth field between the different countries is a related challenge.

2.6 The challenge of building knowledge

In regards to knowledge about the youth field, several challenges need to be kept in mind. An overview of the existing knowledge on youth work needs to be kept, and the gaps filled. Secondly, most academic or institutional research on the impact of education misses out on the contribution of non-formal learning/education of the youth field. Moreover, research in non-formal learning/education too often focuses on learning outcomes but does not investigate the process. Lastly, it needs to be ensured that the knowledge becomes useful for practice and policy making; and that practitioners and policy makers can easily access the knowledge base.

2.7 The challenge of being dependent from different other sectors

Youth work addresses many needs of society: it can be part of the educational, the social or the political system, it is part of the civil society, the third sector and leisure time which all have their own policies, structures and funding facilities. Providers of youth work have to adapt to many different and changing systems at European, national and local level, and this makes them dependent on the development of the other sectors.

2.8 The challenge of creating partnerships

The context in which youth work exists today requires that youth work establishes many partnerships with other actors from all levels such as social and welfare organisations, sport, culture and civil society, education providers, employers, etc. It is necessary to identify the common ground for an ongoing cooperation. This challenge of cooperation and partnerships is also present within the youth field itself where many organisations feel they lack the partnerships and exchanges with other non-formal learning/education providers to work jointly on recognition.

3. Recommendations

We, the participants of the Symposium, highlighted a number of recommendations corresponding to the challenges identified above and addressing the different stakeholders and areas concerned.

3.1 European level policies

Young people all over Europe deserve quality non-formal learning/education and proper recognition of their learning. The European Union and the Council of Europe should make sure that their policies benefit all young Europeans.

Regarding the complementarity of formal, non-formal and informal learning the political process for a better recognition and validation of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field should be reinforced by a joint strategy called the *Strasbourg Process*. Such a process needs to be based on a strong and sustainable political commitment to further support youth work in all its forms, including youth specific resources and infrastructure. The upcoming Council Recommendation in the European Union on validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning should include a youth work and youth policy dimension and commitment from Member States to follow up at national level.

Since the launch of the White Paper on Youth in 2001 there has been a strong dynamic in EU youth policy development. This dynamic should be ensured in the future as well. EU institutions and Member States shall aim at a close cooperation between the youth field and the area of education and training and increase cooperation with other stakeholders such as social partners. The current EU Youth in Action Programme needs to be continued beyond 2013 as a separate and stronger programme that, in addition to supporting youth activities, continues contributing to the development of youth work and youth policy.

The Council of Europe should take advantage of its newly established Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation for strengthening cooperation between the sectors of education and youth and to explore new possibilities for developing non-formal learning/education and promoting its recognition. The co-management statutory bodies of the Council of Europe have a key role to play to start and drive this process.

3.2 National, regional and local policies

To improve the overall opportunities for young people to make their learning outcomes in the youth field visible, the European debate on the further development of the recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field should be taken up and reflected at national, regional and particularly at local level, as these are the levels reaching out to the majority of young people. Developments at these levels, on their turn, should be transferred to the European level in order to make validation and recognition applicable and transferable.

Each strategy for a better recognition of non-formal learning/education in the youth field must be based on the provision of sufficient financial support of youth work and of youth organisations, but also focus on making outcomes visible in order to increase the social and political recognition of the sector.

3.3 Youth work

Youth organisations and other providers of youth work should make the learning that is taking place in their programmes visible. Recognition needs to start within the organisation, with every participant and should also include youth workers. To increase trust and credibility the youth field should strongly highlight the positive outcome and impact of relevant activities both on the level of individual young people as to the society as such. Recognition is also about adapting and using tools for the identification of learning outcomes and encompasses active advocacy and participation in policy processes. As recognition is a multidimensional process it has to include stakeholders from the political and social sector as well as from the labour market.

Regarding the effectiveness of youth work, assuring quality is one of the most effective ways to give recognition a practical dimension. Thus, ensuring high quality training and education programmes, also for youth workers, is essential for the development of competences in youth work.

3.4 Non-formal learning/education

Based on the principle that recognition is a right and not a duty, and in order to support a holistic approach of education, non-formal learning/education has to be acknowledged as a process that gives young people a chance to develop competences that complement those acquired through formal education. Quality assurance of non-formal learning/education in the youth field is a prerequisite condition to develop effective cooperation mechanisms on an equal level with other education fields.

Non-formal learning/education should be recognised for all the competences gained and its benefit for the well-being of the society and individuals, and not only for its contribution to employability and the labour market. Providers of non-formal learning/education in the youth field should be recognised for supporting and empowering disadvantaged groups, as well as for fostering civic participation through youth work and volunteering essential to the development of society.

3.5 Knowledge building and knowledge provision

The continuing practical and theoretical development of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field is essential for strengthening its capacity and recognition. The Symposium generated a common ground for a medium and long-term coordinated joint strategy towards recognition of youth work and non-formal learning; it must be maintained and bring together research, policy and practice to deliver scientific and experiential knowledge. The joint strategy should map and compile existing knowledge, identify gaps and needs for further research. The strategy should include ways of transferring the knowledge back to the providers on all levels.

3.6 Lifelong and lifewide learning

Youth work has its place within lifelong learning, thus the dialogue with the other education fields has to be reinforced. This partnership needs to take place between providers of education and ensure learning mobility between different sectors. The lifelong learning society is being built and the youth field should take the initiative to bring together all providers of non-formal learning opportunities. No lifelong nor lifewide learning policies should be developed without the involvement of non-formal learning/education providers of the youth field. The recognition tools for learning (such as the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, Youthpass and the European Skills Passport) need to be further developed in association with relevant stakeholders to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

3.7 Partnerships with other actors

A strategy to provide the employment sector with appropriate information on the potential of non-formal and informal learning in youth work is needed. This strategy ought to start by identifying the competences that are being sought in the labour market. Strengthened communication with social partners is essential for achieving understanding of the

competences acquired in non-formal learning/education and of the tools used to make this learning visible. The youth field is part of the social and the third sector. However, strategic partnerships as well as more efficient communication channels must be built to increase the cooperation and coherence between the youth field and the other fields of the social and third sector.

4. Conclusions

We call on all the institutions and partners, from the local to the European level, to heed our recommendations and make them reality through policy and support programmes. We commit to work together and with our organisations to implement the recommendations and the Plan of Action.

Together with all the partners we want to achieve our final and common goal: a Europe in which all young people can take part in quality youth work, where all their learning is recognised and in which all providers of non-formal learning/education and youth work get the appreciation they deserve.

Annex to the Statement

PLAN OF ACTION

Introduction

This Plan of Action complements the recommendations made in the Statement of participants of the Symposium on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning. It identifies a number of relevant actions to be launched or supported on the various levels of youth work and youth policy in Europe, at European, national, regional and local level and in all infrastructures that exist in the youth field, in youth NGOs, in public services, in the training, research and policy communities. They are grouped in seven thematic categories, corresponding to subsequent chapters. Under each chapter potential actors who should implement the actions are identified.

The participants of the Symposium entrusted the Expert Group on Recognition of Youth Work and of Non-formal Learning⁴ with editing the draft Plan of Action as developed during the Symposium and with publishing its final version. Therefore, the Plan of Action has been further elaborated and finalised by the Expert Group.

The responsibility for promoting and implementing the actions can not be delegated to any single institutional or extra-institutional body; the wider dissemination and promotion of the Statement as well as the Plan of Action and its ideas need strong support from all those involved in the youth field.

All stakeholders are invited to take further steps, those identified in the Plan of Action as well as further ideas and actions contributing to the recommendations of the Statement, and to inform the Expert Group about it. This will help it to develop the document further, continuously monitor the process of implementation and make the information on developments available to the wide public.

1. Political process

- 1.1 The most prominent action regarding political processes necessary to support the recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education relates to initiating a so-called **Strasbourg Process**. It is seen as a European level political process comparable to the ones that influence and steer strategies in education and training, such as the Bologna process in Higher Education or the Bruges/Copenhagen process in Vocational Education and Training⁵.

⁴ The Expert Group on Recognition of Youth Work and of Non-Formal Learning exists since spring 2011, meets twice a year and is coordinated jointly by the SALTO Resource Centre Training and Cooperation and the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. It consists of representatives of youth policy (European Steering Committee for Youth), youth research (Pool of European Youth Researchers), youth NGOs (European Youth Forum, Advisory Council on Youth), the SALTO Resource Centres and the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme, the trainer communities and the European institutions, European Commission and Council of Europe as well as their partnership in the field of youth.

⁵ The proposal to launch such a process was first made in the Conference "Continue the pathways towards recognition..." held in 2008 in Prague.

The design of the Strasbourg Process should be based on evidence and address the following:

- 1.1.1 Making recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education a priority of European cooperation in the youth field, in both the European Union and the Council of Europe;
 - 1.1.2 Acknowledging the areas of concern that should become the political core of this process;
 - 1.1.3 Initiating work on a legal text to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, including the Strasbourg Process and inviting the Member States of the Council of Europe to encourage the adoption of specific measures to enhance recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field at national, regional and local level;
 - 1.1.4 Actively supporting the initiative of elaborating a legal text by sharing expertise and creating links with other relevant European structures, e.g. the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of Regions;
 - 1.1.5 Developing a Joint European Framework on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field;
 - 1.1.6 Ensuring compatibility of legal structures related to youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field, particularly in regards to youth worker qualifications, to increase workers' mobility in the youth field;
 - 1.1.7 Supporting development of national and local policies for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education;
 - 1.1.8 Ensuring monitoring of the Strasbourg Process.
- 1.2 In 2012, the Council of the European Union Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning is to be expected. The participants invite the Council of the EU to include the youth field as a prominent provider of non-formal and informal learning/education environments. Furthermore, the Council Recommendation should secure links to the future Strasbourg process, to complement one another.
- 1.3 A chapter on youth work and non-formal learning/education should become an integral part of the European Youth Report, to be integrated in the planned chapter on Education and Training.
- 1.4 Forthcoming Presidencies in the European Union should consider making recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education one of their priorities. Thus recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education would also become an on-going element of the structured dialogue with youth.

The proposals made in this chapter are addressed in particular to the two European institutions, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, who should take responsibility to launch, implement and coordinate the expected political process, supported by their partnership in the field of youth and, on the side of the European Commission, the SALTO Resource Centre Training and Cooperation. As far as the Strasbourg Process is concerned the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the institutions

in the European Union, is invited to take the lead, similarly to its coordinating role in the Bologna Process. Also national ministries responsible for youth and for education, as well as youth NGOs/National youth councils and National Agencies of the relevant EU programmes should contribute to the process and related political initiatives.

2. Promotion/campaign

- 2.1 To raise awareness and visibility of youth work and non-formal learning/education and thus foster their social and political recognition, a European **promotional campaign** should be launched. The campaign could entail the following elements:
 - 2.1.1 Launching a European Year on Recognition of Non-formal Learning/Education
 - 2.1.2 Compiling and promoting narratives and experiences of the value and impact of youth work and non-formal learning/education on personal and professional pathways;
 - 2.1.3 Training for youth organisations on advocacy for recognition of non-formal learning/education and youth work on national, regional and local level;
 - 2.1.4 Organising awareness raising events for journalists;
 - 2.1.5 Encouraging involvement of social media activists (e.g. bloggers, social networks etc.);
 - 2.1.6 The campaign could be financed by companies supporting non-formal learning/education and youth work as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes.
- 2.2 **All kinds of knowledge** related to youth work and non-formal learning / education, research findings but also practical and experiential knowledge, should be appropriately communicated, promoted and disseminated, in order to bring it closer to practitioners, policy makers, social partners, etc.
 - 2.2.1 User-friendly versions of research findings should be developed and published in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY⁶);
 - 2.2.2 Disseminate reports and studies on results of non-formal learning / education to policy makers, social partners, civil society and the Academia.
- 2.3 **Better visibility, awareness and understanding of** youth work and non-formal learning/education **practice** should be pursued, including the following proposals:
 - 2.3.1 Implement a conference to showcase tools for non-formal learning/education⁷;
 - 2.3.2 Promote non-formal learning approaches in formal education contexts;
 - 2.3.3 Promote assessment and self-assessment tools for documenting young people's competences.

⁶ See more at <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>

⁷ For the purpose of raising awareness and understanding of the tools, further development of the existing structures could rather be considered. E.g. a yearly, European level event entitled Tool Fair is organised within the Youth in Action programme for six years now, to showcase tools for learning in youth work.

To implement actions under this chapter all actors in the youth sector are invited to promote better recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field; particularly youth organisations at all levels, the European Youth Forum, National youth councils, National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres, but also young people themselves, in particular by using social media and new information and communication technologies. Such a promotional campaign should further involve researchers and other experts and be supported by the European institutions, their youth partnership and by national ministries responsible for youth.

3. Cooperation and partnerships

- 3.1 On-going cooperation of researchers, policy makers, youth workers, social partners and other stakeholders such as the education and training, employment and social sectors, should be facilitated in joint activities, in order to:
 - 3.1.1 Ensure and reinforce cooperation with the education and training sector through an operational plan, e.g. through creating common tools for monitoring and evaluating the impact and efficiency of youth work and non-formal learning;
 - 3.1.2 Promote recognition of competencies gained through youth work and non-formal learning/education towards the higher education sector, and support creating possible links between them;
 - 3.1.3 Identify and map links between European Qualifications Framework, the Bologna process and recognition mechanisms of non-formal learning/education and youth work;
 - 3.1.4 Explore links with other relevant EU policies, e.g. in the social sector, and investigate possibilities for mutual support;
 - 3.1.5 Develop a common ground for knowledge in the field of non-formal learning;
 - 3.1.6 Involve all the above mentioned stakeholders in developments regarding recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning/education.
- 3.2 Specific to cooperation with the employment sector, the following actions have been proposed:
 - 3.2.1 Develop a framework for partnerships between youth organisations and companies;
 - 3.2.2 Establish local cooperation with employers;
 - 3.2.3 Encourage employers to recruit young people with competencies acquired (primarily) through youth work and in non-formal learning / education;
 - 3.2.4 Support young people by providing them with career guidance, finding a job, preparing for an interview, mentoring at the beginning of a job, and this with the involvement of employers and employment agencies⁸;
 - 3.2.5 Bring young people at risk in direct contact with the professional world through partnerships between the labour market and youth work.

⁸ Specific structures in place all over Europe should be considered for these tasks.

The youth field actors on all levels should go beyond their own domain and get in contact with a variety of stakeholders; this includes the employment / business sector and social partners (employers' associations and trade unions), the formal education sector, including school and higher education as well as vocational education and training, and the social sector and civil society at large.

4. Knowledge

4.1 Further evidence about youth work and non-formal learning / education related issues needs to be collected, to support the design and implementation of the Strasbourg process among other purposes, through:

- 4.1.1 Promoting and funding research on youth work and on non-formal learning / education;
- 4.1.2 Developing a methodology for gathering data on youth work and non-formal learning/education;
- 4.1.3 Calling upon individual researchers to carry out projects in the field of youth work and non-formal learning/education.

4.2 In particular, proposals for the following research tasks have been brought up:

- 4.2.1 Map the diversity of different youth work practices in Europe from an educational perspective;
- 4.2.2 Conduct studies on how to improve and further develop youth work and non-formal learning/education, research the aspects that influence the quality and effectiveness of youth and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field;
- 4.2.3 Conduct longitudinal studies in order to evaluate how youth work and non-formal learning/education influences participants' lives over longer periods (including after leaving youth work);
- 4.2.4 Investigate non-formal learning/education in other contexts outside youth work in order to engage in mutual exchange and identify areas of transferability and best practices;
- 4.2.5 Compile a map of existing recognition tools;
- 4.2.6 Conduct comparative research on the use of different recognition tools and their impact;
- 4.2.7 Analyse the link between youth work and non-formal learning/education and employability;
- 4.2.8 Make an inventory of cooperation practices of the youth field actors with employers;
- 4.2.9 Conduct a study on the knowledge and perception of youth work and of non-formal learning/education among employers and the general public;
- 4.2.10 Collect studies on the motivation of young people to take active part in society.

4.3 A number of proposals relate to the presentation and dissemination of research findings:

- 4.3.1 Make research and studies on policy and practice in youth work and non-formal learning/education more accessible in their format, distribution, and language used; for example, user-friendly versions of research findings uploaded in the EKCYP need to be developed;
- 4.3.2 Ensure dissemination of research findings in different languages;
- 4.3.3 Produce an overview of studies on links between employment and youth work.

In the knowledge area many stakeholders can contribute to the implementation of actions, be it the European institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, their partnership in the field of youth, or their respective member states (representing national, regional and local levels). Also the European Youth Forum, youth NGOs in general and National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres have a relevant role to play in gathering, providing and disseminating knowledge on the subject. A prominent role is given to researchers and academics dealing with youth issues and non-formal learning, not least through the Pool of European Youth Researchers. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy should be the central place where knowledge is gathered and made available to all.

5. Quality

5.1 For assuring quality of practices and instruments used in youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field, the following actions have been proposed:

- 5.1.1 Develop (minimum) standards for quality of non-formal learning/education and youth work, including developing quality indicators;
- 5.1.2 Agree on a charter for quality standards in non-formal learning/education and youth work in Europe;
- 5.1.3 Develop a quality label based on the quality charter;
- 5.1.4 Support youth organisations in developing and applying non-formal learning/education quality assurance mechanisms in youth work;
- 5.1.5 Establish an expert group on quality assurance tools;
- 5.1.6 Establish a system of peer review in recognition of non-formal learning/education and youth work practices;
- 5.1.7 Youth organisations and other relevant actors should be actively involved in the process of quality assurance of non-formal learning, currently developed by the European Youth Forum;
- 5.1.8 Establish quality assurance for recognition tools;
- 5.1.9 Provide support to youth workers and local level youth organisations for development of competences through reflective youth work practice and coaching;
- 5.1.10 Increase learning mobility of youth work practitioners.

To develop and assure quality in youth work and in non-formal learning/education in the youth field is particularly the responsibility of youth NGOs at all levels and other providers of non-formal learning/education schemes. Competence development of youth work practitioners should be ensured foremost by the practitioners themselves. Nonetheless, the European institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, together with their member states and their relevant structures, such as the EU-CoE youth partnership, Youth in Action programme National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centres, should support the development of quality assurance systems and tools such as standards and labels.

6. Tools

6.1 The following general actions have been proposed for the development and use of recognition tools in the youth field:

- 6.1.1 Youth work practitioners should be encouraged to document learning outcomes of youth work and of non-formal learning/education in the youth field;
- 6.1.2 Recognition tools should be youth-friendly, they should be promoted online and made available in different languages;
- 6.1.3 Learning outcomes should be brought in relation to a competences framework; in order to ease this effort links to existing systems of competences, particularly vocational grids/systems should be established or developed; thus, direct links to qualifications/job profiles can be developed;
- 6.1.4 Develop a checklist of competences that young people are likely to gain in youth work, in order to make learning outcomes more visible and assessable;
- 6.1.5 Provide further possibilities for validation and formal recognition of learning outcomes for individuals, respecting the principle of voluntary engagement;
- 6.1.6 Promote a "learning coach" system to support self-recognition of youth work experiences as an example of good practice.

6.2 More concretely, the existing European level recognition tools for non-formal learning in the youth field should be further enhanced:

- 6.2.1 Coherence and complementarity of recognition tools at European level should be ensured;
- 6.2.2 All existing and under-development tools at the European level (e.g. Council of Europe Portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers, European Union's Youthpass and European Skills Passport) must be evaluated from the users' perspective;
- 6.2.3 The revision of the current European portfolio for youth leaders and youth workers should be supported;
- 6.2.4 Youthpass should be made available to everyone on all levels also outside the Youth in Action Programme;

- 6.2.5 The stakeholders should make use of the Youthpass impact study planned for 2012.
- 6.3 To ensure that the youth work professions and learning outcomes of youth work and non-formal learning are adequately recognised by European level frameworks in the field of lifelong learning developed outside the youth field, the following action should be taken:
- 6.3.1 The European Commission is invited to consult the youth field when developing the European Skills Passport in order to ensure its appropriateness for youth work, while securing the true passport nature as an easy-to-use collection of records from various fields of non-formal learning⁹;
 - 6.3.2 The European Skills Passport should include attitudes developed in youth work as well as skills acquired¹⁰;
 - 6.3.3 Representatives of the youth field need to be involved in the development of European and National Qualifications Frameworks, in order to make sure that learning results acquired in youth work become integrated in these frameworks;
 - 6.3.4 Contribute to defining youth work related professions in the European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO).

The actions proposed under this pillar invite particularly the European institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, to take and to support actions in developing appropriate tools for recognition. The most relevant partners in this regard are the SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre (by developing Youthpass) and the National Agencies of the Youth in Action programme. Also the European Youth Forum, National youth councils and youth NGOs as well as the trainers' communities play a crucial role in developing, testing, adapting and disseminating the tools. Other relevant actors are national ministries responsible for youth and/or for education, other national authorities, employers and the EU-CoE youth partnership.

7. Resources and support

- 7.1 To empower the practitioners in the youth field , following proposals have been made:
- 7.1.1 Raise awareness and provide training to empower local actors (such as youth workers, social workers, families, etc.) to enable young people with fewer opportunities get better access to youth work and non-formal learning/education; these actors should adapt recognition tools and accompany young people throughout the process of recognition in a way that is adequate to their situation;

⁹ The Europass Skills Passport template currently undergoing technical implementation rather has the format suitable for documenting outcomes of single non-formal learning experiences.

¹⁰ The Europass Skills Passport template under development includes the description of knowledge and skills (but not attitudes) acquired in a learning setting.

- 7.1.2 Empower youth organisations to play an active role in the recognition process through:
 - Capacity building
 - Cooperation with policy makers and other stakeholders (co-management)
 - Joint activities with other actors, within and outside the youth field
 - 7.1.3 Equip youth organisations, especially national youth councils, to contribute to the development of national qualifications frameworks
- 7.2 For delivering good quality youth work and contributing to its recognition, the actors in the youth field need to have sufficient and sustainable funding. That could, among other measures, be ensured through:
- 7.2.1 Securing adequate youth specific funding in autonomous youth programmes and foundations;
 - 7.2.2 Developing national and local policies to ensure that youth organisations have sustainable resources to deliver quality in youth work and non-formal learning/education, and to work on recognition;
 - 7.2.3 Recognise in funding mechanisms at European level the contribution of volunteering as in-kind contributions.

In order to ensure adequate and sufficient resources and support of youth work and non-formal learning/education it is indispensable that particularly European, international, national, regional and local entities provide infrastructures, a legal basis, programmes and funding. Here the European institutions including their EU-CoE youth partnership have a major role to play by offering training and capacity building measures, e.g. via the European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action programme or the Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation and the education and training programme in the field of youth. Also other, in particular national authorities should be encouraged to provide adequate support. Beneficiaries of support measures should make best use of these resources.