Basic information

2009/2159(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering **Subject** 4.40.10 Youth	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	CULT Culture and Education	PAPANIKOLAOU Georgios (PPE)	22/09/2009
		Shadow rapporteur VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL)	
Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2978	2009-11-27
European Commission	**Commission DG**	**Commissioner**	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	VASSILIOU Androulla	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
27/04/2009	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2009)0200	Summary
22/10/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/11/2009	Debate in Council		
23/03/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
30/03/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0113/2010	
18/05/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0166/2010	Summary
18/05/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/05/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2009/2159(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/01184

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE430.936	06/01/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE438.492	01/03/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0113/2010	30/03/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0166/2010	18/05/2010	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2009)0200	27/04/2009	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2010)4416	16/09/2010	
Follow-up document	SEC(2011)0401	25/03/2011	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2012)0495	10/09/2012	Summary
Commission working document (SWD)	SWD(2012)0256	10/09/2012	
Commission working document (SWD)	SWD(2012)0257	10/09/2012	

EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering

2009/2159(INI) - 27/04/2009 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to propose a European Union strategy for youth based on the renewed open method of coordination.

BACKGROUND: Europeans are living longer, having children later and there are fewer young people. The 15-29 age group is projected to represent 15.3 % of Europe's population in 2050, whereas it is currently 19.3%. In this context, this generation will need to be the subject of particular focus in the years to come. This is why the Commission is putting forward a **comprehensive, cross-sectoral strategy** covering all aspects relating to young people and meeting their current and future needs.

CONTENT: youth cooperation is a well structured and developed EU policy field, particularly since 2001 when the White Paper on Youth was adopted. It was in the context of that White Paper that the open method of coordination (OMC) was first launched, a new stronger version of which is now proposed, to deal with the new needs facing young people.

A new strategy is proposed with three overarching and interconnected goals that closely link to those of the Renewed Social Agenda is proposed:

- creating more Opportunities for Youth in education and employment;
- improving Access and full participation of all young people in society;
- fostering mutual Solidarity between society and young people.

Under each goal, the communication proposes 'fields of action' along with priorities for the first three years 2010-2012. These priorities may be summarised as follows:

1) Creating more opportunities for youth

- **Field of Action 1 – education:** currently, a quarter of 15-year olds are low achievers in reading literacy and 6 million young people leave school without any qualifications. Renewed efforts are called for from the Member States and the Commission, in their respective spheres of competence, to enhance young people's level of education. In this regard, it is proposed, among other things, to: i) develop non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving; ii) fully use the range of tools established at EU level for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications; iii) promote learning mobility of all young people; iv) encourage cooperation between education and youth policy-makers; v) make available good quality guidance and counselling services for young people.
- **Field of Action 2 – employment:** young people's transition periods from education to employment have become significantly longer and complex. Unemployment among young people is on average at least twice as high as for the overall workforce; the current economic crisis puts further pressure on the labour market opportunities for the young. The actions envisaged by the Member States and the Commission are as follows: i) **ensure that youth unemployment remains a priority**; ii) promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people; iii) develop youth work as a resource to support youth employability; iv) encourage cooperation between employment and youth policy-makers; v)ensure that the European Social Fund is effectively used; vi) develop short-term measures in their recovery plans to stimulate youth employment; vii) develop career guidance and counselling services; viii)lower barriers to the free movement of labour across the EU; ix) promote quality internships within education and training and/or employment schemes.
- **Field of Action 3 – creativity and entrepreneurship:** the Commission considers that young people should be encouraged to think and act innovatively. The objective in this field is to encourage young people to express and develop their talents and creativity and thus their entrepreneurial spirit. The communication recommends that the Member States and Commission: i) develop start-up funds and encourage the recognition of junior enterprise; ii) make new technologies readily available to empower young talent and attract interest in arts and science; iii) promote contribution of youth work to the creativity and entrepreneurship of young people; iv) widen access to creative tools, particularly those involving new technologies.

2) Improving access and full participation of young people in society

- **Field of Action 4 – health and sport:** the health of many young people is at risk because of stress, poor diet, lack of physical exercise, unprotected sex, tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse. Healthy living and physical education need to be encouraged. The main actions proposed are as follows: i) encourage cooperation and the involvement of young people in health policy; ii) mobilise all stakeholders at local level to detect and help young people at risk; iii)develop tailor-made information on health for young people; iv) encourage peer-to-peer health education at school and in youth organisations.
- **Field of Action 5 – participation:** another objective of the Commission's proposed strategy is to ensure the full participation of youth in civic life and democracy by supporting youth organisations. In this regard, it is proposed that the Member States and the Commission: i) develop quality standards on youth participation, information and consultation; ii) **support politically and financially youth organisations**; iii) promote e-democracy to reach out to more non-organised youth; iv) develop opportunities for debate between European/national institutions and young people.

3) Fostering mutual solidarity between society and young people

- **Field of Action 6 – social inclusion:** in 2006, one fifth of young people between 16 and 24 were at risk of poverty. Preventing poverty and social exclusion and breaking their inter-generational transmission by mobilising all actors involved (parents, teachers, social workers, etc.) are considered important. In this field, it is envisaged to: i) address issues related to teenagers and young adults, in particular those with least opportunities; ii) optimise the use of EU Funds to support the social integration of young people; iii) realise the full potential of youth work as a means of inclusion; iv) develop intercultural awareness and competences; v) encourage youth involvement in inclusion policy and cooperation between policy makers; vi)recognise challenges overcome by disadvantaged youth, including through special awards; vii) address homelessness, housing and financial exclusion; viii)promote access to quality services (transport, health, etc.), ix) promote specific support for young families.
- **Field of Action 7 – volunteering:** youth volunteering contributes strongly to intergenerational solidarity. It should therefore be encouraged by developing more voluntary opportunities for young people. It should therefore be encouraged by both Community and national actions: i) enhance skills recognition through Europass and Youthpass; ii) recognise contributions of youth organisations and non-structured forms of volunteering; iii) reflect on ways to better protect the rights of volunteers (e.g. European Year of Volunteering in 2011); iv) develop national approaches on cross-border mobility of young volunteers.
-

- **Field of Action 8 – youth and the world**: this area relates, for the most part, to mobilising youth in global policy-making at all levels (local, national and international) using existing youth networks and tools (e.g. structured dialogue) to address climate change and the UN Millennium Development Goals. The envisaged actions are to: i) encourage green patterns of consumption and production among young people; ii) promote entrepreneurship and volunteering opportunities with regions outside Europe; iii) support the development of youth work on other continents; iv) raise awareness among young people on fundamental rights and development issues worldwide.

In addition to the description of a wide range of actions to mobilise young people, the communication looks at structures that exist in relation to directly reaching young people and, in particular, the fundamental aspect of **youth work** (and how it is enabled). This can take the form of youth organisations, municipalities, youth centres, churches, etc.). It can help deal with unemployment, school failure, and social exclusion, as well as provide leisure time. It can also increase skills and support the transition from youth to adulthood. However, youth work needs to be professionalised further. A series of actions to **professionalise youth work** are therefore proposed: i) equip youth workers with professional skills; ii) promote youth work via the Structural Funds; iii) develop mobility of youth workers; iv) develop innovative services, pedagogies and practice of youth work.

Envisaged approach to cooperation: to ensure that the actions detailed above can be implemented, the communication recommends that the Member States consider implementing at national level **cross-sectoral policy-making** in relation to young people. The Commission also stresses the importance of **dialogue** with youth. A working group with Member States and the European Youth Forum will be set up in 2010 to review the structured dialogue and a structured dialogue cycle with young people is proposed for every year.

The Commission also stresses the role of peer learning to ensure that better youth policies are drawn up and on the importance of evidence-based policy-making.

Lastly, the strategy will need to draw support from programmes in the youth sector (e.g. Youth in Action) and other similar programmes (such as Culture, Lifelong Learning, PROGRESS, MEDIA, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, Competitiveness & Innovation Programme) as well as the Structural Funds.

EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering

2009/2159(INI) - 25/03/2011 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents this working document in which it proposes a series of European Union indicators on youth.

It should be noted that, in 2009, the Commission had put forward an EU strategy for Youth based on the open method of coordination (please refer to summary of the non-legislative initial document dated 27/04/2009 in this procedure file). In that document, the Commission proposed creating a working group to discuss possible indicators for priorities in relation to youth participation, volunteering activities, creativity and youth and the world, as well as for young people who left school, who are unemployed or are not following training courses.

The Commission therefore established an *ad hoc* group of experts responsible for defining these indicators, which were determined in January 2010. This document provides an overview of the work and the results of the European experts on youth and presents a matrix of the indicators that were defined.

EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering

2009/2159(INI) - 18/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering'.

Overall, Parliament welcomes the Commission Communication on the same subject (see COM(2009)0200) as well as the Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018). It takes the view that Community programmes and funds should reflect Europe's ambitions for young people and calls on the Member States to fully implement the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty in the area of youth policy, such as the encouragement of the participation of young people in democratic life, special attention to young sportsmen and sportswomen and the legal enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Key remarks about the effectiveness of the youth strategy: Parliament acknowledges that the reinforced Open Method of Coordination (OMC is an appropriate tool for cooperation on youth policy issues, despite its weaknesses, its restricted use, its legitimacy deficits, its lack of effective cooperation between ‘experts’ and elected politicians, a lack of proper integration with national priorities and the risk of ‘responsibility confusion’ between the various levels. In order to obtain long-term results, the Open Method of Coordination should be reinforced and be carried by a strong political will on the part of all those involved. Parliament urges closer cooperation on youth issues between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council and stresses the need for more integrated cooperation with national parliaments. Parliament stresses the need to develop **clear and user-friendly indicators** both at European and national level which make it possible to improve, broaden and update knowledge of the condition of young people and to measure and compare progress on the implementation of commonly set objectives. It also points out the importance of an **evaluation of the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Youth**.

Recalling the important role of the Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, Parliament reiterates its **political priority** of considering those programmes as a cornerstone in the development of the EU youth strategy, especially for the next generation of multiannual programmes. Parliament points out the need to mobilise and to adapt the EU programmes and social funds for youth, to facilitate access to them and to simplify the procedures for access. It stresses, in particular, how important it is to devise a practical, non-bureaucratic approach in this area.

Parliament considers that even more effort should be made to **promote the mobility of young people** within Europe and that, in mobility programmes, there must be sufficient scope for and attention devoted to exchanges of young people outside formal education. It calls on the Commission to devote special attention to the mobility of youth workers, and for the special visa regime (which currently exists for students) to be extended to youth workers.

Parliament acknowledges that improving young people's lives is a cross-cutting task which must be taken into account in every policy area. It encourages the creation of a **youth sector** in all departments that will help to strengthen the drafting of appropriate youth policies.

Fields of action: Parliament stresses that the global economic crisis is having a major impact on young people and that it should therefore profoundly influence priorities within the fields of action. This should be done by identifying a range of measures to back up the social exit strategy and special attention should be paid to the review of social safety nets and social security systems.

General principles applying to every field of action: Parliament underlines the importance of eliminating all kinds of discrimination among young people, such as discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation. It stresses the importance of considering young people as a **priority group in the EU's social vision**. It also strongly underlines the need to give young people with disabilities effective, tailor-made support. Everything must be done to identify cross-sectoral connections between youth policies and education, training, employment, culture and other policies, such as those relating to children.

Education and training: Parliament encourages Member States to intensify the interaction between the sides of the knowledge triangle (education, research, innovation) as a key element for growth and job creation. It recommends promoting common criteria for stronger mutual recognition of non-formal education and vocational training, for example by speeding up the adoption of the EQF system for the recognition of qualifications, transparency and the validation of skills. Member States are also strongly encouraged, in the context of increased funding, to promote learning and training mobility for all young people. Parliament strongly encourages Member States, in the context of increased funding, to promote learning and training mobility for all young people, which is a key factor for gaining learning and working experience.

With regard to the problem of **school drop-out**, Parliament calls for measures to be taken to ensure that as high a percentage of young people as possible complete their period of compulsory education. Member States are urged to do their utmost to meet the strategic objectives and to reach the benchmarks fixed under the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"), particularly as regards low achievers in basic skills, and early school leavers.

Parliament also calls on Member States to ensure that children and young people, irrespective of the legal status of their families, have a right to State education, helping them to achieve, with due respect for their own culture and language, the necessary command of the language of the host Member State and a knowledge of its culture as a tool for integration. Parliament asks Member States to ensure **equal access to education for all young people** irrespective of social origin and financial conditions.

Employment and entrepreneurship:Parliament is extremely concerned about the increasing numbers of young people who are unemployed, under-employed or have no job security, especially in the current economic crisis. Parliament considers that job insecurity can discourage young people from starting a family or delay it, and thus giving rise to demographic changes. It also supports the proposal to develop appropriate measures targeted at young people in the recovery plans drawn up in the economic and financial crisis plans. Parliament also wants the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy to focus more on young people.

Member States are called upon to take action against job insecurity and poor working conditions and to **facilitate the access of young people to all kinds of employment** in good working conditions so as to avoid a mismatch between skills and jobs that represents a waste of talent. The quality of internships provided needs to be improved permitting young people to gain qualifications which lead to paid positions, as well as ensuring equal opportunities for young people in the periphery and in urban centres and special support to young mothers.

Recalling the risk of a **brain drain** and the negative consequences for young people's countries of origin, Parliament calls upon Member States to explore and develop youth retention strategies in countries and regions prone to outward migration. They are urged to i) eliminate the cases where a disparity in income levels between young men and young women, ii) ensure decent employment rights and social security, and iii) guarantee the total transferability of acquired social benefits so as not to jeopardise welfare protection for young workers who have opted for mobility. Parliament also suggests promoting an entrepreneurial culture among young people by improving communication on entrepreneurship, by supporting the development of European structures and networks to that end, and by encouraging young people to become self-employed and to use microcredit and microfinance tools. Parliament also supports the need for synergy between the worlds of education and industry and for advanced forms of integration between universities and businesses.

Health, well-being and environment: Parliament underlines the need to take into account the specific vulnerability of young people and children when formulating consumer and environmental policies. Sustainable actions are required in this area. It calls on the Member States to include in their curricula appropriate forms of education on the prevention of health- and environment-related risks. It also underlines the need to take into account the specific vulnerability of young people and children when formulating consumer and environmental policies and stresses the need to ensure a high level of protection of young consumers through actions such as information and education campaigns. It highlights the importance of further combating the use of drugs and alcohol and tobacco-related harm and other forms of addiction, including gambling, and of taking measure to combat the exposure of young people to violent scenes in the media. The role of sport is emphasised as a whole set of activities promoting healthy lifestyles for young people. Parliament draws attention to the continuing high level of under-age pregnancies and calls on the Commission and the Member States to make young people aware of and educate them about this problem.

Participation: Parliament strongly encourages promoting the participation of young people and youth organisations at all levels (local, national and international) in the formulation of general policies and, in particular, of youth policy and not only that, through ongoing structured dialogue. Parliament underlines the importance of considering the method of youth consultation, so as to ensure that a broad range of views of young people are taken into account. It is in favour of the development of structures where all the actors can work together, equally influence policies and decisions and provide the means needed to create these structures. It stresses the need to involve more, and more diverse, young people, with a view to enhancing

representativeness. It also supports encouraging participation from an early age. It also highlights the need for particular efforts to encourage young people living in peripheral and rural areas and in poor neighbourhoods to actively participate in European activities.

Creativity and culture: Parliament is surprised at the lack of any explicit reference to cultural issues in the Commission communication. It stresses the importance of supporting and recognising youth culture when the Member States allocate funds, as this is essential for developing young people's creativity. It welcomes the proposal included in the Council resolution to promote specialised training for youth workers in culture, new media and intercultural competences. It also calls on the Commission and Council to devise a **European youth pass** so that young people can gain access to cultural institutions throughout the EU **at a very low charge**. Member States are urged to facilitate access to new technologies in order to boost young people's creativity and capacity for innovation and generate interest in culture, the arts and science.

Voluntary activities: Parliament takes the view that youth volunteering should be supported but that voluntary activities should not replace professional, paid employment opportunities but add value to society. It calls for the introduction and mutual recognition of a 'European Volunteer Pass' as an adjunct to the existing 'European Youth Pass'; this pass would provide a record of the voluntary work performed by children and young people and could be submitted to potential employers as proof of a qualification.

Social inclusion: Parliament holds the view that, against the background of ageing societies, intergenerational equity is a key challenge. It stresses also the need to develop more outreach programmes for marginalised groups, such as young immigrants and all those with special needs (the disabled, young people who need to be reintegrated into society after a period of imprisonment, homeless people, those in casual employment, etc.). It recommends that priority be given in each Member State to **ensuring that no young minors are denied access to social care**. It also calls for resolute action to be taken to combat all forms of extremism.

Youth and the world: Parliament recommends direct development aid to measures for the benefit of young people and to combat drug use and trafficking in developing countries. It favours fostering general interest activities that create a sense of responsibility among young people, such as volunteering for climate change, for development or for humanitarian aid. It welcomes the opportunities that the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps will give young people and it encourages the Commission to further explore the possibility of enhancing international cooperation activities in youth volunteering. It calls on the Member States to develop exchanges and twinning schemes with third countries and communities in order to promote intercultural dialogue and encourage young people to embark on common projects. Lastly, it calls for the improvement and extensive implementation of the Erasmus Mundus programme.

EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering

2009/2159(INI) - 10/09/2012

Council Resolution 2009/C 311/01 on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) requires an EU Youth Report to be drawn up at the end of each three-year cycle, with a dual objective: (i) to evaluate the progress made towards the overall objectives of the EU Youth Strategy, and (ii) to serve as a basis for establishing a set of priorities for the coming work cycle.

This Communication presents a draft EU Youth Report to be agreed upon by the Council. It recalls that the Strategy is complementary to the Youth on the Move flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, as well as the agenda for new skills and jobs.

The EU Youth Strategy addresses young people's needs and opportunities in eight fields of action:

- Education & training
- Employment & entrepreneurship
- Social inclusion
- Health & well-being
- Volunteering
- Participation
- Culture & creativity
- Youth & the world

Implementation of all fields of action is examined in detail in the report.

The report states that the implementation of the first three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy, covering 2010-2012, demonstrated that it is both lasting and flexible as a framework for a whole range of actions – by the Commission, Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The strategy, with its cross-sectoral and all-inclusive perspective, has been greeted with interest and has inspired not only EU Member States, but also countries in the larger Europe and the world beyond.

The EU Youth Strategy has served as a vehicle to forge links between fields of action, including employment & entrepreneurship, education & training and social inclusion, to develop multi-faceted solutions in support of young people. This has proved relevant in looking for answers to address the current high levels of youth unemployment and to support the growing number of young people who are not in employment, education or training. Youth work has contributed to young people's development and has the potential to do more in all fields of action.

The report stresses that participation of young people in democratic life is central to youth policy.

The first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2012): nearly all Member States report that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced existing priorities at national level, with several Member States emphasising its direct impact. Lithuania, for example, mentions the strategy as a guiding document for developing its own National Youth Policy Programme; Austria mentions that the link between youth policy and labour market policies has been strengthened, and dialogue with youth has been further developed in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-sectoral approach at all levels in implementing the youth policy framework. Most Member States report having a national youth strategy or a cross-sectoral plan targeting youth. All but two Member States have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or some other institutionalised mechanism. While some National Youth Reports set a good example, such groups often consist of different actors and stakeholders in the 'core' youth policy field, with little or no involvement from other government ministries, thereby limiting their cross-sectoral nature.

The next cycle (2013-2015): the priorities for the next cycle are to be adopted on the basis of the current EU Youth Report. The EU presidencies focused in the first cycle on 'employment and entrepreneurship' and 'participation'. The EU and National Youth Reports confirm the robustness and relevance of the EU Youth Strategy and its two overall objectives: (i) creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and (ii) promoting citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. Both tie in well with Europe 2020, the Annual Growth Survey 2012, and Youth on the Move and the Youth Opportunities Initiative.

The priorities for the next work cycle should reflect the current overall priorities and activities under Europe 2020. Youth employment will remain high on the EU agenda. Member States should in particular target young people who are not in employment, education or training, and make full use of available EU funding. They should undertake more efforts to increase young people's access to work, apprenticeships and traineeship contracts and improve their employability. The **cross-cutting tools developed under the EU Youth Strategy** can serve to foster partnerships between different actors involved in delivering support to young people in transition, including employment services, education providers, youth work, social services, employers and young people themselves.

The Commission intends to propose by the end of 2012 a Council recommendation on **guidelines to establish youth guarantees**, which are schemes to be designed by Member States to ensure that all young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed (or leaving formal education).

The situation on the labour market and unemployment has related social effects. For the coming years, the **strategy should increasingly focus on the consequences of the current crisis and its effects on social inclusion** and the health & well-being of young people. To this purpose, it needs to step up its focus on participation in democratic and societal activities, as well as build on youth work in developing young people's life skills, their overall personal development and a sense of belonging to the society in which they live. In order to further its contribution to Europe 2020, the second three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2013-2015) should continue to be placed on employment and entrepreneurship, increasing access to work, along with developing the innovative and creative capacities of young people. It should increasingly focus on social inclusion, health and well-being. The future EU programme targeting young people will contribute towards achieving these objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.

The Commission will **develop the initiative of the 'Youth on the Move Card'** in order to make it easier for young people to be mobile across Europe. It will also reach out to, and facilitate dialogue with, all young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, through the new interactive tools of the **European Youth Portal**. Youth policy will also explore measures to foster the creative and innovative potential of young people when attempting to tackle challenges related to employment, employability and inclusion.

The Youth in Action programme and the future EU programme targeting youth will play a particular role in supporting these initiatives.