

Invitation to the European Conference

Think European – act local:
 Youth 2015 – recommendations
 for Europe

18 November 2015
10.30 am to 5.00 pm,
Committee of Regions, Brussels



Background

The second conference on the EU Youth Strategy and the role of the states and regions will address the core findings of the third EU Youth Report on the realities faced by young Europeans. Further, it will focus on resulting challenges and the need for political action on the regional level, notably in particular in the fields of social integration, employment, participation, culture and creativity, health and wellbeing, volunteering, education and training, as well as international cooperation.

The Youth Report will function as the central reference for the European Commission and for the Council of the EU, when assessing the progress of the EU Youth Strategy, impelling the relevant actions for improving the situation for young people

and defining key areas in youth policy for the next working phase until 2018. Due to the rising number of refugees in Europe, challenges arose that were unpredictable while writing the Youth Report. Those challenges however will (contribute to) shape the youth policy of the member states, their regions and in Europe as a whole. The regions carry primary responsibility for implementing national policies and are supporters and contributors to the political process; therefore, they play a substantial role in shaping youth policy at the European level. As the representative body of the regional and local level, the Committee of the Regions should be a strong advocate for youth policy concerns. Its support is instrumental in continuing to develop the EU Youth Strategy.

Aims

The conference seeks to:

- raise awareness of the Committee of Regions' political role,
- explain regional and local dimensions, as well as the contribution of regions in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, referring to practical examples,
- enhance the exchange about current challenges in regional youth policy, especially in the fields of participation, employment and social integration and support as well as possibilities of cross-sectoral youth policy,
- spread the word about successful examples of European cooperation between regions in the field of youth politics.

Main target group

- members of the CoR Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC);
- representatives from regions and municipalities in Europe with responsibility for youth policy;
- youth policy officers of national, regional and local representations to the EU;
- policy officers of the European Parliament and the European Commission working in the youth policy field;
- representatives of civil society and youth organizations;
- young people.

10.30 – 11.15 am

Welcome

Opening and Welcoming given by **Jiří Buriánek**,
Secretary-General of the CoR (tbc)

Opening panel

*Youth 2015 – challenges in
youth policy for Europe and its regions.*

- **Yoomi Renström**, First Vice-President of the PES Group in the Committee of the Regions, in charge of education & culture
- **Helma Kuhn-Theis**, Plenipotentiary for European Affairs, Ministry of Finance and European Affairs of the Saarland
- **Antonio Silva Mendes**, Director for Youth and Sport, European Commission (tbc)

11:15 – 11:45 am

Debate with the audience

11.45 – 1:00 pm

Parallel workshops

The workshops provide a platform for exchanging examples of good policy and practice and discussing the guiding principles for successful and sustainable implementation. Each workshop will be chaired by a member of the CoR.

Workshop 1:

Locally strong: conditions for successful dialogues between youth and policy makers.

Participation is a central topic of the EU Youth Strategy and serves as an important foundation for the social inclusion of young people and supports a vivid European civil society. The so called “structured dialogue” as one important concept of participation, aims to enhance the discussion between public institutions and young people. As a result, the interests and opinions of the youth

Chair: **Ulrike Hiller**, Plenipotentiary for European and Federal Affairs of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, member of the CoR

should not only be recognized, but also be taken into account when implementing new policies. In this workshop, representatives of European regions and young participants will present various successful participation projects (themes vary from “refugee aid” to “development cooperation”).

Workshop 2:

Interregional cooperation concerning youth political issues - examples and instruments

Both, regional politics and EU financing instruments support the cooperation among/between the regions and the EU in a variety of fields e.g. economy, energy, labour market or tertiary education. The EU Youth Strategy aims to improve European cooperation on relevant topics for the youth, for example mutual

Chair: **Helma Kuhn-Theis**, Plenipotentiary for European Affairs, Ministry of Finance and European Affairs of the Saarland, member of the CoR

learning or developing a common strategy for youth politics, particularly in border-zone regions. To fulfil these goals, effective structures as well as sufficient resources on a local level are needed. This workshop illustrates examples of interregional cooperation that help creating benefits for the youth.

Agenda

Workshop 3:

Implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee and support of the employability of young people

A central concern of the EU Youth Strategy is the support of professional integration in the labour market for young people. Formal education as well as non-formal and informal learning can all play important roles in enhancing the employability. Both, youth work and volunteering are platforms for young

Chair: **Michael Schneider**, Secretary of State, Delegate of the State of Saxony-Anhalt for the German Federation, member of the CoR

people that provide important learning possibilities. Further, they complement actions concerning professional education and the labour market. This workshop presents examples of integrated services for young people concerning occupation and work.

Workshop 4:

Youth politics today: Cross-sectoral and interfering

Pursuing specific initiatives and producing cross sectoral effects in the youth field are the major concern of the EU Youth Strategy. It follows from this understanding that the interests of the youth have to be considered in every political field, were decisions are made that influence the lives of young people. An independent youth

Chair: **Nils Wiechmann**, Member of Parliament of Rhineland Palatinate and member of the CoR (tbc)

political approach needs to regard adolescence as a whole, taking interests and concerns of young people into consideration in every decision to be made. Sustainable implementation of this approach is subject of plenty professional discussions on European, national and regional level. This workshop introduces relevant examples for this topic.

1.00 pm – 2.30 pm

Networking lunch in the Atrium

2.30 – 3.00 pm

Presentation of results from the workshops

The chairs of the four workshops report briefly to the audience.

3.00 – 4.30 pm

Panel discussion

Shaping regions and communities for young people together – recommendations for Europe

- Social exclusion, high youth unemployment, marginalization, radicalization – how can the EU support the regions' local commitment concerning these challenges?
- Which are the challenges for regional youth politics regarding the growing number of young refugees? Where can

Europe provide support?

- Which are the recommendations for the professional work of SEDEC?
- How can young people benefit even more from a European society?

Participants

- **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, First Vice-President of the CoR
- **Terry Reintke**, Member of European Parliament
- **Mario Žuliček**, President of the Youth Regional Network
- **Ulrike Hiller**, Plenipotentiary for European and Federal Affairs of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen

- **Cédric GARCET**, Cabinet of Isabelle Simonis, Minister for Social Promotion Education, Youth, Women's Rights and Equal Chances, Federation Wallonia - Brussels, Fédération Brüssel - Wallonie

4.30 – 4.45 pm

Closing remarks

Hans-Georg Wicke, Director JUGEND für Europa

Moderation of the conference:

Andreas Korn (ARTE, WDR)

The conference

The conference

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Travelling expenses will be covered by the participants themselves.

The venue

Committee of Regions,
Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99-101
1040 Brussels

Contact

Contact

If you have any question regarding the conference please contact

Ulrike Wisser, JUGEND für Europa, wisser@jfemail.de

Further information at

➤ <http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/eu-youth-report-2015.aspx>

Panels in the conference will be held in German, English and French, workshops in German and English.

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