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Part I

Executive Summary

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This "Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe" has three main focal points: youth conditions, youth policies and youth workers. The reports compiled on these three aspects have been organised into two separate volumes. The first volume contains, besides this introductory summary, three general, cross-country, reports pertaining, respectively, to each of the three above-mentioned focal points. The second volume contains the national reports pertaining to youth conditions; the third contains the national reports on youth policies and the national portraits concerning youth workers.

This introductory summary concentrates on only some of the main aspects explored in the three general reports and in the national reports, and offers some additional policy reflections and recommendations. More specifically, this text focuses on selected aspects which are of particular interest for the Directorate General for Education and Culture, which explicitly requested their further development in this summary. These aspects are: education and training; the labour market; wellbeing, health and values; organisational and political participation; the "European dimension".

2. YOUTH CONDITIONS AND YOUTH POLICIES

2.1 Preliminary Remarks

Contemporary societies are characterised by an extension over time of the permanence of people in the youth condition, that is to say in a condition in which biological and intellectual adulthood is not matched with social adulthood. Today, like fifty years ago, a person is perceived to be an adult member of a society when he/she has finished his/her school attendance, possesses a job, has left the family of origin creating a new one and, possibly, has children. As a consequence, in the past youth lasted few years because most people, around the age of fifteen had, at least, finished school and found a job. Today, on the contrary, many persons in their twenties are still attending school and do not get started in work. Moreover, in several European countries the age at first marriage, or at first cohabitation, has strongly increased in the last twenty years, and the same holds for the age at which women have their first child. This makes it difficult to determine with certainty the individual life span during which a man or women can be considered as young. In a conventional way, we have decided to define as "young people" those aged from 15 to 24 years.

Structural aspects of youth conditions currently vary significantly within the European Union and, in addition, they are not very well known. This also applies to the cultural aspects of youth conditions. By and large, it can be said that, despite the fact that several surveys have been carried out over the last thirty years on the cultural characteristics of younger generations in many European countries, a general picture of this topic is not yet available. As a consequence it is rather difficult for the European Commission to formulate any suggestion in order to improve the living conditions of youth in European countries. This study attempts to provide such a general overview, including a series of quantitative indicators of demographic, social, economic and cultural aspects of youth condition in the fifteen countries currently belonging to the EU (plus Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein).

The concept of youth in a policy context is the product of national and historical traditions. In European countries with a long historical tradition for youth work and youth policy there is a marked tendency to define youth policy as policies directed towards "young people" which includes some or all cohorts of children, and sometimes even expand into age groups beyond the age of 24. In other European countries, the generic term "young people" is not used at all in policy contexts, and in these countries there is a separation between child policy and youth policy. Because of the fundamentally different youth concepts – the narrow one which excludes children and the wide-ranging one – it is very difficult to compare youth policy across Europe.

These differences in the definition of youth are of importance when examining the two main approaches to youth policy in Europe: youth as a human resource vs. youth as a problem. In countries where youth is chiefly perceived as (social) minors, there is a tendency to consider young people as a potential problem, as being in danger, as people that must be protected against threats to their development. In countries in which youth policy is based on the narrower and more adult point of view, there seems to be a tendency to regard youth as a resource.

Another problematic aspect of comparing national youth policies is the differences in the conceptualisation of "policy" as either a dynamic or a static concept. These variations in the understanding of policy are correlated to national traditions. In countries with a long tradition for a national youth policy and an extensive youth sector – primarily countries in Northern Continental Europe – the static youth policy concept is predominant. In countries where a co-ordinated youth policy has been introduced rather late, and in countries where major revisions of youth policies are being implemented – the Mediterranean countries, the British Isles, and Denmark – the youth policy concept is more dynamic and emphasis is put on recent changes in youth work, in youth provisions and on the interaction between policy actors.

2.2 Education and Training

Education is a central part of youth identity for a number of important reasons. In all European countries the great majority of 15-to-19-year-olds are enrolled in education and training institutions, and even at later ages high percentages (though not necessarily majorities) of youths continue to be engaged in activities which increase their formal qualifications. Indeed, the relationship between being young and being a student is so strong that when the convergence of the two situations is missing it is commonly construed to be a problem. Most young people place a good deal of trust in educational institutions and feel that schooling provides an efficacious preparation for adulthood; indeed, in many (but not all) European countries the majority of youths feel that schools prepare them "very well" for what lies ahead. Education and training is viewed by them as the most important channel for accumulating skills and credentials that are crucial for an accomplished future, including a well-paying, secure job. And this is usually true: educational qualifications are perhaps the most important means of achieving full membership in the "grown-up" community, especially as regards access to advantageous occupations and class positions.

In many ways the social importance of schools has increased over time, in that their role as agencies of socialisation has been augmented by the decline of other important agencies (religious authorities, government), the changing role of the family (working parents who dedicate less time to children, increased autonomy conferred to older children in the household, etc.), the inadequacy of emergent agencies (such as the mass media), the wider variety of tasks which educational institutions are expected to carry out beyond the transmission of basic knowledge and skills (youth counselling, sex education, conveyance of anti-drug and other social "messages", etc.) and, especially, the increasing awareness of the role of human capital in determining the performance of national economies in a context of globalisation. All industrial societies during the last half-century have enacted wide-reaching school reforms aimed at increasing participation in schooling and training schemes.

As a consequence, an increasing proportion of youths continue their education beyond compulsory schooling; young people's engagement in educational/training schemes is increasingly lengthy; a decreasing proportion of youths leave school early, thus failing to achieve "minimal" credential and skills required for satisfactory placement in the workforce. In addition, educational qualifications generally improve individuals' chances of attaining prestigious occupations; less-educated youths are more likely to be unemployed or to be plagued by intermittent joblessness.

Despite these common themes and developments, substantial differences continue to exist among European countries as regards educational ideas, participation, opportunities and effects.

In some countries education is valued for the specific vocational skills with which it equips young people; elsewhere, education is supposed to confer general knowledge upon students; still elsewhere education is used for distinguishing students on the basis of ability or learning potential.

The minimum age of school leaving ranges from 14 years to 18 years; in most European countries compulsory education lasts until the age of 16. In principle, the longer the duration of compulsory schooling the higher the equality of educational opportunities; and, in fact, countries with lengthier compulsory schooling also report higher proportions of students among youth populations. Completion rates also vary significantly from country to country: for upper secondary education, rates go from little more to 70% to virtually 100%; tertiary education completion rates exhibit a similar differentiation.

In general, despite efforts to democratise school systems, inequalities in educational opportunities continue to exist. Moreover, educational opportunities vary extensively from country to country, as do the patterns of association between such opportunities and individual labour market outcomes. Such differences appear to depend on the institutional arrangements and operation of national school systems. Even though there has been a certain degree of convergence among countries as regards basic school structures, differences relating to education systems' standardisation, stratification, vocational specificity and expansion of tertiary education deeply affect individuals' success on the labour market.

The longer duration of many youths' educational/training commitments has contributed to a heightening of career and life expectations, which are not always satisfied by economic and social reality (especially in Southern Europe). Individuals thus potentially face a new age ("post-adolescence") which is characterised, among other things, by a waiting period which entails the risk of their being less able to adequately play adult roles and face adult responsibilities. This risk involves the issue of denying youths their citizenship rights, but also has important negative implications at a systemic level.

In fact, long-term demographic developments in Europe have determined a reduction in the size of the youth cohort relative to that of the working-age population, so that in the future the viability of economies and welfare arrangements will place an increasing burden on today's young people, and more specifically on their productive skills and on the duration of their careers (i.e., tax contribution periods). In other words, it is imperative to reconcile the need to maximise young people's educational qualifications and the need to get young people working as soon as possible (in order to face both problems regarding both the establishment of young people's adult identity and demographic disequilibrium).

Although other factors – such as employers, structure of the economy, labour market legislation,

salary and wage schemes, professional organisations, trade unions – undoubtedly affect the association between education and occupational destinations (and transition to adulthood in general), it is possible to identify the following imperatives for an efficacious educational policy aimed at reducing inequalities stemming from social origin:

- constrain early-school leaving and, in general, young people's attitudes and behaviours which hinder their attaining a minimal level of educational qualifications;
- encourage the acquisition of advanced levels of learning and skills among all young people;
- achieve a more secure connection between educational/training outcomes and job market opportunities.

Although educational policy is an "implicit" component of youth policy, it is less so than other sector policies (e.g., housing, labour market, family affairs, and other domains which are not youth-specific), in that education has always involved young people in an almost exclusive manner. In this sense one may apply the "problem" vs. "resource" views of youth to educational policy. In the case of young people interrupting their educational itineraries and potentially becoming a burden for the community, policy assumes a "youth as problem" approach; in the case of improving overall qualification levels, youth is a "resource" to be developed for the benefit of society. Both approaches may involve greater spending, as implied by the significant variations which may be observed in different countries in educational spending per student or the educational spending/Gap ratio.

Discouraging early school-leaving is a particularly important policy goal, in that under-educated youths have never been so at risk of unemployment in particular and social exclusion in general. Indeed, fighting high drop-out rates in post-compulsory education is already a major strategy adopted by most European countries, through "second-chance" schooling, more robust counselling and placement services, life-long learning programmes, financial assistance, compensation of educational deficits, arrangements for the formal recognition of informally acquired qualifications (usually through work experience, but also relating, for instance, to foreign language skills or computer proficiency), peer education, projects for the identification of specific at-risk categories (usually specific ethnic, social and regional groups). Differentiation and "flexibilisation" of existing educational institutions – so as to widen the "supply" of educational opportunities and therefore the probability that potential school-leavers will find at least one educational/training opportunity that appeals to their interests and aspirations – is another means for encouraging skill acquisition. Another important objective involves the removal of the stigma which denotes vocational training programmes, which in some countries are seen as second-class education vis-à-vis general academic schooling.

The *overall improvement of the quality of schooling* is another major strategy pursued by all

European countries, albeit by different means: redefinition of curricula, recruitment and on-the-job training of instructors, modernisation of teaching techniques and styles, introduction of information technologies, and "innovation" in general. School systems which have a structure privileging local decision-making (and grounded therefore, one presumes, in local networks of interacting employers, political authorities and school officials) and which are scarcely stratified are much more efficient and egalitarian than those directly ruled only by central governments and with higher secondary schools fragmented in several educational tracks. Since what counts most, in terms of access to labour market and determination of the quality of a country's productive factors, is precisely the proportion of people with higher qualifications, action should be taken to encourage reform of centralised educational systems.

Of course, the improvement of the quality of education necessarily means establishing a stronger *link between education/training and the labour market*. To a certain degree, this entails an obfuscation of the dividing line between two heretofore separate phases of life – full-time "study" and "work" – in order to facilitate, or indeed even render imperceptible, the transition from one to the other. Today, the quantity of youth who engage simultaneously in both education/training and in work experiences (including work/study programmes) is quite small: common (20-35% of older teenagers) in countries which have apprenticeship programmes, a dual system or widespread part-time employment (Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), but less – often much less – than 10% elsewhere. Apprenticeship or dual systems arguably contribute to young people's employability. Other initiatives include the development of double-qualifying pathways which combine general education and technical and vocational training, thus permitting multiple exit points and transfers from one track to another; the introduction of work-based learning and part-time employment in general education; programmes based on alternating-training contracts, and so on.

All of these strategies, of course, require that vocational/work components of education be relevant to labour market needs, and this usually means: devolution of tasks to regional and/or sectoral levels; close involvement of employers, worker organisations and other bodies in their design; constant re-definition and up-dating of skill profiles to ensure the attractiveness of training schemes and effective integration in the job market).

Policy thinking and specific studies must also turn to other challenges to equal opportunity in education and training, which were not specifically part of the scope of this study. One such challenge is that of extension of educational opportunities to children of *immigrants*: significant and increasing flows of foreigners from outside Europe have introduced (and will continue to do so) increasing numbers of second-generation immigrants into European schools, and this means that there has emerged a new at-risk category of youths, the social integration of whom poses

new problems. Another continuing challenge concerns *gender differences*: although women now participate in education to a greater degree than men and have subsequently enjoyed a more pronounced improvement in their employment prospects (and although men contribute to domestic and family chores to a greater degree than in the past), many educational arrangements continue to be more suited to typically male labour-market itineraries; also, there continue to exist significant gender-related dissimilarities in choice of tertiary-level specialisation; in addition, the greater educational role which information technology and computer-aided learning will in all likelihood play in the future may harm women's educational opportunities if extant, socially determined gender-differentiated approaches to use of technology are not corrected. A potential risk for primary and secondary schooling is that of *extra-curricular overload*, i.e., taking advantage of educational institutions' status as socialisation agencies in order to burden them with initiatives that do not strictly relate to knowledge and skill acquisition: sex education, anti-racism campaigns, health awareness, etc. Finally, another issue toward which European institutions should be particularly sensitive concerns the monitoring of participation in *European educational exchange programmes*: are they benefiting youths of all social origins, or better yet more disadvantaged youths, or are they being accessed primarily by youths coming from privileged backgrounds?

2.3 Youths and the Labour Market

To have a stable job or, alternatively, to live in a country with high rates of job mobility and good employment opportunities, represents a crucial step in the process of transition into adulthood. Of course, to have a job is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of economic independence. Earnings from occupation should guarantee an acceptable level of living. Alternatively, transfers from welfare system should complement incomes that young people are able to gain on the job. Unfortunately, during the last twenty years most European young people have experienced a worsening of their position in the labour market compared to that of adult cohorts.

In fact, both activity and employment rates among European young people have declined over the last two decades, while unemployment rates have increased. But what counts more is that, with the exception of the United Kingdom, employment rates of people aged 15-24 are much lower and, as a consequence, unemployment rates are much higher than those regarding people aged 25-64. Moreover longitudinal data shows that, *coeteris paribus*, the duration of first time job searches last longer among younger generation than among older ones.

This situation improves when one examines current rates of long-term unemployment (i.e., unemployment spells of 12 consecutive months or more). This experience is much more common among adult people than youths. Yet, the opposite holds in the case of repeated spells of unemployment. They are more widespread among young people at the beginning of their work career. In addition, longitudinal analyses seem to show that the experience of multiple unemployment spells of short length (though confined to the beginning of the work careers) is increasingly spreading across age cohorts.

Education and gender do affect rates of labour market participation and the risks and duration of unemployment among European youths. Generally speaking, better-educated young people display higher activity and employment rates. They also show lower risks of unemployment and a shorter duration of unemployment spells. Mediterranean countries (especially Italy) seem to be an exception to this regularity, at least in the case of first-time job seekers. Educational qualifications play a much smaller role in determining the rapidity of finding a first job. With the exception of the United Kingdom, young European women are still less likely to enter labour market and more prone to unemployment.

Over the last two decades, the proportion of European young people hired using so-called "atypical" contracts (fixed term contracts, temporary contracts, part-time contracts, work training contracts, franchise workers and the like) has increased significantly. This means that the level of the employment protection enjoyed by the new entrants in the labour market is significantly smaller than that experienced by people who got started in the 1950-80 period. The same holds in the case of "black" or "grey" jobs. The rate of people in the so-called "informal economy" is growing across generations.

Of course, intergenerational disparities in the risk of finding unstable workplaces is much stronger in those countries (mid-European and Mediterranean ones) where the degree of employment protection is very high and where legal or contractual rules limit the use of the atypical contracts to people in their first job. The same is true in the case of "black" or "grey" jobs. The stronger a country's employment protection for adults, the higher the likelihood of its youths of ending up in informal economy jobs. It is not clear whether people starting their work career from weakly protected jobs are entrapped in those positions for their whole working life or can move towards more stable occupational positions. The few analyses recently carried out using panel data seem to point in the latter direction. As in the case of labour market participation and risks of unemployment, the probability of getting started with atypical contracts or black jobs is lower for people with high educational qualifications and higher for women.

Today, as in the past, young people at the beginning of their work career earn less than adult people with a longer work experience. Moreover the income from work increases as young people become older. The problem is that the earnings of youths relative to adults are falling across cohorts in many EU countries.

The condition of relative economic deprivation of young people is exacerbated by the above-mentioned increasing rates of unemployment and the lower generosity of the welfare system. In some EU countries unemployment benefits for people looking for first job have been reduced or the eligibility rules to them have been render more restrictive. At any rate, social protections in most EU countries favour young people less than adult or old ones.

Rising rates of unemployment, reduction of transfers from the state and a fall in the relative income provided by work can explain why, controlling for the level of education, the proportion of young people living with their family of origin in their late twenties is increasing across generation in most EU countries.

The reports regarding youth policies stress that several EU countries lack labour market measures specifically devoted to improving the employment prospects of young people. In most cases employment barriers faced by youths are dealt with through policies aimed at a general reduction of a country's unemployment rates. However, in such cases it is also possible to sort out some measures that should affect mainly the labour market position of young people.

A first group of policies directly intended to raise the rates of youths' employment consists of measures *reducing the costs of youth labour*. Three main ways to arrive at this result have been singled out: *a)* reductions of wage below contractual minimum for young people involved in special employment programmes. This is the case for: apprenticeship contracts in Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom; work training contracts in Belgium and France; new workers scheme in the United Kingdom; *b)* reductions of social security contributions paid by employers for young workers (work training contracts in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal); *c)* paying wage subsidies to employers who hire young workers (Portugal).

Little evidence is available on the capacity of these policies of creating net new jobs. Yet, the measures allowing a reduction of minimum wage for apprenticeship contracts and those reducing social security contributions paid by employers seem to be most effective. As regards the impact on the subsequent work career of people involved in the programmes described above, it seems that apprenticeship contracts based on alternation of work experience and vocational training in educational institution (like those provided by Germany dual system of education) are the most successful.

As mentioned earlier, many European governments have introduced atypical contracts in order to *reduce the negative, rigidity-inducing effects of strict employment protection* on youth

unemployment. It seems that atypical contracts succeed in increasing chances of young people rapidly finding a first job. Despite this positive result, it is rather unclear whether poorly protected jobs lead to subsequent stable employment relations or whether they trap people into insecure labour relations. Lack of longitudinal data make it difficult to answer this question. Moreover cross-sectional surveys indicate that the proportion of people in atypical contracts that have been able to arrive at permanent occupational positions vary a lot among different EU countries. Italy displays the highest conversion rate from temporary jobs to permanent contracts, Spain the lowest. If conversion rates are low, a further problem arises regarding intergenerational inequalities. Occupational positions of most adult workers are tenured while, on the contrary, young people are trapped for long periods, potentially for the whole of their working life, in poorly protected employment relations. A fairer solution would be a gradual increase of labour market flexibility involving all age cohorts.

In many EU countries, rules regarding eligibility of young people to unemployment subsidies have become more stringent over the last two decades in an effort to implement *"supply-side" measures*. More precisely, unemployed young people have been asked to increase their personal commitment in finding a job. Yet, the reduction of unemployment subsidies for young people have been usually combined with active labour policies based on placement, counselling, guidance and training services. Denmark, Finland and the United Kingdom are good examples of this new way of combining restriction of social protection with wide sets of active labour policies explicitly aimed at young people. Apparently these policies are successful.

Self-employment support represents another interesting measure to help young people to find a job. Usually this kind of programmes consist of training courses to develop entrepreneurial skills and business start-up loans. Some interesting measures intended to help young people in moving to self-employment can be found in Sweden and Italy. Unfortunately little is known about the effectiveness of these programmes beyond the immediate short term.

Despite the high degree of variability among EU countries in the youth's positions in the labour market and the related policies, we think that some common European targets on this topic can be devised. In our opinion, *raising the employability of European young people* is the most important of such common goals. On the basis of available knowledge, it seems that training programmes based on alternation of work experience and vocational education in specific institution are the most suitable and effective tools to increase the chances of an easy transition from school to work. However, these programmes should have a short duration (from 3 to 6 months). This characteristic is needed in order to avoid an excessive permanence of young people in the educational processes and a ready adaptation to changes of a country's economy.

A high level of employability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to find a job. In fact the chances of young people to be employed depends also on the labour market regulation. There is room for a second common EU goal here, namely for *the reduction of the level of aggregate unemployment among youths*. To achieve this result, policies aimed at diminishing payroll costs of new labour market entrants have proved to be rather effective. For purposes of intergenerational equity, we think that measures reducing social security costs paid by employers should be preferred to measures setting youths salaries below the contractual minima. As already stressed above, the introduction of atypical contracts has also succeeded in reducing risks of youth unemployment. But, again for equity reasons, we suggest that policies aimed at a general increase in the labour market flexibility – i.e., flexibility achieved by weakening the level of employment protection both for young and adult people – should be preferred to those entailing burdens exclusively for youth. At least, measures raising the conversion rate of poorly protected jobs into more stable positions should be implemented.

Rates of youth aggregate unemployment can further be reduced by policies acting on the supply side of the labour market. In this case we think that measures reducing level of unemployment benefits for young people or introducing more stringent criteria of eligibility to them, could be accepted at two conditions: increasing and improving placement, counselling, guidance and training services; extending unemployment benefits to people looking for their first job. Of course, the extension of supports for youth self-employment could also be useful, at least in countries where small firms prevail over large size ones.

A third common EU goal regarding youth position in the labour market should be a *reduction of gender disparities*. Among young generations of most EU countries, *educational* disparities between men and women have disappeared. Yet, these disparities are still strong in the labour market and can be observed in occupational destinations. Education being equal, young women are over-represented either among unemployed (this is mainly the case for Central European countries and Mediterranean ones) or among the employed through atypical, namely part-time contracts (and this is mainly the case for the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries). Moreover, across all over EU, young women are under-represented in the professional positions and in the self-employment, while they are concentrated among white collar and routine non-manual employees. Gender inequality in the world of work derives more often from cultural bias, informal rules regarding the workings of the family and the gender division of domestic care and lack of welfare provisions regarding motherhood protection and care services for early childhood and elderly disabled people. As a consequence, it is mainly on the side of education and welfare measures that one has to operate in order to achieve greater equality between men and women in the labour market.

2.4 Wellbeing, Health, Values

The economic situation of young people tends to reflect the relative roles of the *labour market*, *family* and *social transfers* in different countries. In the first and largest cluster of countries – Austria, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden and the Netherlands – the labour market is the most important source of income followed by family support and then social transfers. In a second cluster of countries – Denmark and the United Kingdom – the labour market is the most important source of support followed by social transfers and then the family[1]. In a third cluster of countries – Belgium, Spain, Greece and Italy – the family is the most important source of support followed by the labour market and social transfers. Social transfers are very low in the last three of these countries. In Finland there is almost equal support from each source. We could say therefore that there is a contrast between family-centred and labour-market centred countries in terms of economic support. This is related to the patterns of family formation which we discuss below. Countries where young people are most likely to live in families with financial difficulties are Spain, Greece, Ireland and Portugal, although individual poverty is most often found in Germany, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands, which probably reflects more the patterns of leaving home.

Fertility is dropping everywhere, both among the 15-19 year olds and among the 20-24 year olds, but this drop is especially sharp in Spain and in Italy (which are also among the family-centred countries in terms of economic support). Whilst in general, cohabitation and births outside marriage are increasing, there are important differences in family formation in the different parts of Europe. In the Northern Protestant countries, leaving home and forming independent households is regarded as a normal part of the transition to adulthood, but is not necessarily associated with getting married. Cohabiting with a partner is common and fertility is separated from marriage. In the Southern, Catholic countries as well as Ireland, having children occurs only after marriage and getting married is seen as the occasion to set up an independent household. That is why young people are most likely to be still living with their parents in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece. In the Central European countries (including France) cohabiting with partners is common, but marriage is for having children. The main reason for not leaving home, however, is not being able to afford to leave home

The general health of young people in Europe is good and improving, but they are still disproportionately subject to death from particular causes such as traffic and other accidents,

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[1] Calculated by putting together Ela-Elh and F3

violence, suicide and assaults. The life expectancy was highest in Sweden and lowest in Portugal, but there was no simple North/South divide since life expectancy was also high in Spain and rather low in Germany. This is on account of their lack of experience and risky behaviour. Young men are much more at risk of mortality than young women, both from accidents but also from suicide. Drinking as an element of this risky behaviour is particularly high in Sweden, Finland and Denmark where both young men and young women are most likely to report having been drunk. In Ireland it is high among young men. However, Catholic and Orthodox countries such as Greece, Portugal, Belgium but also France this seems less likely to be part of the culture of growing up. Smoking has increased among young people in many countries during the 1990s and is especially high in the UK, France, Austria, Germany and Belgium although there is no information for most countries.

A number of the reports mentioned that many problems affected male and female youth differently, but also migrant and ethnic minority youth more severely than those from the dominant national culture. Poverty, ill health, homelessness were all found more often among ethnic minority/migrant youth.

Attitudes to gender roles are also reflected in these patterns with young people in Portugal, Italy, Austria and Greece being the most conservative and also more homophobic in their attitudes. Young Austrians, Italians and Irish are also likely to see religion as being important. There is not information about abortion from every country, but from those included there is a clear upward trend. This might indicate a lack of appropriate information with regard to sex education or otherwise lack of access to suitable preventatives. Abortion is highest in those countries that are the least family-centred with regard to economic support : the United Kingdom, Denmark and Finland.

Nevertheless, the family is seen as important by most young people in most countries. Highest support for the family comes from Ireland, Italy, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Only one of these are among the these are among the most family-centred countries in terms of economic support and two of them are the least family-centred. Work is most important in Norway, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy and least important in Finland and West Germany. Friends are seen as most important in those countries where young people are most independent from their families: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, but also Ireland.

There is evidence that in general young people are becoming more tolerant on a range of indicators, although in some countries xenophobia has risen in recent years. Xenophobia is higher in Belgium, Germany, Austria, France and lowest in the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland. In general, young people are happiest in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and

Austria and least happy in Italy, Portugal and Germany. There is a general tendency for young people to become more interested in "post-materialist values" concerned with the quality of life rather than "materialist values" associated with economic survival as general levels of affluence rise. However, this was not always the case among European youth, so we might assume that many of them are still mainly concerned about material problems.

It would seem that young people are most in danger from their own behaviour and therefore education, awareness-raising campaigns and preventative measures would be called for, including information or campaigns about the risks of smoking, drinking, traffic accidents as well as sexual education. The availability of counselling services might help to discourage those inclined to suicide. However, since taking and conquering risks is also a part of the *rite de passage* of growing up, youth services should perhaps be prepared to offer some daring and exciting activities to challenge young people – but ones which are less likely to lead to bad health or physical damage. It seems that this is especially a problem for young men. Providing adventurous experiences for young men could also be combined with promoting travel and exchange, especially for the less educated who would not have access to the many exchange programmes offered by educational institutions.

The situation of ethnic and migrant youth should be monitored (something beyond the scope of this report) and their problems addressed in order to avoid widening inequalities associated with race and ethnicity. At the same time, education and awareness-raising campaigns among young people of the dominant cultures could help to mitigate xenophobia and racism, problems which are becoming more prominent in contemporary Europe. This should be a priority for the youth and education services. In these policies, less educated young men should be targeted in particular, since they are the ones most prone to commit acts of xenophobic and racist violence. Youth services could perhaps offer alternative outlets for bonding and aggressive behaviour, as is mentioned above.

It is difficult to suggest a policy for Europe in terms of economic support for young people because there are different traditions for leaving home and family support. To avoid the risk of social exclusion, however, and in order to offer all young people the possibility of integration into society, there should be adequate support services for young people who are not able to rely on support from their families and may also be marginalised in the labour market.

To counteract the dramatically falling birth rates (especially in some countries) there should perhaps be some thought put into policies for helping young people to start families and have children without being significantly economically and socially disadvantaged. There should be particular consideration of the situation of young women. Education, training and working careers have traditionally been designed around men and take a linear form, compatible with

male family roles. However, young women also now want careers along with extended training and education, leading them to postpone childbearing, perhaps indefinitely. Once they step off the education-training-career ladder it is difficult to step back on again. This issue needs addressing so that people can build non-linear careers or have bridges and platforms available so that they can step on and off the ladder without being disadvantaged. Employment careers which offered gates of entry to people throughout their lives and did not discriminate in favour of young people would need to be developed. Child care policies, parental leave policies, along with ways of helping people to integrate families with lengthening educational careers and with various kinds of employment should be considered. This is beyond the scope of youth policies. Policies concerned with promoting flexible employment and life-long learning should also have this dimension built in to them.

2.5 Organisational and Political Participation

Participation in formal associations is considered a key activity in establishing a general level of social integration in terms of democratic citizenship. But there is a marked difference between countries with and without a long and strong tradition for youth associations: in the Mediterranean countries, there is a small but growing number of youth who are organised in youth associations; in the rest of Western Europe, the percentage of youth who are members of youth organisations and associations is higher but not increasing – in Belgium, Denmark, United Kingdom the participation rates among youth is even declining.

The most important type of association concerns sporting activities, where the same pattern can be found: in Mediterranean countries (plus Belgium) less than one-fourth of young people belong to sports associations, whereas Scandinavian countries express the highest rates. Participation in religious and parish-based associations varies: Italy, where 18% of youth report membership in such associations, expresses a participation rate 8 times higher than Belgium's. Membership in explicitly youth-oriented associations involve a very low proportion of youths and the Mediterranean areas displays the weakest participation.

The stable or even declining rate of membership north of the Mediterranean countries changes the conditions for youth policy: The importance of voluntary youth work, that used to play an important role in young people's leisure time, has diminished during the last decades. Young people nowadays are more reluctant to bind themselves to organised communities, they move in a "free space" between various youth scenes and institutions and they are no longer permanently organised. Another consequence is that social networks, which used to help youngsters solve problems, disappear. This creates new demands on youth work and policy. Youth work will

become more difficult and programmes for youth must be flexible and have a short time limit because of the quickly changing youth cultures and interests.

In all the Western European countries, national, regional and local youth councils are emphasised as the major source of political participation and influence of youth. Youth councils – whether they are private umbrella organisations of youth organisations and youth associations or state youth councils that include public youth institutions and state officials – are the traditional channels of co-operation and exchange of information between politicians, authorities and youth. But the traditional model for entrusting influence to youth has shown its limitations in several ways.

Firstly, youth councils only represent a minority of youth. Secondly, the youth councils do not represent a socially balanced section of the youth population. Thirdly, there has been a tendency towards a change in the motivation of membership or participation in organisations: instead of being *members,* young people become *users* of organisations, and many of these users have a pragmatic interest and a consumer attitude towards voluntary organisations rather than an ideological interest in their activities. Fourthly, the persons who represent youth in youth organisations and youth councils are not necessarily young themselves and their knowledge of the interests of the young members may be rather limited.

This kind of criticism of youth associations, youth organisations and youth councils has – with the exception of the Mediterranean countries – led to the introduction of new modes of youth participation; not as alternatives to the youth council model, but on an experimental basis and as supplementary models of influence: youth parliaments, workshops and commissions, and information on and from youth.

However, there is a marked tendency indicating that the Southern European countries, in which the level of participation in voluntary organisations and associations is low – Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy – are also countries in which there are few – if any – experiments with alternative forms of youth participation. Apparently, in these countries it is the aim to raise the rate of organisational membership, to strengthen the traditional representative youth organisations and associations, and finally to consolidate the co-operation between the authorities and the third sector.

Countries such as Iceland, Denmark, Ireland, Liechtenstein, and Scotland have established national youth parliaments, while Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have instituted local city councils of youth or regional youth parliaments. In some countries this of kind of youth parliamentary bodies are the results of general elections among youth and in some cases they have been given limited decision-making authority and their own budget.

In other countries – Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein – the search for alternative forms of co-operation between youth and the authorities has resulted in national *ad hoc* co-operative bodies or workshops, in which youth or representatives of youth associations meet with either civil servants or politicians with the purpose of exchanging ideas on youth policy.

Norway and Austria have established national advisory groups of youth, and other countries – Germany, Finland, Norway, Austria – have started using statistical data, survey data and qualitative data on youth as indirect ways of making youth heard.

Only limited information is available on youth's participation in the traditional political processes – as party members, as voters in European, national, regional or local elections, as candidates for political parties, or as members of representative bodies: Parliaments, regional or local councils. Information from selected countries suggests that young people – especially those voting for the first time – have a lower turnout than older age groups, and that the representation of young adults as members of national or regional parliaments and of local elected bodies is disproportionally low. Comparable data shows that membership in political associations or trade unions involves a very small portion of youths, with the notable exception of Scandinavian countries. Even "discussion of political matters with friends" is a frequent occurrence only for a minority of young people. Another significant indicator of political participation stems from self-placement on the left-right political spectrum. In many countries – notably, the Mediterranean ones, but Austria and Luxembourg as well – over one fourth of young people "don't know" or refuse to reveal their position on the political scale.

These varying levels of political participation and their underlying patterns are reflected in young people's level of trust toward political institutions. Trust is relatively low (30-35%) in Mediterranean countries – such as Spain, Italy, and Portugal – but in other countries – such as Finland and Great Britain – as well. The national parliament enjoys high levels of trust in selected central European and some Scandinavian countries. In any case, the national parliament is by no means the most trustworthy national institution among youth.

Limited political participation – voting, membership of political parties, of youth associations and organisations, and representation in decision-making bodies – is understood as a major youth problem in most Western European countries except the Mediterranean countries in which there is a growing societal participation among youth. The declining political engagement and traditional societal participation among youth is perceived as a threat to the future of the representative democracy, and a series of initiatives has been launched to counteract this tendency. In a number of countries – the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Austria, Luxembourg – the political participation of youth has become a major policy area and several programmes have been initiated at both national and local levels; some of which have

been given prominence as "good examples" of youth policy: the Youth Policy in a Municipal Perspective Programme from Denmark; the Tele-democracy Project from Finland; the Porsgrunn Model, the Youth Forum for Democracy and the Youth Parliament from Norway; the Youth Municipality of the Year Award from Sweden; and the Youth Consultative Council from Portugal.

It is difficult to propose measures or initiatives that would be meaningful to implement on a European level. Research on the political participation of youth show that young people's political interests – in general – are governed by the principle of proximity: local politics engender much more debate and participation among youth than national or European politics do. Therefore, initiatives with the purpose of enhancing the political participation of youth should primarily be rooted in the local interests and the local problems of youth.

Hence, the role of the EU in this matter should be supporting existing and future experiments with active participation of youth in the democratic process. This kind of support could have the form of the dissemination of experiences from programmes and projects, exchange of ideas on this matter, a data base of programmes and knowledge on the political participation of youth, comparative research on the political behaviour of youth, networks of local experts on youth's societal participation, research on "what works?" in increasing young people's participation at the local level, etc.

2.6 The European Dimension

Empirical data from youth research demonstrate that young people are still deeply rooted in their life-world contexts and do not regard their future as being dependent on European unification. The majority of young people continues to be bound to their local contexts and to their national perspectives, cultural habits and lifestyles. Young Scandinavians and Germans have the most sceptical view of the EU and the EU- institutions, whereas there seems to be a more positive "feeling" toward European citizenship in Southern European countries. Important geographical and educational differences can be observed in relation to the meaning the European Union has for young people: critical to sceptical in the North as well as in Germany and Austria and positive to optimistic in the South as well as in Ireland.

Youth's potential for geographical mobility is measured by indicators on the knowledge of foreign languages, on the travel activities and by their disposition to study or work abroad.

In Luxembourg, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, young people speak at most one or two foreign languages. Young Belgians and Germans also express high rates of speaking one language other than their mother tongue. There is still a quite large proportion of young

people who speak no other language than their mother tongue, especially in the Southern European and English-speaking countries. Given the prominence of English as an "international" language, the attitude that foreigners should learn to speak English rather than British citizens having to learn a foreign language persists. There is a strong link between knowledge of foreign languages and the dispositions of young people to geographical mobility. The possibility of travelling to any place in Europe is the idea that European youngsters choose the most when they define the meaning that the European Union has for them, exception made for the British, Spanish and Greek.

Television is the source of information that has contributed the most to young peoples knowledge of the European Union. Schools and universities are the second most important source. A stronger combination of information sources is to be found in the Nordic countries, especially in Sweden. It is interesting to note that youth and general population surveys show a large discrepancy between the relative low knowledge about the EU and low acceptance of its institutions, on the one hand, and, on the other, the growing significance this institutions have for everyday life of the European citizens.

3. Recommendations for European-Level Youth Policy

Improving European Citizenship and Attitudes Towards the EU. Considering the analysed tendencies about the meaning the EU has for young people in Europe, especially the sceptical attitudes to be observed in Northern European countries, a first priority of European youth policy should be seen in the reinforcement of *European awareness and European citizenship.* This includes improving EU policies in the following dimensions: better information for young people on European issues and policies as well as upon EU youth-relevant activities and programmes; participation of young people in policy-making processes and co-operation between EU institutions and relevant national actors.

Young people in Europe receive information about the EU mainly from television, secondly from schools and universities, thirdly from newspapers and magazines and then from other data sources. Youth associations and youth organisations do not play any role as information sources about the EU. Since secondary schools reach a very broad segment of young people in all European countries, it would be important to improve knowledge of secondary school teachers upon European issues and EU youth-relevant programmes. With this purpose the European Commission should develop (together with national educational and youth policy authorities) specific information and qualification programmes so that teachers can act as qualified

mediators of activities and chances offered by such programmes. Something similar should be conceived for youth workers and other practitioners working with young people. Furthermore, in co-operation with the EU programme national co-ordination offices and relevant youth organisations in each country, attractive and up-to-date information packages, home pages and other electronic information means (e.g., electronic bulletin boards, magazines, etc.) should be produced and used to inform young people about European issues and the EU, about its member states as well as on relevant events, grants, youth exchange programmes (European Voluntary Service, etc.) and other activities of interest for young people. Multimedia contents for European non-formal education processes with young people, e.g. information packages on European youth relevant topics for young facilitators in youth and international youth work should be elaborated and tested with different groups. Also EU-funded European multilateral youth information projects (pilot projects) should be developed and implemented by young people themselves.

Participation. It is a substantial condition of effective youth policy to involve children and adolescents in all decisions relevant to them. However, they will not commit themselves, unless they are convinced their involvement has an effect on their future, and what they decide today will concern their basic life circumstances tomorrow. Participation is also one of the pre-requisites for their growing into democracy and having a say where their matters are at stake. Participation at local, regional, national and EU levels ensures that young people's interests are taken into consideration. At the EU level this will indirectly generate a higher acceptance of the EU institutions on the side of young people. Therefore, participation is one of the rights that should be strengthened by the EU. The issue of participation has to be defined as a *cross-sectional task* heeding the interests of children and adolescents to be considered by all EU Directorates General and programmes. To operationalise this strategy two pre-requisites have to be fulfilled. Firstly, institutions at local, national and European level must open themselves and become accessible for young people: participation will not work without partnership and dialogue, horizontal exchange and transparency in rights and duties. Secondly, young people must be motivated to recognise and take their chances in intervening and participating in the shaping of policies. This understanding of participation should be implemented in a concrete, realistic and effective way by EU youth policies. Adolescents should have more opportunities to express their views and ideas as citizens in planning procedures at local, national and EU level. There are some examples of "good practice" that could be promoted by the EU. Above all, adolescents should be included in the following forms of participation: representative forms of participation: youth community councils, children and youth parliaments; open forms of participation: children and youth forums (young people should have free access to these forms

of participation and take part spontaneously); project-oriented forms of participation: projects limited in terms of time and objectives and which attempt to find answers to concrete problems; young people represented in adult committees: direct participation and decision-making and in adult planning groups such as neighbourhood study groups, round tables and citizen's initiatives; contacts with local politicians: consultation hours, school classes visiting city hall, complaint boxes; politicians give children opportunities to exchange views.

Social and political participation is democratic learning in the widest sense and it is tightly linked to political education. It imparts experience and knowledge to young people and empowers them to further activities. It adheres to values and takes up young people's great potential, their wishes and desires, their curiosity and pleasure in discovering and experimenting in order to develop perspectives suitable to youth. It addresses all youths, whether or not they are organised. Therefore, the EU should fund, support and evaluate pilot projects and programmes in which new forms of participation are being experimented. An extended dissemination of its results should be promoted.

Co-operation between EU and National Institutions and Organisations. As already pointed out, a tight co-operation between EU institutions and public and private national institutions and organisations is necessary in order to improve perceptions of the EU among the population, particularly among young people. Such co-operation initiatives could include: deepening and improving existing consultation procedures and structures between the European Parliament, the European Commission and national, regional and local responsible for youth policies; experimenting and exchanging results about new participatory structures and forms of planning and implementation of national and EU youth policies; reporting regularly on "youth conditions" and on "European youth policies" (such reports should be presented by the Commission to the European Parliament and be disseminated in all member states); development of quality standards for the professional qualification of youth workers and other practitioners working in the field of youth policies; recognition of certificates of youth workers and other professionals working in the field of children and youth policies in order to facilitate also their own European mobility

Mobility. Gaining first-hand practical knowledge of Europe, collecting international experience by travelling abroad, receiving foreign visitors in one's own country, getting to know other cultures and, in this way, diminishing prejudices, building relationships and friendships with young people in other countries or maybe even working together with them long-term on a European scale – all these are biographical key events for young people, triggering an emotional interest in and enthusiasm for Europe. In this respect, an important aspect of national youth policy and undoubtedly the core element of European youth policy should be the expansion of

measures supporting mobility and European citizenship. EU institutions frequently confirm the importance of this policy field, yet young people who participate in mobility programmes have to cope with a number of obstacles such as insufficient language skills, being granted trips abroad, the right to stay abroad, social security, tax issues. Often, there are also problems of financing, etc. European youth policy should contribute to overcome these obstacles through programmes focusing on the following areas.

Knowledge of foreign languages. Especially in the Southern part of Europe and in the United Kingdom, speaking a foreign language at a certain level of competence is not widespread. Even if improving foreign language proficiency of young people is a responsibility of national educational systems, European educational and youth policies could also make a contribution in this field, for instance through the following initiatives: funding the development of European curricula frameworks and proficiency standards in the sphere of foreign language teaching in schools; funding, implementing and disseminating results of model projects in the field of innovative foreign language teaching with children and young people; funding high-level and demanding language teaching for students who wish to study or have stages in other European countries; establishing encounter camps, "action weeks" and other activities of a European character, stimulating interest for and knowledge of other cultures as well as the practice of existing "theoretical" foreign language skills; sponsoring European summer camps with foreign language training as a central part of their activity programmes; sponsoring European camping sites offering special "European" leisure programmes for children and adolescents and promoting informal learning of foreign language skills; promoting a broad coverage of European sport, social and cultural events, economic and political actualities through bilingual media programmes (mother tongue and two foreign languages) in television, press and broadcasting.

Visiting Foreign Countries and Youth Exchanges. Existing EU mobility action programmes, like "Youth" (including successful programmes like "Youth for Europe", the European Voluntary Service, Leonardo, Socrates, etc.) should be considered as core elements of European youth policy. The activities considered in these programmes should be complemented by other more open forms of mobility like: projects of European youth tourism; bi-/tri-/multi-lateral work camps; youth projects in the context of city partnerships; European festivals; cultural and sport activities.

Mobility of young people should also be improved through an action programme on "non-formal European youth education". On the background of experiences existing already in several member states, the EU should develop and promote, within the frame of such a programme, together with youth and non-profit organisations: national and international youth

seminars and workshops on European issues; training courses on European citizenship; training courses for "facilitators " in the field of international youth work; projects of young people focusing on relevant European issues (e.g., activities against racism, xenophobia and intolerance).

Studying and Working Abroad. Programmes like Erasmus and Leonardo have already shown positive effects in promoting youth mobility in Europe. The experience achieved with these programmes should be extended, especially to disadvantaged youths who are the ones with less opportunities to live in other European countries and studying and/or working there for longer periods of time. Intensive language courses coupled with six-month internships in schools, enterprises and other institutions could motivate these youngsters to test their chances in other social and cultural contexts.

Part II

Youth Conditions in Europe

Preface

Contemporary societies are characterised by an extension over time of the permanence of people in the youth condition, that is to say in a condition in which biological and intellectual adulthood is not matched with social adulthood. Today, like fifty years ago, a person is perceived to be an adult member of a society when he/she has finished his/her school attendance, possesses a job, has left the family of origin creating a new one and, possibly, has children. As a consequence, in the past youth lasted few years because most people, around the age of fifteen had, at least, finished school and found a job. Today, on the contrary, many persons in their twenties are still attending school and do not get started in work. Moreover, in several European countries the age at first marriage, or at first cohabitation, has strongly increased in the last twenty years, and the same holds for the age at which women have their first child. This makes it difficult to determine with certainty the individual life span during which a man or women can be considered as young. In a conventional way, taking into account the median age at the first job in some European countries (Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and the second lowest legal age at which starting to work is allowed in the countries belonging to the EU, we have decided to define as "young people" those aged from 15 to 24 years. However, in same cases we have been compelled either to widen or to reduce this age range, because of the different criteria of classification adopted by official data sources.

Being biologically and intellectually adult, young men and women tend to react to their lack of economic and social independence by developing specific subcultures and particular social identities. This process is enhanced by the fact that, usually, adult generations tend to make a full participation of young people in everyday social life difficult. In turn both these factors have produced several (latent or explicit) intergenerational conflicts. This is one reason why cultural features of youth conditions have been extensively studied by social scientists for such a long time.

Structural conditions of youth, on the other hand, have been less frequently investigated. For many years social scientists have assumed that young people lived with their family of origin, which took full care of them. But recent changes in family patterns and in the mechanisms of the labour market have rendered this assumption rather unsound. In several European countries post-nuclear forms of family are spreading and many young people live on their own even when they are not (fully) economically independent. In these cases their living conditions depend mainly on the features of the welfare system. This is true also in the case in which the labour market is flexible and finding a job is quite easy. In fact, universalistic and individually oriented (social-democrat) welfare systems allow a longer and more accurate search of one's own first

workplace and a better matching between individuals' skills and job characteristics. On the contrary, in a less generous liberal welfare system, young men and women without family support are compelled to quickly find a job, whatever it may be.

In other European countries the picture is rather different. Mainly in the Mediterranean countries, but also in some mid-European ones, the traditional nuclear family is still a stable and central institution, the welfare system is of a familistic type and the labour market is strongly regulated, so that the search for the first job is a rather long and exhausting process. In such cases parents have to take a care of their children for a longer time, and many of these children live in their family of origin up to their thirties. And if family support is lacking, young people seriously run the risk of being socially and economically marginalised.[2]

In sum, structural aspects of youth conditions currently vary significantly within the European Union and in addition, as stressed above, they are not very well known. In a sense the latter remarks apply to the cultural aspects of youth conditions as well. By and large, it can be said that, despite the fact that several surveys have been carried out over the last thirty years on the cultural characteristics of younger generations in many European countries, a general picture of this topic is not yet available. As a consequence it is rather difficult for the European Commission to formulate recommendations in order to improve the living conditions of youth in European countries.

In this report we will present some results of an attempt to provide such a general overview. More precisely we have tried to summarise the main structural and cultural features of the current youth conditions across European countries. Our attempt has been to account for both possible communalities and specificities between countries and variations in these conditions. In order to give a sound methodological basis to our comparisons, we have worked out a series of quantitative indicators of demographic, social, economic and cultural aspects of youth condition in the fifteen countries currently belonging to the EU (plus Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein). The general idea is to create a system of reliable indicators that can be continuously updated and enlarged. The list of the indicators we selected is given in Appendix 1. As we do not know of any previous attempt to establish such a system and recent comparative analyses on the various aspects of youth condition are not available, at present it is rather unclear to us which indicators are best able to describe, in a parsimonious way, the dimensions of youth conditions we mentioned above. Therefore we decide to work out a twofold system of indicators. This means

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[2] Obviously, the statements in the main text do not imply that the length of the cohabitation with the family of origin depends only on welfare and labour market arrangements. Cultural and legal norms regarding parents' duties and children's expectations can also affect the duration of the length of the period a person spends in his/her family of origin. Yet, we feel that structural conditions have a stronger impact on this aspect of individuals' lives. We will return later to this topic.

that we, first, collected a wide range of variables from several sources (e.g.: European Commission, Eurostat, Oecd, Eurobarometer, World Value Surveys) provided that these variables were recently collected and available for all (or at least most) countries of the EU. Then we selected, from the whole system, some core indicators intended to represent the minimum information necessary to give an acceptable description of the overall living conditions of young people in each European country. These core indicators, marked by an asterisk in Appendix 1, have been selected taking into account the variables usually adopted by social scientists when analysing the overall social position of specific social groups and their cultural features.

The texts concerning youth conditions are organised in the following way. This chapter presents a summary of recent theories on youth conditions and a general overview of these conditions in the EU as documented on the basis of the above-mentioned system of indicators. In a separate volume eighteen chapters are devoted to the analysis of these conditions in single European countries. Of course, each country chapter contains comments on the core indicators. Moreover they present analyses based on some of the remaining indicators and some supplementary information regarding both the lack of knowledge about some specific features of the youth condition and the availability of other relevant country specific data.

THEORETICAL, STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF YOUTH CONDITIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

As we mentioned in the preface, this introductory chapter aims to supply a general description of the similarities and the differences which distinguish current youth conditions in European countries. Before proceeding with this description, however, we wish to present a brief review of the current debate concerning the position of young people in post-industrial societies. This review aims to facilitate the interpretation of the information we have collected during the various stages of research project. The illustration of this information will be limited to comments of a descriptive character. In other words, we shall not attempt to connect data and theory in a direct and systematic manner. There are three reasons for this. First, even though there exists a vast consensus among scholars concerning selected fundamental aspects of youth conditions, other aspects provoke remarkably different viewpoints. Second, the variations in youth conditions which can be observed between countries make it difficult to achieve a unitary representation. Third, we have interpreted our task as the construction of a system of indicators

capable of highlighting problems stemming from young people's current social position, not as the formulation of policy guide-lines for European youth.

The chapter is organised into five sections. The first outlines the transformations in modern and contemporary societies which have influenced youth conditions. The second section examines the major analytical approaches used in accounting for youth in contemporary society. The third section deals with the structural and institutional aspects of youth conditions in Western European countries. The fourth section describes some of the basic elements of youth culture. Finally, the fifth section contains some general conclusions.

In order to make easier reading and allow an immediate control of the various statements it contains, the chapter will treat the various topics according to their general order in the system of indicators given in the indicator table in Appendix 1.

1. YOUNG PEOPLE AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

1.1. Industrial Society and the Emergence of Youth as a Social Category

For quite some time scholars have employed the term "youth" to denote a set of subjects who: a) are concluding, or are about to conclude, their studies; b) are about to enter the labour market or have recently started working for the first time; and c) have yet to form their own families. If it is understood in these terms, youth is a social category which is typical of modern industrial societies. In fact, industrial societies have conferred social visibility to individuals, aged between 15 and 25, who have achieved biological maturity and virtually completed their socialisation process, but have yet to master all the abilities and skills required to assume adult roles.

The reasons why 15/25-year-olds have become a socially visible category are various. First of all, industrial society sharply separates the sphere of economic life from that of family relationships and, in doing so, produces a labour market. Secondly, industrial society, especially when it is organised in the form of a nation-state, imposes compulsory education of children – initially from the ages of 6/7 to 10/11 and shortly afterwards from 5/6 to 14/16. Thirdly, industrial society uses compulsory schooling and further education as an instrument for the general and specific training of the work force. Moreover, since the industrial society's work ethic states that an individual who doesn't achieve economic independence based on an occupation cannot form a new family, he/she cannot not even be considered a member in full standing of his/her community. Finally, industrial society contributes to the evolution of the modern state founded on a rational bureaucracy; and one of the major criteria used by a modern state bureaucracy to classify and control citizens is age. The modern state and industrial society limit young people's autonomy precisely because they have not achieved a sufficient, "adult", age. Yet both institutions have always reserved a great deal of attention to youth. After all, society's continuity over time and its economic and cultural development depended – and continue to depend – on young people and their capacity to learn the skills required to exercise adult roles.

Due to the importance that has been assigned to young people, they have been progressively recognised – albeit in extremely different ways from a nation-state to the next – as the objects of specific welfare measures and public policies (health protection, study assistance, vocational training, economic support). At the same time these policies have helped define a socially legitimate pathway to adulthood and independence. This pathway comprises the following sequence: a) completion of schooling; b) initiation of working career; c) formation of a couple;

d) birth of first child. Of course, this is not the only sequence which leads to the assumption of adult roles and positions. It can be argued, for instance, that single people who have a job and have left their family of origin are adult. Likewise, one may maintain that an individual who enters into a homosexual couple relationship has attained a fully acceptable transition to adulthood. In general, one may experience these steps may in a different order, or - perhaps more frequently - simply skip some of them. It should be noted, nonetheless, that the normative assumptions concerning the sequence of steps to adulthood that are embodied in many welfare policies may contribute to the fact that the above-mentioned sequence is the most widespread in industrial (and post-industrial) societies.

1.2. Youth and Post-Industrial Society

Over the last thirty years industrial society's economy and institutional arrangements have undergone significant changes which some authors (Beck 1986; Giddens 1990; Castells 1997) consider so radical as to justify the formation of the concepts of post-industrial society and even post-modern society. Although not all scholars subscribe to this idea, most of them acknowledge that contemporary societies operate quite differently from industrial societies of the "golden age", i.e. from 1950 to 1975. Obviously these changes have had repercussions on youth conditions. Yet not all scholars agree on the intensity and the consequences of the changes experienced by youth, considered as a social category.

Before we examine these analytical approaches, let's briefly outline the major changes that industrial society has undergone and which have certainly involved young people. The first, and perhaps the most important, of these changes – which began in the Fifties – is the lengthening of schooling. This development has engendered a delay in both labour market entrance and, as a consequence, formation of couples and birth of first children. The delay in transition to work has also had another significant effect on youth. It has lengthened the duration of their economic dependence from their parents. In turn, the duration and the intensity of dependence on parents have been amplified by three other meaningful developments.

First of all, unemployment levels have risen and so has the incidence of insecure and short-term jobs. Secondly, welfare systems have experienced a generalised crisis. Of course, the phenomena involve all social groups, not youth alone. Nevertheless, in most European countries their negative effects on youth have been particularly intense, and this has been due to the forms of labour market regulation which prevail in these countries. In fact, employed adults usually enjoy legally sanctioned forms of job protection which makes dismissal exceedingly difficult.

Unemployment risk thus ends up being borne by young people looking for their first occupation. The same goes for short-term, insecure jobs. It is usually young people who are obliged to accept non-permanent working positions (temporary work contracts, short-term contracts, special training contracts), characterised by low pay. Indeed, they are often forced to seek jobs in the informal economy. Moreover, the decrease of welfare measures has been achieved through reductions in unemployment benefits reserved for those seeking their first jobs, less spending on incentives for insertion of young people in active life, cuts in assistance for young couples searching for a home, and so on.

The overall effect of all these changes has been, as previously mentioned, the lengthening of individuals' permanence in a condition of youth, or rather, of not-quite-adulthood. Today's youth, however, despite their increased material dependency on their families of origin, are also more psychologically independent than in the past. This psychological emancipation is a result of both the higher mean age of individuals who have yet to complete their transition to adulthood and the contemporary family's inability to pilot its children's behaviour.

Families' inability to control and curb their children's conduct derives from changes within the family and more general social transformations. Over recent decades the dominance of the typical nuclear family has been eroded by post-nuclear families, that is, families formed by divorced or single (usually female) parents. And it is precisely in this latter category of families that adult authority is constrained in its manifestation, for the simple reason that children's identification with an acquired parent or a single natural parent is usually weaker than that which ensues when both biological parents live together. In addition, one must keep in mind that post-industrial society expresses a fragmented value system, in which individuals' rights and freedom of choice, rather than responsibilities toward the community, are the nucleus around which interpersonal relationships are defined. And this is just as true for parent/child relationships. Finally, one must consider that the economy and labour organisation are much more flexible and fluid than they once were, and this means that parents are no longer able to hand down their jobs to their children, at least not to the same degree as in the past.

In general, in contemporary society each individual's occupational and social destination has become more free, but also more uncertain and less precise, compared to twenty or thirty years ago.

2. THEORIES OF YOUTH CONDITIONS

The most recent analyses of youth conditions have focused primarily on the expansion of the duration of transition to adulthood and the greater uncertainty of individual's destinations. Such analyses can be classified into three categories.

2.1. Youth and the Underclass

One of the categories of youth condition analysis (see, for example, Furlong and Cartmel 1997) emphasises the risks to which today's young people are allegedly exposed. These risks include educational failure, unemployment and homelessness. This deterioration of young people's material well-being engenders a deterioration of their psychological conditions as well. Today's youth, in other words, runs greater risks of alcoholism, drug dependency and bad mental health. Even if these phenomena of severe psychological malaise were not to manifest themselves, it remains true that in Europe increasingly large groups of young people are excluded from the job market and other significant domains of community life. Thus the hypothesis has been advanced that some young people can represent an important component of that which has been called the "underclass". The main argument of the thesis linking youth people to underclass (Murray 1990) can be summarised as follows. Several young people in deprived areas help to perpetuate an underclass through behaviour which is supported by the welfare system. These young people engage in irresponsible sex and thus produce high rates of teenage pregnancy and fatherless children; such children grow up without a proper male role model and controls. Hence in these areas there ensue high crime, drug taking, debt, violence and the like. This helps the formation of an underclass which then reproduces itself.

The above thesis has been the object of various critiques. In particular, attention has been called to the fact that, even though they may experience anxiety and social exclusion to a greater degree than people born 40 or 50 years ago, today in Europe young people do not really risk abject poverty, hunger or threats to physical survival. In addition, phenomena of radical social exclusion and attachment to deviant cultural models are rare and tied more to their victims' social origins and the socio-economic context in which they live than specific age groups. Moreover recent research (Buzzi et al., forthcoming) actually records a decreasing (self-reported) tendency, among young people, to engage in non-conformist behaviour. And the remarkable rates of childbearing outside marriage recorded in Northern Europe have not produced high levels of anomie or deviant behaviour. Finally, it is the same notion of underclass

that seems scarcely appropriate for describing the social situation of most European countries. Surveys regarding poverty, social exclusion and unemployment suggest that young people falling in such deprived conditions are not permanently trapped in them. In other words, the experience of social exclusion quite often represents a mere episode in an individual's life history. As a consequence, the actual basis for the formation of a self-reproducing underclass in EU countries are lacking.

2.2. Individualisation of Life Courses and Youth's Limited Social Visibility

The second group of theories on youth conditions in contemporary society underscores the assumption that there are no longer any "normal" biographies, i.e. typical sequences of transition to adulthood. Indeed, perhaps it no longer makes sense to distinguish between youth and adulthood. Most life choices are now reversible, and most people can autonomously decide how to shape their own destination. In short, life course are increasingly individualised and fragmented.

The early stages of an active life non longer need coincide with the end of all contacts with the educational and training system. At almost any moment an individual may decide to interrupt his/her working career and return to being a full-time student. At the very least, he/she can decide to work and study at the same time. What is more, there is no longer such a thing as a lifetime job. In the same way, couple relationships are increasingly unstable and no longer necessarily imply having children. Indeed, people increasingly decide to have children even if they have no stable relationship, and having a job is no longer a necessary prerequisite for establishing a new family. In sum, the ties that used to bind the various stages of life courses are increasingly weak, nor are specific life events associated to specific ages (Beck 1986; Giddens 1990; Castells 1997). For these reasons, scholars who subscribe to the theory of the individualisation of life courses feel that "post-modern" society, as they call it, is causing the disappearance of youth as a socially visible category.

These authors do not assert that greater freedom of choice in determining one's life course is only a source of advantages. The retreat of the welfare system and the flexibilisation of the labour market have introduced strong elements of uncertainty in individuals' lives. The structural and cultural transformations of post-modern, or post-industrial, society have especially increased the difficulties which 15/25-year-olds encounter in their attempts to become full-fledged members of their communities. In sum, young people no longer comprise a social category, which used to be the beneficiary of specific social policies, and have become a mere statistical category (Wallace and Kovatceva 1998). The members of this statistical

category are more free than in the past, but also more unsure about their social and occupational destinations and less socially relevant.

The ample margins of uncertainly which surround their future, the difficulties underlying a linear transition to adulthood and their diminished social centrality lead today's young people to make contingent decisions which are not based on a plan for developing their existence. Some scholars (Leccardi 1999) speak, in reference to this situation, of contemporary youth's inability to imagine their future, their tendency to live in the present, of life strategies without a plan. Young people are not able to identify priority hierarchies, in terms of both time and values, among the goals they intend to achieve during their lifetimes. Life is seen not as a set of interrelated events, but rather as a random series of episodes.

Although it is perhaps more persuasive than the youth-as-underclass hypothesis, the theory of life-course individualisation and destructuring of youth as a social category has its problems. In the first place, recent availability of longitudinal data drawn from large sample surveys (British Household Panel Survey, European Community Household Panel, German Socio-Economic Panel, Italian Household Longitudinal Study) permits the study of inter-cohort variations of life courses (in that these surveys contain waves which reconstruct retrospective data, i.e., past episodes, spells and events). In general, such analyses as have been performed show no sign of there having been a individualistic transformation of the traditional sequences of transition to adulthood. Most subjects born from the second half of the Sixties onwards continue to complete schooling before they start looking for a job, start working before they leave their parents' home or commence their first couple relationship, and have their first child only after having formed a couple. It is true, on the other hand, that the younger cohorts complete these transitions at a later age compared to people who were born from the early Forties to the early Sixties. But this delay is not without precedent. People born during the first three decades of the 20th century also tended to get married and have their first child at ages which are similar, and sometimes even greater, than that of today's youth. Of course, the causes of these deferred transitions to adulthood have changed. For those born at the beginning of the century, the presence of patriarchal family structures and an underdeveloped economy hindered emancipation from families of origin. Today adulthood is postponed because of prolonged schooling, high unemployment, and the crisis of the welfare system. People who were young between the late Fifties and the late Seventies were able to become adults faster than their parents did (and faster than their own children will be able to do) because they benefited from a booming economy, full employment and a functional welfare system. It is interesting to note that the ages at which young people experience the individual stages of transition to adulthood vary, for the same birth

cohorts, from country to country (Iedema et al. 1997; Iacovu 1998; Schizzerotto and Lucchini 2000; Pisati forthcoming).

In sum, empirical evidence seem to support the Karl Mannheim's generations theory rather than the theory of life-course individualisation. According to the generations theory, the opportunities and constraints issuing from the economic situation and the institutional arrangements of a country in a specific period, along with individuals' socio-economic characteristics, influence the duration and the sequence of transitions to adulthood. There exists, therefore, no irreversible, long-term historical tendency towards less structured life courses and slower transitions to adulthood.

The economic situation and the institutional arrangements of contemporary European societies are such that they strongly penalise younger generations and make it extremely difficult to forecast and plan individual destinations. Moreover, national welfare systems are less geared to young people's needs than in the past. Nevertheless, it is not entirely true that the existence of a social group depends on the existence of welfare measures directed at it. And in the specific case of young people, many countries do have specifically youth-oriented public policies; indeed, in some countries these policies are being developed with utmost intensity right now. The fact is that young people have never been a homogeneous social group, but rather a category with internal divisions defined, at he very least, by gender and social class. Only if one chooses to ignore these internal divisions is it possible to state that young people today are, objectively speaking, a more homogeneous group than in the past. There is in fact little doubt that inequalities among generations, with the partial exception of the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries, are increasingly pronounced in European societies.

2.3. A New Stage in Life: Post-Adolescence

Authors who belong to the third group we have considered here are steadfast believers in the homogeneity of contemporary youth's living conditions. According to these authors, the longer duration of the transition to adulthood has engendered a new stage of life: "post-adolescence".

Three major hypotheses underpin this approach to youth conditions. Firstly, the extension of educational processes creates a heightening of expectations towards one's career working career and life. These expectations, however, are not satisfied by economic and social reality due to the inflation of educational degrees, flexibilisation of the labour market and high levels of unemployment. Secondly, this gap between educational levels and job and social integration opportunities obliges individuals to experience a longer waiting period before they can assume

all the responsibilities entailed by adulthood, in order to re-define their personal system of expectations. The opportunities of enjoying this waiting period are increasing, in that today parents are more willing to grant their children ample autonomy, even if they are not economically independent. Life courses are thus enhanced by a new age -- post-adolescence – during which contemporary youth may experience a plurality of jobs, living arrangements, couple relationships, and so on, and thus build adult destinations which are less definite than they used to be in the past (Galland 1990; Cavalli and Galland 1995).

But what are the social and demographic boundaries of post-adolescence? In terms of age, it theoretically comprises ages from 20 o 29. In social terms, it involves the set of individuals who are no longer completely dependent from their families of origin but who have yet to establish a family of their own.

Empirical indicators of the existence of this allegedly new stage of life are represented essentially by the plurality of short-term job experiences and participation in intermediate living arrangements (singles, unwed couples, friends living together), midway between living with one's parents and living as a spouse/parent in a new household.

The theory of post-adolescence as a new period of life, much as the theory of individualistic fragmentation of transitions to adulthood, presents both elements of strength and weakness. There can be no doubt, for instance, that the condition of individuals no longer living with their parents even though they have not established a new family is more widespread today than it was in the past. This condition, however, is the result of numerous causes. In part, it is quite simply the effect of the increase in the incidence of university students among young people: many students move from their cities of residence in order to continue their studies. Nevertheless, this fact means that these individuals enjoy greater freedom from their families of origin and effectively delay initiation of married life proper. But in this case the opportunity to experience new forms of living arrangements depends on parents' economic resources or having a job. Participation in intermediate living arrangements is not, as a result, an experience shared by all post-adolescents. As far as the plurality of job experiences at the beginning of working careers is concerned, one should consider whether such experiences are voluntary or whether they reflect the fact that the labour market has become less regulated and more flexible. Finally, we must emphasise that the duration of post-adolescence varies according to country. The median age at first cohabitation or marriage is about 24 or 25 in the United Kingdom and in Scandinavia, whereas in the Mediterranean countries it is 29. It would seem, therefore, that post-adolescence, even though it is a new phenomenon, manifests itself more intensely in countries in which modernisation is less advanced. This is not completely true, of course, as young people in Nordic countries are much more independent from their parents than their Mediterranean

counterparts. Yet, the above data stress the fact that is rather difficult to detect the boundaries of post-adolescence and hence to define the latter in a sound way.

In sum, post-adolescence theory efficaciously takes into account parents' diminished ability to control their children's decisions and the objective lengthening of the period between completion of schooling and creation of a new family, which is typical of contemporary society. It also seems reasonable to believe that in that period subcultures may establish themselves and emphasise the differences which set off post-adolescents from the rest of society. It remains to be seen whether post-adolescence represents an authentically new stage of life or, more simply, a temporal drawing out of youth.

2.4. Conclusions

As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, we still have no convincing and widely held theory of youth conditions in contemporary society. The variation over time and space of the constituent elements of youth remain particularly ill-defined. For this reason we have preferred not to present a general interpretative framework; we have simply put together a series of indicators concerning the position of 15/25-year-olds, who traditionally make up the "youth" component of the population, in selected important spheres of community life in Western European countries. For this same reason we have preferred to adopt a traditional definition of youth, i.e., the period of life that goes from achievement of biological maturity to completion of the various stages of transition to adulthood.

3. STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

3.1. Demography

The incidence of young people aged 15/24 on the overall population varies considerably across the EU countries (from a bit more than 1 in 10 for Germany to almost 2 in 10 for Eire), but there is no clear trend. That is to say that the percentage of young men and women within each European country cannot be related to any known structural characteristic of the country. This result is quite surprising because it is well known that Mediterranean countries, with a familistic welfare state and a strongly regulated labour market, have been displaying dramatically low and

decreasing birth rates over the last decade. It might be that this reduction is too recent to generate visible effects on the whole age cohort we are studying. But in the next few years this should be the case. In fact, Eurostat forecasts that in the year 2010 the ratio of young people to the whole population will reach its lowest level (1 in 10) precisely in the Mediterranean countries. On the contrary the forecasts regarding UK, the Scandinavian countries and the Mid-European ones shows a stable or, even, an increasing proportion of young people in the whole population.

In the light of the above remarks, it seems, therefore, rather difficult to maintain that adults in contemporary European societies give little importance to young people and that they are much more concerned in defending their privileges rather in investing on new generations. Instead we would say that many people in countries with a bad economic situation, high rates of youth unemployment, a weak welfare system and inadequate social services for early childhood think that having a baby and looking after him/her until he/she becomes economically independent is an authentically costly and demanding commitment.[3]

3.2. Citizenship

"Citizenship" is an ample topic, in the sense that this label can include several kinds of rights, namely civil, political, social and economic rights. In this section we will pay attention only to some political and civil rights. Social and economic rights will be analysed later in this chapter.

EU countries are strongly homogeneous regarding the age of voting rights which is fixed at 18, except in the case of Austria and, partly, Italy where it is higher (19 years in Austria and 25 years in Italy but only for the election of the Senate).Moreover in some countries there have been proposals to lower the age of voting to 16.

Looking at these figures it can hardly be said that European youth is excluded from the possibility of participation in the political affairs. The real disadvantage of young people consists in the fact that, on average, very few of them are admitted to policy-making circles of parties and elected to national parliaments or local governments.

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[3] However, one has to take into account that in most EU countries an increasing selfishness of adult generations can be observed. In many EU nations there are increasing numbers of elderly people who live longer and consume more welfare resources, which must be paid for by decreasing numbers of working young people. From this point of view it can certainly be said that adult generations give little importance to younger ones and that in the EU there is a latent intergenerational conflict. The problem is that in order to guarantee their current and future privileged positions, adult people in many EU countries, mainly the Mediterranean ones, would have to have many more children than they in fact have.

Great disparities among European countries can be found in the case both of legal age of criminal responsibility and lowest age at which one may be imprisoned. The former ranges from 14 years (in Austria and Eire) to 18 years (in France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands). The same age range holds for the latter (14 years in Austria and Italy; 18 years for Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain). It is worth noting that, as in the case of demography, in the case of the legal age of criminal responsibility and the lowest age of imprisonment, disparities between EU countries are trendless. It is reasonable to hypothesise that in this case historical traditions of each country count much more than their current economic and social situations.

In most EU countries the legal age of criminal responsibility corresponds to the lowest age of possible imprisonment. Yet in two countries, namely Greece and Eire, the latter is higher, while in France and Italy it is, paradoxically, lower. As mentioned above, Italy and Austria display the lowest age of imprisonment which is fixed at 14. It seems a peculiarly early age, even if very few boys and girls are imprisoned when they are 14 years old and those who are imprisoned are not kept in a true jail but in special institutions.

3.3. Schooling and Education

Education represents one of the most important rights of social citizenship. For this reason, and because of the raising importance of human capital in the economy, all industrial societies during the last half century have issued school reforms and recorded increasing rates of social participation to education. Despite the efforts of national governments to democratise school systems, no country has yet been able to guarantee a condition of real equality of educational opportunities among its citizens. Moreover educational opportunities deeply change from country to country depending on the institutional arrangement and the workings of national school system (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993). This the case also for the EU countries.

The minimum age of school leaving, for instance, ranges from 14 years in Portugal to 18 years in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Yet, in most EU countries compulsory education lasts until the age of 16. In principle, the longer the duration of compulsory schooling the higher the equality of educational opportunities. In fact, most countries with lengthy compulsory schooling also record the highest proportions of students among the respective populations of both 15/19-year-olds and 20/29-year-olds (see table 1).

Table 1. *Minimum age at school leaving (Indicator C1), % of 15/19-year-olds who are students (C2) and % of 20/29-year-olds who are students (C3)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
C1	15	18	18	16	16	15	16	17	15	15	16	15	16	18	14	16	16
C2	75,7	92,1	87,9	79,6	73,8	72,0	88,3	81,8		79,3	79,7		83,8	88,5	67,5	83,3	72,1
C3	16,8		20,5	26,0	21,8	12,0	19,1	29,6		14,6	24,5		25,2	23,7	20,5	23,6	17,5

Of course schooling rates affect completion rates. But the latter depend also on the degree of stratification, selectivity and efficiency of educational system (Almendiger 1986; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993; Shavit and Müller 1998). This is why the completion rates of tertiary education (both academic and non academic) is higher, for instance, in the United Kingdom than in Germany. Regarding the incidence of people with tertiary education qualifications on the corresponding theoretical population, it can be said, by and large, that EU countries give rise to a ladder with the Nordic countries, plus the United Kingdom, at the top, mid-European countries in the middle and Mediterranean countries at the bottom. Since what counts most, both in entering the labour market and in determining the quality of productive factors of a country, is precisely the proportion of people with higher qualifications, we would maintain that school systems which are organised also on a local basis and scarcely stratified are much more efficient and egalitarian than those directly ruled only by central governments and with higher secondary schools fragmented in several educational tracks (see table 2).

Table 2. *Tertiary education completion rate (graduates x 100 / corresponding theoretical population) (Indicator C6: where two figures appear, the first refers to short university programmes and the second to long)*

A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
10	16	20	20	11	13		11		1	14	15	15	22	24	2+	11	34
	(Fl)		+8	+15			+13		+12	+11			+6	+7	14	+8	

At any rate, we think that several European countries should act to raise their rates of attendance in both upper secondary and tertiary education. Moreover, most of them (principally those with a very stratified school system) should engage in policies aimed at reducing educational inequalities. In fact, despite statements by some scholars that increasing rates of school attendance would produce a strong inflation of educational qualifications which, in turn, would causes severe problems in matching young people's expectations with the actual situation of the labour markets, no systematic sign of devaluation of school credentials has been detected in most European countries. On the contrary, human capital still represents the most effective resource in shaping individuals' occupational destinations.

3.4. Employment and Unemployment

Rapidly finding one's first job (and quickly getting a new occupation after a job loss) represents an important right of economic citizenship and, above all, the most crucial factor influencing both the standard of living and the chances of transition to adulthood, i.e. of personal independence.

Recently (Grubb and Wells 1993; Scarpetta 1996; Reyneri 1996; Nickell 1997; Oecd 1999; Schivardi 1999; Esping-Andersen 1999; Bernardi et al. 2000) it has been shown that the social composition of the unemployed, as well as the duration of the job search, are directly affected by labour market regulation. More precisely, labour markets that strongly protect insiders and are mostly centred on permanent full-time jobs usually make it particularly difficult for young men and women to find a job. Of course rates of unemployment among young people are also affected by the conditions of the economic system, i.e. by the level of aggregate unemployment. As is well known, Mediterranean countries possess the most regulated labour markets and the weakest economic systems, and in fact they also display (with the exception of Portugal) the highest rates of unemployment among young people (see table 3).

Table 3. *Percentage of 15-24 year olds who are unemployed (Indicator D1)*

A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
4,4	6,7	4,9	5,1	14,6	11,9	9,0	17,2		13,0	5,5		2,3		5,8	4,5	7,1	7,9

Against our statement, one could object that the United Kingdom, with a non-regulated labour market and a well-functioning economic system, also shows quite high levels of unemployment among young people, whereas countries like Germany and Sweden, with strongly regulated labour markets, display lower overall rates of unemployment among young people. However, one must keep in mind that the level of labour supply of young people is much higher in the United Kingdom than in other European countries. In other words, rates of youth unemployment in Nordic and mid-European countries are depressed by the relatively strong proportion of young people who are not in the labour force. This might depend on the presence of a much more generous welfare system allowing higher percentages of young people not to enter the labour market.

There is further proof that strict labour market regulation produces strong inequalities in the chances of getting a job. We are referring to gender disparities in unemployment rates. Usually regulated labour markets mainly protect the workplaces and favour the employability of adult married men. As young single men, sooner or later, become adult and get married, it is easier for them, compared to their feminine counterparts, to find their first job, or a new job after a job

loss. In fact, the difference between the unemployment rates of young men and young women is highest in the Mediterranean countries, followed by the mid-European ones, while in the United Kingdom the direction of this inequality is the opposite and young women are less prone to be unemployed than young men. The latter statement applies also to Sweden, suggesting that a social-democratic welfare system, through development of the tertiary sector – namely services to families and individuals – could be functionally equivalent to a completely flexible and almost unregulated labour market.

Coming back to the overall position of young European people in the labour market, it can be said that their most striking disadvantages, in comparison with adults, consist in both severe difficulties in finding their first job and increasing risks of being confined to non-standard (or atypical), poorly paid jobs (see also table 4 below). From this point of view the increasing duration of the transition to full economic independence of many European young people can be interpreted much more convincingly as an effect of intergenerational inequalities produced by labour market regulations and new patterns of work organisation than as a consequence of an emerging new step towards adulthood.

3.5. Income Sources and Poverty Risks

According to the literature, income sources can be classified as follows: a) market ;b) transfers from the state; and c) transfers from the family of origin. Of course, market comprises both wages, either from regular or casual jobs, and profits; transfers from the states include training allowances, educational grants, unemployment subsidies, social security benefits and the like.

On average, regular and casual jobs are two of the most important sources of income among young people in Europe. This is why we said that work plays a crucial role in determining the level of living of youth in contemporary Europe. But there are two more income sources that appear to be rather widespread among European young people, namely, transfers from the family of origin and transfers from the state (see table 4).

Table 4. *Economic situation: income sources (Indicators E1)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
Regular job	45,5	33,0	51,2	64,9	35,9	40,6	40,1	24,6		26,1	36,9		37,3		33,8	47,1	29,5	56,8
Casual work	8,2	9,1	15,8	3,6	10,9	5,3	14,6	19,5		15,5	12,1		23,2		22,8	5,1	18,6	6,2
Training allowance or educational grant	13,6	2,4	5,8	28,2	1,5	0,1	5,4	25,4		1,3	4,7		4,7		24,7	1,7	10,4	2,8
Unemployment/ social security benefits	4,7	10,3	7,8	8,5	2,1	1,7	5,6	15,1		0,1	13,1		1,4		5,7	1,3	11,7	18,3
Parents/family	41,0	48,0	37,7	18,7	62,4	50,9	47,8	40,6		67,6	38,0		58,0		32,6	50,7	34,2	17,3

Probably, in every European country the income of many young people comes from several sources. Unfortunately, the available data sets do not allow an analysis of the variation across countries of the income packaging strategies followed by them. Yet we are able to show how the importance of each income source vary in each country.

By and large, the proportion of young people stating that regular job is an important income source for themselves varies, quite obviously, according to unemployment rates and the proportion of youths not in the labour force. This is why Italy and Spain, together with Belgium, Finland and Sweden, display the lowest proportions of young people whose earnings come from a regular job. The picture is even clearer if we put together incomes from regular and casual jobs. In that case, Greece and Portugal join Italy, Spain, Belgium Finland and Sweden in the number of countries with the smaller percentages of young people deriving their money from the market or, rather, from work. On the contrary, the United Kingdom displays the largest amount of young people relying on work for their income.

Turning to state transfers, Nordic countries show very high proportions of young people receiving benefits from the government, as expected. And, again as expected, young men and women from Mediterranean countries are the least economically supported by the state. But, rather surprisingly, the United Kingdom also displays a rather strong proportion of young people receiving unemployment benefits. Yet, one has to bear in mind that these benefits are far less generous and last for a much shorter time than those of the Nordic countries.

Obviously, the ranking of countries based on transfers from parents is the opposite of the above. Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal show the highest rates of young people stating that they receive economic support from their family of origin, while the United Kingdom shows the smallest proportion of young men and women in that condition.

All the above remarks can be summarised saying that incomes of young people are: a) most strongly supported by the state in the Nordic countries; b) mainly based on market in the United Kingdom; c) relying on the family of origin in the Mediterranean countries; and d) based partly on the market and partly on parents in most mid-European countries.

Things being so, it should not be surprising to observe that, using 40% of mean income value as a poverty line, young people from Italy, Spain and Greece run among the highest risks of being observed in poverty . This is due to the fact that the family of origin is an economically weaker institution than the state or the market. To put it another way, when Italian, Spanish and Greek young people lack the economic support of the family of origin, or when the family itself is in a weak economic condition, they cannot rely on the market or the state in order to improve their standard of living. However, our data show that there are some countries, namely the Netherlands, France and Germany, in which the proportion of young men and women receiving

economic support from their parents is lower than that observed in the Mediterranean countries and that, nonetheless, display very high percentages of poor young people, at least when the poverty threshold is fixed at 50% of median income. But if one uses the 40% of mean income as the poverty line, the proportion of poor young in Germany and France becomes lower than that observed in most Mediterranean countries.

We consider the latter measure of poverty (40% of mean income) more reliable, despite the fact that most economists would prefer to use 50% of median income as the poverty line. The reason for our statement is that in the former case data show a much more understandable trend.

In looking at data regarding poverty among young people it should keep in mind that a considerable proportion of them are still leaving with their family of origin. As a consequence, a sizable number of young people are poor not because they are young, but because their parents' income falls below poverty lines.

3.6. Generational Relationships and Housing Arrangements

Not surprisingly, countries in which the highest proportions of young people receiving transfers from their family of origin have been observed, also display the greatest percentages of young men and women, aged 20/24, still living with their parents. As we mentioned earlier, in the Mediterranean countries the standard nuclear family still represents a central and stable social institution. This is, in part, an effect of the persistence of traditional cultural patterns regarding the arrangement of every day life and the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children. But, above all, it represents the result of a structural constraint. As shown in the previous section, in order to guarantee their economic survival, many young Mediterranean men and women have to rely mainly, and sometimes exclusively, on their parents . Moreover, one must take into account that Mediterranean families are rather permissive: young men and women living with their parents enjoy a lot of freedom in the arrangement of their everyday life (Cavalli and Galland 1995). Nonetheless this long cohabitation with parents excessively widens, as stressed above, the duration of the transition to adulthood of Mediterranean young people.

Nordic countries (in this case represented solely by Finland), the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and Germany display the lowest percentages of young people aged 20/24 living with their parents. But the reasons underlying this common situation are rather different. In Nordic nations young men and women can live on their own because of the transfers from the state; in the United Kingdom because of the efficient performance of the labour market; and in some mid-European countries for the effective combination of both market and state provisions.

Table 5. *Percentage of 20-24 year olds living with parents (Indicator G10)*

A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
65	68	55		89	72	52	29		87	64		69		47	82		47

As regards the formation of couples and parenthood among young people, available data shows that young people living in the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom form their first union and have their first baby at earlier ages than people living in Central and Mediterranean countries. Moreover, according to our remarks regarding the spread of post-nuclear models of family, the Nordic countries, namely Denmark, the United Kingdom and France possess the greatest proportions of 20/24-year-old men and women living together outside marriage; these nations also display the highest rates of abortion among teenagers.

The latter phenomenon is usually interpreted negatively, as a sign of social disorder. But one may wonder whether it is even more negative to compel young people to live for a very long period with their family of origin, as happens in many Mediterranean countries. As we mentioned earlier, one of the most negative consequence of this long cohabitation with parents is to delay the transition to adulthood and, more precisely, to postpone marriage or consensual union and parenthood later in the life cycle and to depress fertility rates. In fact Italy and Spain represent the European nations with the lowest fertility rates among 20/24-year-old women. After all, establishing a family and having babies can also be considered rights of citizenship.

4. CULTURAL ASPECTS

The 20th century has witnessed the emergence of specific youth subcultures which were in many respects unknown to pre-modern societies. Unfortunately, construction of indicators pertaining to cultural aspects of youth conditions is often vulnerable to many methodological problems, stemming from the impossibility of direct observation and the distortions implicit in self-reporting in survey contexts. These problems are further aggravated in an international framework, in that there are relatively few cross-country studies dedicated specifically to youth or in which youth subsamples contain a sufficiently high number of cases to justify generalisation of findings. These problems are partly illustrated by some of the indicators listed in the table of indicators (Appendix 1), which, for example, seem to indicate large changes from one survey to the next for no obvious reason. In addition, there may be important differences in national wording and/or response styles. For this reason, the following inter-country comparisons sometimes take into account relationships between specific indicators to a greater degree than the absolute level of response for single response categories. In any case, all data regarding young people's "attitudes" should be interpreted with a grain of salt.

4.1. Group Membership, Political Participation, Trust in Institutions

Participation in formal associations is considered a key activity in establishing social integration in general and civicness in particular. High levels of youth participation in associations is to be considered with favour in that, in all likelihood, it promotes young people's insertion in social networks. The available data suggest that levels of group membership vary significantly among EU countries: in Nordic countries an ample majority of youth belong to at least one association, whereas only a minority do so in most Mediterranean ones (plus Belgium). It is worth noting that one reason why membership of associations is higher in Nordic and Central European countries is that associations are strongly embedded in the welfare system and in the institutional arrangement of society. In Austria and Denmark, for instance, it is almost impossible not to join an association. For almost any activity (such as riding, doing swimming lessons, playing tennis) people have to become a member of an association. In these countries the churches administer student hostels and summer camps, so that people choose to belong to the church in order to get access to those facilities. Moreover, in many Nordic countries membership of a trade union represents a requirement for getting a job.

Of course, in order to better grasp the meaning of formal group participation, one must also consider the types of association which account for such participation (table 6). The most important type of association concerns sporting activities, where the same pattern characterising generic association membership prevails: in Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, plus Belgium) less than one-fourth of young people belong to sports associations, whereas Nordic countries express the highest rates. Participation in religious and parish-based associations varies extremely: Italy, where 18% of youth report membership in such associations, expresses a participation rate 8 times higher than Belgium's. Of particular interest here is membership in explicitly youth-oriented associations, which involve a very low proportion of youths. Once again, the Mediterranean areas displays the weakest values.

Table 6. *Percentage of 15-24 year olds participating/belonging to an association (Indicators J1a, J2a, J4a, J5a)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	I	IRL	L	NL	P	S	UK
Any association	60	47	58	77	38	36	49	67	54	61	66	77	40	82	50
Sports association	27	24	36	44	12	15	28	27	23	44	40	50	21	51	28
Religious or parish associations	12	2	7	5	6	2	3	12	18	7	6	18	8	13	7
Youth associations	9	13	6	18	8	3	7	11	7	12	26	8	5	9	8

An interesting trend seems to have been operative during the Nineties. If one compares overall participation rates in 1997 with those in 1990, all Mediterranean countries experience an appreciable increase in youth participation. Other countries' rates are either stable, or in some cases – Belgium, Denmark, United Kingdom – noticeably declining.[4]

Membership in political associations or trade unions involves a very small portion (<7%) of youths, with the notable exception of Scandinavian countries. In addition, "discussion of political matters with friends" is a frequent occurrence only for a small portion of young people (less than 20% in each country, but in most less than 10%). There seems to be no discernible trend across countries in such indicators of political participation, which probably depend on specific contingencies which may be relevant when survey were carried out (e.g.: in proximity of elections, corruption scandals, and so on).

Another significant indicator of political participation – and, as previously mentioned, at a more general level of social integration in terms of democratic citizenship – stems from self-placement on the left-right political spectrum. The importance of this indicator has to do not so much with the ideological orientation of youth, but rather with the proportion of young people who are able (or willing) to report such leanings (table 7). In many countries – notably, the Mediterranean ones, but Austria and Luxembourg as well – over one fourth of young people "don't know" (or refuse to reveal) their position on the political left-right scale.

Table 7. *Percentage of 15-24 year olds who do not know how to place themselves on a 10-point left-right political scale (or who refuse to do so) (Indicator J7)*

A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
35	19	19	12	26	26	20	17		32	28		35	20	14	30	9	17

These varying levels of political participation and their underlying patterns are reflected in young people's level of trust toward political institutions. High levels of trust in the national parliament are expressed by 30 to 60% of each nation's youth (18/25-year-old) population. Trust is relatively low (30-35%) in Mediterranean countries – such as Spain, Italy, Portugal – but in other countries – such as Finland and Great Britain – as well. The national parliament enjoys high levels of trust in selected central European and Nordic countries, Norway and the Netherlands above all.

In any case, the national parliament is by no means deemed to be the most trustworthy national institution. The legal system and the police forces both arouse a greater degree of trust of young people in all countries (table 8), although the extent of this greater confidence is relatively low

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[4] Unfortunately it is rather unclear how reliable these data are. In fact, after 1990 World Value Survey

in places such as Belgium, France, Portugal and – at least as far as the legal system is concerned – Italy. Churches, strangely enough, are deemed to be less trustworthy than national parliaments, except in some (but not all) strongly Catholic countries (including Northern Ireland). Confidence in the press is relatively low (except in some Scandinavian countries), whereas it is relatively high for the business world (except for some mid-European countries).With the predictable exception of Norway, young people from all countries place more trust – albeit in varying degrees – in the European Union than in their own national parliaments. The "European dimension" of youth conditions will be further explored below.

Table 8. *Percentage of 18/24-year-olds who express high levels of trust ("a great deal" or "quite a lot") in the national parliament, and ratio (r) between number of young people expressing high levels of trust in selected institutions and number of young people expressing high levels of trust toward national parliament (if ratios > 1, the corresponding institutions are considered more trustworthy than parliament; UK excluding Northern Ireland; Indicators I)*

	A	B	D (W)	D (E)	DK	E	F	FIN	I	IRL	N	NL	P	S	UK
Nat'l parl't (%)	36	40	42	33	42	32	51	32	33	37	56	58	33	44	34
Legal system (r)	1,7	1,2	1,4	1,4	1,9	1,3	1,2	2,4	1,0	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,1	1,4	1,5
Police (r)	1,6	1,2	1,4	1,2	2,1	1,5	1,2	2,2	1,9	2,0	1,6	1,4	1,2	1,7	2,3
Churches (r)	1,0	0,9	0,5	0,9	0,7	0,9	0,6	0,8	1,7	1,5	0,6	0,4	1,5	0,7	0,9
Press (r)	0,5	1,0	0,8	0,7	0,6	1,6	0,7	1,6	1,3	0,8	0,9	0,7	1,1	0,8	0,3
Major companies (r)	0,9	1,3	0,7	1,3	0,9	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,8	1,5	1,1	1,0	1,4	1,3	1,4
European Union (r)		1,8	1,2	1,8	1,1	1,7	1,5	2,0	2,4	2,0	0,7	1,1	1,9	1,5	1,5

4.2. Basic Values and Tolerance

A very popular typology (proposed by Ronald Inglehart) for recording individuals' value orientations posits a distinction between materialist and postmaterialist values. Materialist values deal with the satisfaction of primary needs and usually focus on physical security and well-being (defence, economy), whereas postmaterialist values have to do with secondary needs such as achievement, self-empowerment, social participation (concern for the environment, social citizenship). In theory, individuals living (and, especially, socialised) in advanced democracies should display postmaterialist tendencies. Young people in Western Europe should therefore be relatively postmaterialist in their value orientations.

Although the analysis should be taken further (which is not possible given the small youth subsamples in the World Value Surveys), the available data reveals that in all countries the majority of young individuals have "mixed" value orientations, characterised by both materialist and postmaterialist values. Figures dating back to 1990 (Eurobarometer data, with robust

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wave, the questions regarding association membership changed a little.

samples) indicate that postmaterialist orientations prevail against materialist ones to a greater extent in countries such as the Netherlands, but also Spain and Germany (including ex-East Germany), which doesn't seem too convincing (see problems mentioned at the beginning of section 2) and may also depend on the conflation of values grounded in actual conditions with aspirations.

In all countries, young people, when asked to state the importance in their lives of a series of value-laden objects (such as family, work, leisure, friends, religion, politics, etc.), confer a very high degree of relevance to family (table 9), and this is especially true in countries as diverse as Italy, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland. Nevertheless, there are some cases in which "family" does not represent the most important value: in the Netherlands, in Sweden and in the western part of Germany, "friends" are more important than family. But then, friendship is highly valued in almost all countries (less so in France and Portugal).

"Work" occupies an intermediate position in terms of importance in most countries, and is everywhere more important than, for example, religion or politics. In some countries, most of which have high youth unemployment rates in common, work is considered as important or even more important than friendship (Finland being a notable exception).

Table 9. *Percentage of 18-24 year olds who state that "family" is "very important", and ratio (r) between number of young people giving much importance to selected aspects of life and number of young people giving much importance to family (if ratios > 1, the corresponding aspects are considered more important than family) (Indicators H2, H3, H5 and H7)*

	A	B	D (W)	D (E)	DK	E	F	FIN	I	IRL	N	NL	P	S	UK
Family (%)	79	71	47	67	80	74	74	66	82	90	80	65	60	83	87
Work (r)	0,6	0,8	0,6	0,8	0,6	0,8	0,8	0,4	0,8	0,7	0,9	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7
Friends (r)	0,7	0,8	1,2	0,8	0,8	0,7	0,6	0,9	0,7	0,7	1,0	1,1	0,4	1,0	0,7
Leisure (r)	0,7	0,7	1,3	0,8	0,7	0,6	0,5	0,9	0,5	0,4	0,6	0,8	0,3	0,7	0,5

An important dimension of basic values concerns attitudes toward gender equality. A specific indicator, drawn from a 1997 Eurobarometer, shows that Europe's youth can be divided into a two tiers: one in which a great majority of young people are basically oriented towards gender equality (70-80% claim to have "no preference" when it comes to having a man or a woman as their "boss"), and this tier includes Northern European countries, plus Spain); one in which only approximately half (40-55%) of all young people do have a gender preference, and this tier includes all Mediterranean countries (except Spain), plus Austria, Belgium and Finland.

Another facet of value orientations has to do with tolerance toward people from different cultures or having different life-styles. In general, Central and Northern European countries are the most tolerant (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Belgium), whereas young people from

Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece) are the most prone to feeling "uneasiness" toward minority or marginalised groups (table 10). However, these general differences do not always hold for specific groups. For instance, young Belgians are the most unsettled by "people of another race" (and, in general, Northern European youth are more disturbed by the idea of living next door to "people of a different race" or "immigrants and foreign workers").

Homophobia is relatively more widespread in Mediterranean countries (except Spain), but not in an exclusive manner. The fear of having homosexuals as neighbours is confessed to by at least 20% (more than 30% in Portugal, Austria, Finland) of young people in all countries, except in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Table 10. *Percentage of 15-24 year olds who feel "uneasiness" when meeting selected groups (Indicators K1 to K4)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	I	IRL	L	NL	P	S	UK
People of another nationality	5	18	5	2	1	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	2	1
People of another race	6	17	6	5	3	3	6	4	5	2	1	3	4	3	1
Homosexuals, gays, lesbians	13	8	15	8	7	20	13	13	17	15	11	8	15	9	15
Feels uneasiness toward no group	47	39	36	33	72	55	49	42	46	50	47	42	62	33	47

4.3. Safety and Risk

Today young people are perhaps the major beneficiaries of advances in health care, in that to a greater degree than ever before children enjoy access to proficient public health services and hygienic living conditions (even though changing dietary habits may be represent a new threat to youth health in many countries). In all countries, 15-year-old males can expect to live for another 60 years; females of the same age can count, on average, on another 65 years. Variations in life expectancy across countries are relatively small.

Despite this, however, there are major differences in youth mortality rates and in habits which affect health. A first major difference, which is widely known, refers to the greater mortality rates which distinguish males from females: male mortality rates that are 2 to 4 times greater than female rates (table 11). Gender differences are especially marked for motor traffic accidents (male rates 3 to 5 times greater than female rates) and self-inflicted mortality/suicide rates (male rates 4 to 7 times greater than female rates, excepting the Netherlands and Portugal where male rates are "only" twice as high as female ones).

There are also significant inter-country differences (table 11). Overall mortality rates vary significantly: in Portugal, which has the highest rate, young male mortality is almost three times higher than in Sweden, which has the lowest; young female mortality is almost two times

higher. If only motor traffic mortality is examined, the Portugal-Sweden ratio is equal to 5 for males and 3 for females; for male suicide rates, the ratio is again equal to 3 (young female suicide is relatively rare in all countries). Northern European countries generally have the lower rates.

Regardless of overall mortality rates, one may also observe that in Nordic countries deaths of young males are disproportionately due to self-inflicted wounds and suicides (30-40% of deaths in Finland, over 20% in Sweden), whereas in Mediterranean countries the impact of such causes of death is significantly lower than 10%. On the other hand, motor traffic accidents account for relatively few deaths in Nordic countries (20% circa in Finland and Sweden) with respect to other countries in Mediterranean and Central Europe (45% of young male deaths in Belgium and Italy; 35% of female deaths in Belgium, Germany, Greece).

Table 11. *Overall mortality rates (x 100.000) of 15/24-year-olds in 1995, by sex (m/f) (Indicators L4 and L5)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	FL	I	IRL	ISL	L	N	NL	P	S	UK
M	116	102	89	74	87	98	102	93		90	85				61	159	56	77
F	29	40	34	30	28	28	35	26		29	25				28	46	26	29

Other geographical differences pertaining to risks to health and safety involve smoking and drinking. Heavy alcohol consumption, for instance is much more widespread among males and in Northern European countries. Whereas it is generally true that males engage in more risky behaviour, as regards youth smoking in many countries young women report higher rates of cigarette use.

4.4. The European Dimension

Finally, the study turns to the "European dimension", i.e., the attitudes and behaviours of European youth toward knowledge and experience of cultures and institutions beyond their national borders. This is a crucial aspect for the future development of the European Union, as the network involving the member states and their populations continues to grow thicker.

A first obstacle to such a development is linguistic. Although the youth populations of many European countries are almost entirely capable of communicating in at least two languages (one of which is usually English), some countries – especially the United Kingdom (where the majority of young people speak no foreign language) but also the Mediterranean countries (where lack of multilingualism is less widespread than in Britain, but more acute, in that those

countries' national languages are often relatively useless for transactions of any kind with people from other countries) and some mid-European countries – have many youths that encounter great difficulties in communicating with foreigners (table 13).

The pattern of language difficulties is reflected in young people's travel experience. Once again, the Southern periphery and the British Isles express relatively low rates of interculturalism. In these countries, only a minority of young people have travelled abroad recently. Of course, this is in part due to geographical as well as economic constraints; but one cannot help but acknowledge that hoped-for human mobility among European countries may will be hindered by these linguistic and experential deficiencies.

We have already mentioned that many young people place more trust in the European Union than in their own national parliaments. What do young people think of the EU in terms of their own future? Interestingly enough, with the exception of the United Kingdom (but of Spain as well), the Mediterranean countries and Ireland, i.e., the youths who currently have a less developed "European competence" in terms of experience and language skills, are those who are most optimistic vis-à-vis the EU's potential role (table 13).

Table 13. *Young people and the "European dimension" (Indicators N1, N4, N5a)*

	A	B	D	DK	E	EL	F	FIN	I	IRL	L	NL	P	S	UK
% of young people who know only their mother tongue	24	21	26	4	43	29	27	6	31	30	1	4	33	3	55
% of young people who have visited a foreign country in the last two years	71	78	76	91	30	17	63	80	46	57	97	90	49	84	51
% of young people who feel that the EU is "a way to create a better future for young people"	40	26	34	26	26	40	32	35	51	49	34	23	40	30	27

5. CONCLUSIONS

We can recall here that as regards education there appears to be a tripartite ranking that distinguishes Northern European, Middle European and Southern European countries (in order of decreasing qualification of youth populations). Mediterranean countries also have the most regulated labour markets, the highest rates of unemployment among young people (although there are exceptions, and several reasons which account for the differences), the greatest gender discrepancies in unemployment, the highest percentages of young adults who continue to live with their parents. In terms of income-packaging, however, there are at least four groupings, in that the United Kingdom cannot be considered akin to other Northern European countries for the centrality of the market (and not the state) in the former.

If we consider the less structural and more cultural aspects, again we often encounter a potential division, which poses Nordic countries against Mediterranean ones. Association membership is higher in the Northern and mid-European countries (although the South seems to be making up the lost ground), where there is also a higher capacity for left-right political spectrum self-placement, greater relative trust in national parliaments, higher levels of belief in gender equality and tolerance towards outsider groups. The Mediterranean also has higher mortality rates, especially as regards motor traffic accidents, but a lower incidence of suicide or alcohol abuse.

However, in all of these cases there are important exceptions that do not make it easy to generalise. In addition, there are many dimensions along which there seem to be no discernible trends (basic values, political participation), and countries which at times behave as if they belong to one group and at other times seem to belong to others (e.g., France, and especially the United Kingdom as concerns foreign language skills and travel experience).

If one considers all the above figures and remarks, one should say that the degree of social visibility of youth as a social category varies a lot across European countries, depending on the features of the welfare system. The most "invisible" youths, in that very few welfare measures address them, should be those who live in Mediterranean countries. But in the meantime young people from these countries, being so strongly economically dependent from their families, remain longer in a post-adolescent condition. From this point of view they should be even more socially visible than, say, Scandinavian young men and women. This is not to deride theories described in section 2 of this chapter, but to stress that it is truly difficult to find a unique and sound interpretation of the dynamics underlying the social conditions of European youth. What is absolutely clear is that risks of poverty among young people are far stronger in countries where the labour market is strongly regulated and transfers from welfare state towards youth are non-existent or very small.

The risk entailed by being young in contemporary European societies is not merely a question of ignoring the citizenship rights of young generations. In fact, it may be argued that slow and delayed transitions to adulthood render people increasingly less able to adequately play adult roles and face adult responsibilities. And what is true for partnership and parenthood is even more true for socialisation to work roles. How well can a man or a woman perform if he/she has not had a real work experience up to his/her thirties?

Finally, it should be stressed that from the structural data presented in this report it turns out that in contemporary Europe there are increasing inequalities among old and young generations regarding the chances of finding a job, the age at which marriage and parenthood are experienced. In other words, despite the growing role of the markets in shaping individuals'

destinations, collectivistic and ascriptive forms of inequality – such as those based on age – are more important and visible today than in the recent past.

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Part III

Youth Policies in Europe

1. YOUTH POLICY CONCEPTS

1.1. The Narrow and Wide Youth Policy Concept

While in international law and in international statistics "youth" is very well defined and covers the age between 15 and 24 years (Angel, 1995: 35), the same is not the case in national youth policies.

In European countries with a long historical tradition for youth work and youth policy there is a marked tendency to define youth policy as policies directed towards "young people" which includes some or all cohorts of children, and – in several countries – even expand into age groups beyond the limit of 24 years. In other European countries, the generic term "young people" is not used at all in policy contexts, and in these countries there is a separation between child policy and youth policy. Normally, children in these countries are defined legally – and politically – as minors, while youth is defined as teenagers and young adults. Hence, in these countries there is an overlap between policies towards children and policies towards youth, but these policies are not identical and cannot easily be united into a report on youth politics.

The national rapporteurs have not been asked to report what age groups are the target of youth policies, and only a few of them touch on this question. Based on information from a former comparative survey of youth policy within the European Union and the Scandinavian countries (Nissen, 1995), the countries in question can be classified into four groups according to the main target groups of national youth policies:

- countries where youth policy covers the age range from birth to 25/30 years (Austria, Belgium, Germany and Finland),
- countries where youth policy covers the age range from the age of early primary school to 25 years (Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg),
- countries where youth policy covers the age range from 11/13 years to 25 years (France, Iceland, Norway and United Kingdom),
- countries where youth policy covers the age range from the end of lower secondary education to 25 or 30 years of age (Denmark, Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Sweden).

This classification is based on a single expert's interpretation of national youth policies and it might not be accurate in every detail. Besides, this classification ignores the fact that within each country, youth can be defined in different ways from one sector to another. However, the

classification does point to the fact that the concept of youth in a political context is the product of national and historical traditions.[5]

Because of the fundamentally different youth concepts – the narrow one which excludes children and the wide-ranging one – it is very difficult to compare youth policy across Europe. If, for example, one wants to study the similarities and dissimilarities between youth policy in countries with a tradition for a wide-ranging youth concept and youth policies in Scandinavian countries, one should include both child and youth policies from the Scandinavian countries because these age groups are included in the wide-ranging youth policy concept. Another example of difficulties arises when comparing countries with and without special youth legislation: When some countries have no provisions for youth in a specialized youth act, this is most likely the result of the national youth concept, because in countries with a narrow youth concept, provisions comparable to special youth acts are often to be found in legislation regarding children; legislation that should be included in the comparisons.

These differences in the definition of youth as either young people (the wide youth concept) or as adolescents (the narrow concept) might even be of importance when examining the two main approaches to youth policy in Europe: youth as a human resource vs. youth as a problem ((Stafseng, 2000b) these approaches will be addressed more thoroughly in section 3 of this comparative report). In countries where youth is chiefly perceived as minors (not legal minors, but social) and – consequently – more like children than adults, there will most likely be a tendency to consider young people as a potential problem, as being in danger, as people that must be protected against threats to their development.

On the contrary, in countries in which youth policy is based on the narrower and more adult point of view, there seems to be a tendency to regard youth as a resource more than a problem.

However, there are some major departures from these general correlations. The United Kingdom, in which youth policies cover adolescents and young adults is the country where the image of youth as a problem is most obvious. And in Finland, where youth policies cover both children and youth, the image of youth as a resource is predominant.

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[5] The reasons for the different national youth concepts in Europe are complicated. It has been suggested that it might be the result of different historical inspirations for youth policy: the original German concept "Jugendlichen" which includes both children and youth and which might have inspired all German speaking countries while Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries may be more influenced by the American concepts "adolescence" and "teenagers" (Stafseng, 2000a).

1.2. Youth Politics vs. Youth Work

Another problematic aspect of comparing national youth policies based on national reports is the differences in the conceptualisation of "policy". Obviously, the national reports on youth policy are based on different comprehensions of policy, either a dynamic or a static concept of policy. In some of the national reports, the greatest importance in attached to the national youth work: How is it organized? Who are the major actors of youth work? What are the aims of youth work in that country and how are these aims achieved? In these reports, there is no distinction between youth work and youth policy, and the major youth work providers are also seen as the major youth policy actors. This is what is meant by a static policy concept: youth policy is identical with the state of youth work.

As opposed to his, other reports emphasize the processes of change, the trends, the evolution and development of youth work and the way in which youth policy actors interact. In these reports, the contemporary youth work is seen as a result of yesterday's youth policies and according to this policy concept, major youth work providers are not necessarily also major youth policy actors.

These variations in the understanding of policy are correlated to national traditions: In reports from countries with a long tradition for a national youth policy and an extensive youth sector – primarily countries in Northern Continental Europe – the static youth policy concept is predominant. While in reports from countries where a co-ordinated youth policy has been introduced rather late, and in countries where major revisions of youth policies are being implemented – the Mediterranean countries, the British Isles, and Denmark – the youth policy concept is more dynamic and emphasis is put on recent changes in youth work, in youth provisions and on the interaction between policy actors.

The two opposing youth policy concepts represent a major impediment in the comparisons between youth policy in the European countries. The guidelines for the country-reports did stress the dynamic concept of politics when they asked for reports on "policy actors", "roles of actors", "policy networks", and "trends" but these guidelines have not – as mentioned – prevented some of the rapporteurs from subscribing to the static policy concept and from describing major youth work providers as they were major youth policy actors.

1.3. The Youth Sector Concept

One of the major differential factors in Western European youth policy is the sectorization of youth work. In some countries, youth work, youth policy, and youth legislation are unified in a well-defined and well-structured youth sector. Other countries function without this kind of separate youth sector; in these countries, youth work and youth policy are dispersed across a range of traditional sectors: the social sector, the educational sector, the cultural sector, the health sector, etc.

Countries with a well-developed youth sector are characterized by having a ministry of youth or a ministry with special responsibility for youth matters, a secretariat-general on youth matters plus specific youth legislation. In countries without – or with an undeveloped – youth sector, youth matters and youth provisions are divided among several ministries, authorities and agencies, and youth related measures are regulated by more general legislation.

However, all Western European countries fall somewhere between these extremes: in practice, there are no countries in which all youth matters are united in one youth sector, and – on the other hand – there are also tendencies towards amalgamating youth matters in countries without a youth sector. Hence, the Western European countries cannot be classified in two distinct groups: with and without a youth sector. It would be more correct to say that the European countries can be placed on a continuum from countries with a well-developed youth sector to countries with only a few elements of a self-contained youth sector.

But based on the major policy actors, the way of co-ordinating youth policies and the legislation on youth matters, the European countries in this study can – tentatively – be classified into three different categories:

- Countries with a major youth sector: Countries in which youth policy is primarily concentrated within the limits of a well-defined and dominating youth sector (Austria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Germany, Spain, Greece and Portugal).

- Countries with a minor youth sector: Countries in which youth policy is partly linked to a specialized youth sector and partly dispersed among a number of traditional sectors such as education, employment, urban planning, etc. (this is the case in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, and Norway).

- Countries without a special youth sector: Countries in which youth policy is fractured into traditional sectors and without a centre (this is the case in the United Kingdom, in Iceland, in Italy, and in Denmark).

This classification will be used throughout this report where relevant. It should be noted that the classification is only based on the extent to which the organization and co-ordination of youth policies are united in a separate societal sector. The classification does not indicate the level or amount of youth work, or the priorities which are given to youth related measures.

In the national reports, there is a tendency that in countries with a well-developed youth sector, the concept of youth policy is coloured and restrained by the already existing youth sector: the political and administrative provinces which are defined as a part of the youth sector are regarded as "youth policy", while other youth relevant matters (including education, training, housing and health, for example) are excluded from the youth policy concept – and, to a great extent, also from the country reports.[6]

By contrast, in reports from countries without a well-developed youth sector, there is a tendency towards a more wide-ranging youth policy concept. In these countries, youth policy is a cross-sector strategy to not only regulate young people's living conditions but also to view old and well-known social problems in this context of youth policy. The national reports from these countries suggest that here the concept of youth policy is given a certain role in a long-term modernization of society; a modernization that transgresses the traditional sectors of society and instead perceive the living conditions of a specific cohort and the public measures towards this cohort in their entirety. In countries in which youth policy has been a well-defined concept for a long time, youth policy is a not given this role in the modernization processes – at least not in reports from these countries.

1.4. The Need for Shared Definitions of Core Concepts

Youth policy cannot be discussed in a meaningful way, until the concepts used have been defined and – preferably – shared across countries. As mentioned above, the concepts used in the national reports differ from report to report, but in this comparative report, the concepts used – tentatively – are defined in this way:

Children: there is no general concept of children; the meaning of "children" varies according to the national traditions.

Open youth work: Youth work – statutory or non-statutory – open to all youth, without request for membership; examples are youth clubs, youth centres, and youth information.

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[6] This tendency does not apply to Germany or the German national report.

State youth council: Statutory council normally consisting of representatives from voluntary and statutory youth councils plus public authorities.

Statutory youth work: youth work prescribed or authorized by legislation or statutes.

Voluntary youth work: non-statutory youth work based on the principle of voluntary participation and voluntary leadership.

Young people: children and youth.

Youth agency: statutory body responsible for the implementation or the administration of youth oriented measures.

Youth association: local or minor, voluntary, non-statutory and non-profit association of youth; mainly set up by young people themselves (the principle of self-organization).

Youth council: Private and semi-private umbrella organization of youth organisations or associations.

Youth organization: a voluntary, non-statutory and non-profit organization *of* youth or *for* youth.

Youth participation: the economic, societal and political participation of youth as citizens.

Youth plan: public youth programme with both general aims and specific objectives.

Youth project: short time measure involving youth either as participants or as organizers; often experimental.

Youth protection: the protection of youth as minors in the legal system, on the labour market, in sexual relations and in public places.

Youth service: long-time, institutionalized, statutory or voluntary youth oriented measure.

Youth support: public support for out-of-school education and the societal participation of youth; also labelled youth promotion.

Youth welfare: protection of youth in the family; also called youth care or youth assistance.

Youth work: any kind of service, project or programme directed towards youth – statutory or voluntary.

Youth: in this report there is not a general youth concept; the meaning of the concept varies according to the national context in which it is used.

2. YOUTH POLICY ACTORS

2.1. Public Institutions Responsible for Youth Policies

Comparisons between countries in this matter are difficult because the constitutions of the involved countries differ substantially – some nations are federations or unions of states with more or less control of their own internal affairs and within individual states the division of labour among state, regional and local authorities varies a lot. But some indicators may suggest to what extent explicit youth policy is a major policy area, which is given high national priority. Two simple indicators will be used:

1) On the state, governmental level:

- Is there a specialized ministry of youth to which the jurisdiction over an explicit youth policy is allocated?
- Is youth policy primarily allocated to one sectorial ministry and has a junior minister with youth as his or her responsibility been appointed?
- Is youth policy recognized as a separate policy area that is shared among a few ministries?
- Is youth policy co-ordinated among several ministries?
- Is youth policy un-co-ordinated among ministries?

2) On the state, administrative level:

- Is there one or more specialized directorates on youth, whose responsibility it is to:
- implement youth oriented legislation?
- supervise or monitor youth services, youth institutions or authorities at lower levels?
- allocate funds for youth work or youth programmes?
- co-ordinate and consult actors within the youth field?
- Is there no specialized directorate on youth?

Based on these two indicators, the 18 countries in this study, can be classified in this way:

- Countries with a specialized youth ministry and a youth directorate (or similar administrative structure). This group includes Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, and France.7

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[7] In France, there is a specialized youth ministry but its power is rather limited, and there is no fully coordinated youth policy. Each ministry has its own area of intervention and specialization and runs structures and programs in that area: recreation for the Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports,

- Countries where youth policy is allocated to one ministry and where youth matters are handled by a youth directorate. This group comprises Sweden, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway.

- Countries where youth policies are co-ordinated among several ministries, but where there is no youth directorate (or similar authority). This is the situation in Denmark.

- Countries without a youth directorate and in which youth policies are not co-ordinated among different ministries. This situation applies to Iceland, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

2.2. Parliamentary Committees

Only very few of the national reports address the questions about a standing committee on youth policy within the national parliament and whether the political parties have appointed a specialized parliamentary spokesman on youth.

From other sources (European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the Youth Field (CDEJ), 1998) it is known that only the Spanish Senate has a special committee on youth policy. Other parliaments have broader committees, which include youth policy. This is the case in Luxembourg (Committee on Sport and Youth) and Germany (Committee on Family, the Elderly, Women and Young People). The Austrian parliament can set up temporary committees on youth policy, and MPs responsible for youth questions in the Greek parliament have established an informal committee on youth policy.

In some parliaments, youth questions are handled by one particular sectorial committee. This is the case in France, in the Netherlands, and in Sweden. But most parliaments have not allocated youth matters to one particular committee – specific youth questions can be handled by several different standing committees.

2.3. Youth as policy actors

2.3.1 Participation in Traditional Political Systems

Even though young adults in all the European countries included in this study are granted voting rights (the electoral age is 18 or 19 years in most parliaments (Indicator B1) and hence the majority of youth (as defined in this study) has the right to vote, only few of the national reports on youth policy discuss young adults' participation in the traditional political processes – as party members, as voters in European, national, regional or local elections, as candidates for

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occupational integration for the Ministère du Travail et de la Solidarité, schooling-related matters for the

political parties, or as members of representative bodies: Parliaments, regional or local city councils.

It is a well-known fact that youth – especially those voting for the first time – has a lower turnout than older age groups. Swedish turnout analyses – for example – show that participation in general elections for first-time voters is 2-10 percent points lower than the general rate of voting (Report on Youth Conditions in Sweden, p. 24). Another report mentions that, generally, youth is disinterested in politics and political participation (United Kingdom), and figures from Denmark show that only 1.5% of the elected local and regional town councillors are below the age of 26 years.

The lack of more comprehensive information on the participation of youth in the traditional ways of gaining political influence – as voters, as party members, as parliamentary candidates, and as members of elected bodies at different levels – could indicate that the national rapporteurs regard the political participation of youth more as the special, non-adult and limited channels reserved for youthful influence – youth organizations, youth councils and youth parliaments – than as the adult ways of taking part in the conventional political processes.

2.3.2 Youth Councils

In all the national reports, national, regional and local youth councils are emphasized as the major source of political participation and influence of youth. Youth councils – whether they are private umbrella organizations of youth organizations and youth associations or they are state youth councils that include public youth institutions and state officials – are the traditional channels of co-operation and exchange of information between politicians, authorities and youth.

However, in many of the European countries, alternative ways of youth participation are being introduced; not as alternatives to the youth council model, but on an experimental basis and as supplementary models of influence: youth parliaments, workshops and commissions, information on and from youth, and campaigns directed towards youth (Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland – among others).

The national reports do not explain this trend, but the traditional model for entrusting influence to youth has shown its limitations in several ways.

Firstly, youth councils only represent a minority of youth. Data from the *Study of the Youth Conditions in Europe* reveals that if sports organizations – which are not normally members of youth councils – are excluded, the level of organization among 15-24 year olds is quite low:

Ministère de l'Education Nationale.

From 10-20% in the Southern European countries to between 40% and 50% in the Scandinavian countries (Indicator J2a-J4a, 1997).

Secondly, the youth councils do not represent a socially balanced section of the youth population. A social profile of the members and participants of youth organizations and associations would, without any doubt, reveal that especially youth from low income families and youth at risk do not take part in associative life.

Thirdly, there has been a tendency towards a change in the motivation of membership or participation in organizations. Youth belongs to or participates in associations and organizations rather because of the services offered than because of an interest in the ideals or the democratic structures of the organization. Instead of being *members,* young people become *users* of associations and organizations and many of these users have a pragmatic interest and a consumer attitude towards voluntary organizations rather than an ideological interest in their activities (Vanandruel et al., 1996: 345ff).

Fourthly, the persons who represent youth in youth organizations and youth councils are not necessarily young themselves. Very often, youth leaders active in the organizational structures of youth associations and organizations are not young people but adults whose knowledge of the interests of the young members may be rather limited.

2.3.3 Youth Parliaments

In most of the countries – 11 out of the 18 countries in this study – alternatives to youth councils are being implemented. Countries such as Liechtenstein, Scotland, Iceland, Denmark and Ireland have established national youth parliaments, while Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have instituted local city councils of youth or regional youth parliaments. Some reports specify that this of kind of youth parliamentary bodies are the results of general elections among youth and that they have been given limited decision-making authority and their own budget (Germany, Denmark), but most country reports do not clarify how these parliamentary bodies are elected, what their competences are, or how their tasks are defined.

2.3.4 Workshops and Commissions

In other countries – Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – the search for alternative forms of co-operation between youth and the authorities has resulted in national ad-hoc co-operative bodies or workshops, in which youth or representatives of youth associations meet with either civil servants or politicians with the purpose of exchanging ideas on youth policy. In the Netherlands, the National Youth Debate is an annually repeated youth debate, during which

100-200 young people in the age range of 10-18 years enter debates with politicians and policy-makers. On the agenda is a wide range of topics that are relevant to children and young people's interests, such as education, safety, developing countries and environmental issues.

Norway and Austria have established national commissions of youth. In Austria, the Youth Forum is a permanent advisory group of 15 youths. Norway has sat up the Youth Forum for Democracy with 16 members between the age of 15 and 26 selected from all parts of Norway, representing a wide range of youth groups with various cultural and social backgrounds. The Youth Forum for Democracy is an advisory commission for the government, and its mandate includes proposals, which can promote the participation of youth in national, polices, in the educational system and in the municipalities.

2.3.5 Information On and From Youth

In most countries, there are some kind of systematic collection and dissemination of statistical and survey data on the living conditions of children and youth, but a few countries have expanded this monitoring to include qualitative data, and in these countries this information is used as an indirect way of making children and youth heard.

In Germany, some local authorities have established "Children- and Youth Forums" and other open forms of discussion in which young people can present their views and interests to local politicians. The Finnish authorities have instituted several methods aiming at a systematic collection of information on youth, such as the Youth Barometers, various surveys, a special youth research programme and a data bank which gives access to information on the opinions of young people.

Similar methods are used in Norway, but are supplemented by the systematic use of children and youth as informants: group interviews with children and youth, diaries, drawings of physical surroundings, and artwork from young people. The use of youth as informants is also the idea behind the Austrian experiments with groups of youth organized in so-called future workshops, where adolescents meet and work on various topics. In such future workshops, agreement on actions to be taken must be reached and the results of the workshops are presented to the politicians.

2.3.6 Campaigns Directed Towards Youth

At least two countries – Finland and the Netherlands – have used media campaigns as instruments to raise the political participation of youth. With the purpose of increasing the turnout of youth in a Finnish general election, a campaign was arranged in mass media and at

schools. In the Netherlands, a national media campaign was used to inform children and youth on their rights and duties.

2.3.7 Youth's Participation in Public Debates

Only a few of the national reports mention examples of how attempts are made to stimulate youth's participation in public debates. In Germany, laws regulating urban planning have imbedded regulations requiring the participation of citizens in planning and decision-making processes. This is being used to stimulate participation of young people at the local level.

In Wales, it is planned to establish a Virtual Youth Assembly, which will function as a communication network for young people. Examples of this kind of virtual networks among youth can probably be found in most European countries, but they do not contribute to solving the problem of the limited youth participation in general public debates.

2.3.8 Geographical Differences

There is a marked tendency indicating that the Southern European countries, in which the level of participation in voluntary organizations and associations is low – Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy – are also countries in which there are few – if any – experiments with alternative forms of youth participation. Apparently, in these countries it is the aim to raise the rate of organizational membership, to strengthen the traditional representative youth organizations and associations, and finally to consolidate the co-operation between the authorities and the third sector.

The Portuguese report claims that the authorities are open to dialogue with and inspiration from youth organizations, but the Portuguese youth organizations lack the capacity to take part in this kind of co-operation. The Portuguese National Youth Council, the platform of youth organizations, is usually more concerned with internal conflicts than with contributing to the definition of youth policies. Also, youth organizations do not usually play a very active role in implementing youth policies.

The situation is somewhat similar in Spain where the level of associative participation still is low in spite of several forms of support from public authorities. The situation on the local level is an example of the consequences of the low level of youth organization: Many local authorities want to establish a youth council, but there is a lack of associations which can send representatives for its constitution.

In Greece, there has been a campaign to persuade youth to participate in a youth organization. The government finances all youth organizations and specific action programmes are

implemented to promote the creation of networks, reinforce youth voluntarism and provide support for the creation of youth councils at a local level.

Italy is the only country in the European Union without a national youth council. A new youth bill presented in 1999 will – if enacted – create National Youth Council and similar forms of representation at local levels.

2.3.9 Major Youth Organizations and Associations

Apart from national youth councils and other types of umbrella organizations, the national reports do not address the question about which national youth organizations and associations are the most important ones regarding youth policy. Apparently, the same kind of organizations and associations are active in most of the studied countries – political, religious, sporting, ecologically oriented, trade-unionist, and cultural – but information of their seize in terms of memberships, number of local associations or branches, and the number of leaders or instructors would be outside the scope of this report.

The only types of youth organizations, which are given special attention, are the religious organizations.

2.3.10 Religious Youth Organizations

Historically, churches are one of the original major providers of youth work, and churches are – most likely – still major. However, the national reports only draw attention to religious youth organizations as political actors in a few instances, and even then it is uncertain if they are major political actors or only major providers of youth work.

The Irish report mentions a number of religious youth organizations, and especially the Catholic Youth Council, which supports youth programmes, training, events and activities for youth and adult leaders, is emphasized. It provides co-ordination and support for educational and recreational programmes aimed at young people, and it runs Youth Information Centres and Crime Diversion Projects.

In Iceland, there is a long tradition for youth work within the national church. The YMCA and the YWCA (Young Men's/Women's Christian Association) are active on the national level and are also represented in the international co-operation of Christian youth work. However, the influence of these organizations on the national or local youth policies is unknown.

In Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest youth work actor and it leads extensive youth work with more than 1.200 employed and 30.000 trained volunteers to work with teenagers and young people. Also, the Orthodox Church of Finland provides various forms

of youth work – especially scouting and youth clubs. Altogether, 10% of Finnish youth between the age of 15 and 18 participate in religious youth work.

In the Greek report, the Greek Orthodox Church is characterized as a public institution responsible for youth policy at level with governmental agencies. During the last decade, the Greek Orthodox Church has started new forms of youth work which include seminars for youth leaders, Sunday schools and summer church camps and also web sites. However, the role of the Greek Orthodox Church in the development of national or local youth policies is not discussed. Formerly, the church in Liechtenstein used to be a major youth policy actor, but the church is no longer involved in youth work.

2.3.11 The Student, Labour and Farmers' Movements as Political Actors

Historically, the labour movement has been one of the major providers of youth work and also a major actor in child and youth policies, but none of the national reports underline youth organizations affiliated with the labour movement as contemporary policy actors. Youth labour organizations are mentioned – for example in the reports from Germany and Denmark – but their absences in most national reports indicate a very limited influence on youth policy. This could be the result of the priorities given to the educational, social and cultural sectors of youth policy (and the corresponding lower priority to labour market policy) in the national reports, but it could also reflect the diminishing role of youth on the labour market.

Also, the youth movement within agriculture has lost much of its former significance. Young farmers are only mentioned in the Greek and the Portuguese reports, and at least in the latter, young farmers associations have little power in influencing youth policy.

With the possible exception of Italy, the student movements have apparently lost their former influence on national policies – youth policies and general policies. At least, the student movements are only mentioned in the Italian report.

2.3.12 The Relationship between Organizations and the State

Historically, youth organizations and youth associations were private, non-commercial and non-statutory associations based on the principle of voluntary participation and run by voluntary leaders and instructors. But several of the national reports indicate that nowadays, youth organizations depend on financial support from the state or other public funds and their operations are – to a large extent – defined by or adapted to statutes. In some cases, the traditional distinction between voluntary and statutory youth work is being sustained by the principle of "subsidiarity"; in others, there are trends towards what might be labeled as "Neo-

Corporatism", and the concept *quasi non-governmental organizations* has been introduced to encompass the character of this kind of modern youth organizations. The effects of this development are not discussed in the national reports on youth policy.

2.4. Youth Institutes - Expert Committees - Counselling Institutions

2.4.1 Research Institutes

Several of the countries included in this study have specialized youth research institutes but the political importance (or the lack of importance) of these institutes are pointed out in only a few country-reports – the German, the Danish and the Austrian reports. Youth research institutes contribute to the evolution of youth policy not only through their research or evaluation activities but also by providing experts to commissions and councils on youth (mentioned in the Finnish report) and by producing knowledge, which can be disseminated by clearing houses as – for example – in Ireland, Portugal and the Netherlands.

The reports do not address the important question to what extent youth research institutes are independent of national governments.

2.4.2 Ombudsmen for Children

As a result of the national implementations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN Convention of 20 November 1989, 1989), several countries have established one or more Ombudsmen for Children (Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Spain and Portugal) or similar institutions for the protection of children's rights and interests in society (children are defined as young people below the age of 18). Only the Danish and the Greek Ombudsmen institutions are mentioned in the national reports on youth policy.

The Danish National Council for Children has dealt with such issues as the protection of youth between 15 and 17 against exploitation as porn models; ethnic youth; the alcohol consumption of youth; commercial marketing towards youth; social legislation regarding support for youth; and the final classes of lower secondary education.

The Greek National Observatory for Children and Youth Rights promotes scientific research and evaluations about children and youth rights, it collects statistical, legal and bibliographical data and it oversees the implementation of the legal framework. It also co-ordinates the submission of an Annual Action Programme to the Greek Parliament and the publication of the Annual Report regarding the situation of children in Greece.

2.4.3 Major Corporations or other Market-Oriented Actors

Market-oriented actors involved in promoting youth policy are insufficiently examined in the country reports; with the exception of commercial leisure-time activities (cinema, concerts, amusement parks, Internet cafes, discotheques etc.), the majority of them do not even mention this subject. This lack of information can possibly be interpreted as an indication that corporations or other market-oriented actors are not active in the youth policy field, but we cannot know for sure if this is the reason for omitting this question.

The country reports which discuss this subject emphasize these examples:

Sponsoring and funding of youth oriented work by commercial businesses and funds. This kind of youth work funding is only mentioned in the Swedish and the Danish reports, but exists probably in most countries. If the sponsoring or the funding is substantial it can be a major actor in youth policy because it will influence the development of new forms of youth work.

Employers' associations and labour unions are emphasized in the German, the Danish, and the Irish reports. Employers' associations and labour unions are without any doubt major actors in certain aspects of youth policy; e.g. vocational training and the integration of young people into the labour market. This is especially the case in countries where the labour market policies are negotiated between the two sides of industry and the state, and in countries where the sides of industry have a great influence on labour market policies in other ways. This is certainly the case in the Scandinavian countries and most likely in several other countries.

The Portuguese Youth Foundation is an unusual example of this kind of co-operation in youth policy. It is funded by major agricultural, industrial, commercial, banking and services firms, municipal administrations and several public institutes, and its objectives are to promote young people's integration into professional life.

The German report draws attention to an increasing share of profit-oriented suppliers offering traditional youth services. At the moment, their share of all youth services produced in Germany amounts to less than 5%, but their share of youth services is growing.

As accentuated in the Dutch report, technical, social and economic developments have created room for commercialization and individualization of the leisure of youth, and commercial services have partly replaced the traditional (voluntary or state funded) provisions.

Private health insurance companies are probably major actors in all countries with private health insurance systems, but their role in the development of youth oriented policies are uncertain, and it is questionable to what extent such corporations can be labelled as youth policy actors.

3. POLICY MAKING PROCEDURES

3.1. National Co-ordination of Youth Policies

The ways in which youth policies are co-ordinated in different countries are heavily influenced by the constitution of the country, the administrative systems and the division of labour and of power between different levels of government and administration. Comparisons of policy co-ordination between, for example, federations or unions of states and independent, non-federal states are difficult, and such comparisons conceal important aspects of national precedents for and legislation on the relationship between different levels of public authorities.

However, a few major models of co-operation on the national level can be identified. Most important, there is a marked tendency towards more well structured forms of co-operation within countries with a well-developed youth sector than in countries where youth policies and youth work are spread among several sectors.

3.2. Countries Without a Separate Youth Sector

As expected, in countries without a youth sector, there is no or only limited national co-ordination of youth policy. In the British and the Icelandic reports, the conclusions on youth policy co-ordination are very short and clear: there is no national co-ordination across the different youth relevant sectors.

In Denmark, there is a "soft" co-ordination across sectors by governmental and inter-departmental committees on youth policies but no vertical co-ordination of youth related measures or youth policy among national, regional and local public institutions. This weak co-ordination has made room for co-ordinational powers of the non-governmental youth organizations in the Danish Youth Council. This umbrella organization has a well-developed network of contacts to politicians and to the central administration, and – at the same time – the membership organizations of this council maintain close contacts with local politicians and local youth agencies. This network – and the council's organizational and financial power – explains how the Danish Youth Council has been able to influence the vertical co-ordination of youth policy among local and national institutions and bodies to a high degree.

The situation in the UK is similar. Because of the lack of both horizontal and vertical co-ordination, and the highly fractured nature of services for young people, local policy networks are in some sense the most important.

Ireland could be another example of a country with a low level of co-ordination of youth policies on the national level. The education and training sector is the only sector in which there

is a strong tradition for networking among policy actors. In Ireland, these years there is a strong focus in youth policy towards training and education, and within this area there are elaborate but informal networks. Last year, the government presented a Youth Work Bill which aims at formalizing these networks on a statutory basis.

The overlapping responsibilities of the Irish Departments of Health, Education and Justice regarding youth (juvenile justice, child protection, truancy and youth homelessness), which are co-ordinated by a Minister of State, form another area with a relatively high level of horizontal co-ordination. In all other sectors, the co-ordination of the activities relating to young people takes the form of ad-hoc inter-departmental committees which focus on specific issues such as poverty, health, alcohol and substance use, unemployment, etc.

3.3. Countries With a Major Youth Sector

In countries with a specialized ministry of youth, this ministry is normally responsible for the co-ordination of youth policies. This applies to the horizontal co-ordination on the national level and the over-all vertical co-ordination among national, regional and local institutions8.

In a country with a well-defined youth sector such as Luxembourg the co-ordination of youth policies is concentrated in a unified system based on distinct responsibilities and a structured division of labour among different youth policy bodies. There is no inter-ministerial co-ordination of youth matters, but the governmental Department of Youth is endowed with the authority of co-ordinating all governmental policies related to young people.

The co-ordination between governmental and non-governmental bodies is assigned to the state's youth council – called the Superior Youth Council – which is composed of ministerial representatives, delegates of the General Conference of Luxembourg Youth (i. e. the national youth council), and of other youth associations. This Superior Youth Council advises the government on all youth related topics – including legal matters – and it exerts powerful influence on government youth policy, not only through the Department of Youth but also through other ministries.

In Spain, the co-ordination of national youth policies is assigned to an Inter-ministerial Youth Committee, but another – and quite unique – instrument of co-ordination is the Spanish Youth Plans. Youth Plans are national youth programmes initiated by the central state, but developed at the regional and local levels. The Youth Plans are instruments which facilitate the participation of all the agents which operate within the youth field. They are reference

frameworks in relation to which the daily policies concerning young people can be measured, and mainly a reflection of the political wishes, as they has to be approved at the level of the central government, of the regional level or of the local level.

3.4. Vertical Co-ordination and Steering Instruments in Youth Policy

In the national reports, a wide variety of different administrative bodies and procedures of co-ordinating youth policies across different levels of government and administration are described in great details. It would be more interesting to have information on what kind of power relations governs the co-operation between different levels of government. Apparently, decentralisation of youth policies is the ideal in all countries, and in several reports, the principle of subsidiarity, the autonomy of local authorities, and the right to municipal self-organization are stressed. But in most national reports the division of power between central, regional and local authorities, and the steering mechanisms used in this division of labour and co-ordination, are underexposed[9].

In spite of the all-pervading ideals about decentralization of youth policy, it is a well-known fact that the Western European countries differ from each other in this respect – some countries have a long tradition for centralized government and administration while others are known for the distribution of the administrative powers and functions throughout local or regional divisions. However, the actual state of things regarding the level of decentralization of youth policies and youth work cannot easily be extracted from the national reports. They are too different in their descriptions of how youth policy is co-ordinated across different levels of society.

For example, in Austria, in matters such as youth protection and youth promotion, the legislation and execution are duties of the Federal Regions, but the Federal Youth Ministry is in charge of examining all draft laws and political measures with respect to their effects on youth. In other reports from federal states or unions, this question about central control of legality is not addressed at all.

Another example: The Irish report states that the government has committed itself to the restoration of "real decision-making and power to local authorities and local people", but research on youth policy processes show that in reality this target has not been met. Thus the

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[8] An exception from this rule is Spain, where an Inter-ministerial Commission for Youth and Childhood co-ordinates the public policies related to young people across the different ministries and departments of the Government.

[9] The German report is an exception. It mentions that there are two essential steering instruments regarding the cooperation among different levels of government: Funds and legislation.

development of youth policy is still mainly from top to bottom. This kind of research on policy processes is either not available from other countries or are at least not referred in the national reports.

Hence, the national reports do not supply the information necessary to examine the extent of centralization in the co-ordination of youth policy. However, there seems to be a correlation between a well-defined youth sector and a centralized youth policy. Special circumstances apply to countries with a federal structure, but in non-federal countries in which there is a well-developed legal framework around youth work, in which there is a single ministry responsible for youth policy, and a well-developed centralized youth work administration in the form of a directorate or a similar authority, there tends to be a top to bottom kind of youth policy process and a weak local commitment to youth policy.

This correlation applies at least to Portugal. According to the Portuguese report, youth policy tends to be very centralized while local municipal authorities, on the other hand, have very limited competencies within youth policy. Apparently, the same correlation prevails in Greece, where youth services at regional and local levels are poorly developed, and it is difficult even to identify explicit regional or local youth policies.

3.5. Legal Framework for Youth Policies

3.5.1 International Law

The implementation of international law in national legislation was not a part of the guidelines for the national reports, and only a few of them refer to international conventions and other legal instruments of the international community. The reports from Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium and Luxembourg explicitly mention the ratifications and implementations of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN Convention of 20 November 1989, 1989) in national law, but all or most European countries have probably ratified this UN convention.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (which applies to young people below the age of 18) is only one of several international conventions on youth rights. The major reference book, *The International Law of Youth Rights* underlines 15 principal conventions on youth rights – most of them adopted by the International Labour Conference – some of which have only been ratified by half of the nations included in this study (Angel, 1995: 1099ff). It would have been

interesting to know the reasons for not ratifying individual conventions and to have the consequences of the missing ratifications examined.

3.5.2 Basic Rights of Youth

The guidelines for this study did not include constitutional or basic rights of youth in national legislation, and the country reports do not discuss this matter, except the Spanish report which refers to the Spanish constitution which includes provisions concerning support for young people in order to enable them to participate freely in the socio-political, economic and cultural life of the country.

Similar declarations of basic rights can be found in the preambles of some of the national laws on youth. The German Child and Youth Welfare Act declares that every young person has the right to assistance in his or her development and to an appropriate upbringing so that he or she can become a responsible member of society (SGB VIII, 1998: paragraph 1 of article 1). Similarly, the Finnish Youth Work Act states that the aim is to improve young people's living conditions and to create conditions for young people's civic activities. It defines the basic values of youth work as promotion of equality between generations, genders and religions, tolerance and the plurality of cultures (Un 510, 1995: section 1).

Such declarations of intent and aims in specific acts on youth have no or only limited significance in practice, but show how some countries have articulated and included the superior aims of youth policy in legal texts.

3.5.3 National Legislation on Youth

The legislation of all Western European countries include provisions within the core fields of youth policy: education, social welfare and protection, vocational training, employment, crime and delinquency, health care and the promotion of youth's societal participation. In some countries, these provisions are specific to youth, while in others, provisions regarding youth are included in more general provisions regarding minors and adults. In some countries, youth related provisions are assembled in specialized youth laws – laws on youth welfare, youth care, youth protection, youth support, youth work or youth promotion – in others, youth related provisions are included in sectorial legislation (social legislation, health legislation, educational legislation, cultural legislation etc.).

The existence of specialized youth legislation in a country is not necessarily an indicator of how high youth policy and youth work are on the list of political priorities, but rather the result of specific historical traditions, administrative procedures and structures of the public authorities.

But specialized youth legislation is – one of several – indicators of the existence of a separate and distinctive youth sector.

As expected, in countries without a specialized youth ministry or one ministry with special responsibility for youth matters, and in countries where youth policies are highly fractured, un-co-ordinated and heterogeneous, there are no laws relating specifically to young people. This is the case in the UK, in Denmark, and in Italy. In these countries, legislation of relevance to youth must be found in more general laws relating to both children and adults. In spite of specialized youth ministries in Sweden, Spain, Portugal and France, laws relating specifically to youth are absent here too.

With minor variations, European laws on youth can be classified into three different types:

- Legislation on youth support – in some countries called youth work, youth promotion or youth activities. This kind of legislation covers support for youth work services and programmes – both statutory and voluntary. Included in this type of laws are out-of-school education and cultural, leisure-time and sports services directed towards youth. Normally, the public funding of youth associations and youth organisations is also included in this type of legislation, which also regulates the relationship between public and private services. The Finnish Youth Work Act, the Icelandic Youth Activities Act, Youth Promotions Laws from the Austrian regions, Youth Assistance Decree in the French-speaking Community of Belgium, the (not enacted) Youth Work Bill in Ireland and the proposed law for young people in Greece, are examples of this type of youth laws.

- Legislation on youth's welfare. This type of legislation defines the limits between family and society responsibilities towards young people. Legislation on youth's welfare includes provisions regarding the social, economic, physical and psychological well-being of youth, and involves individual help for families so that they can meet the need of their adolescents as well as measures to protect young people when necessary. The Youth Care Act from the Netherlands, the Youth Welfare Law from Austria, the National Youth Service Law from Luxembourg, and The Protection of Youth Act from Belgium are examples of this type of legislation.

- Legislation on youth protection. This type of legislation includes protection of youth in non-family spheres of life: on the labour market and in public space, as exemplified by the Austrian regional Youth Protection laws which cover presence in public places, restaurants, overnight stays in hotels, hostels and on camp sites, visits to public theatre and film shows, public dance events and other cultural events, participation in gambling, consumption of

alcohol and nicotine; ownership and purchase of youth-endangering objects, hitchhiking, etc..

The Liechtenstein Youth Act combines these three types of youth legislation and includes youth work, youth welfare and youth protection in the same laws. The same applies to the German Child and Youth Welfare Act. According to the obligations of this act, German youth service policy focuses on the promotion of individual and social development, the avoidance of discrimination, the support and advice of parents as well as the preservation or creation of positive living conditions for children, adolescents and their families.

The two first kinds of legislation can also be found in countries without youth specific laws, for example in Norway and in Iceland, but with the important departure that the laws on promotion (Lög nr. 24/1970, 1970) and welfare (Lög nr. 20/1992, 1992; Child Welfare Act in Norway) only applies to children below the age of majority – not to youth in general.

This observation could possibly point to a complicated interplay or correlation between the age limits of laws relating to young people and youth's social and psychological emancipation. It is a well-known fact that youth from Iceland – and other North European countries as well – gain independence from their parents in matters such as labour market participation, economy, and forming one's own family earlier than youth in Southern Europe (see reports on *Living Conditions of Youth in Europe*). These differences in the age level of emancipation from parental care could probably be a reflection of – and at the same time reflects back on – the differences in the age limits of the promotion, protection and the welfare laws relating to young people. At least, there is a striking similarity between the age limits of young people laws and the age level of achieving social adulthood.

4. INTERNATIONAL IMPACT ON YOUTH POLICY MAKING

The Danish report is the only national report which explicitly denies any international influence on youth policy. According to leading Danish civil servants, there are no specific examples of inspiration or influence on Danish youth policy from other countries or from international bodies.

4.1. European Union

In most country reports, the EU youth exchange and mobility programmes – Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service – are mentioned as examples of the impact on youth policy, but the specific role of these programmes in the national context is seldom expanded. The Irish report, which states that the EU has impacted the development of youth policies in at least two ways, is an exception: First, Irish training policy and practice has been strongly influenced through EU directives and resolutions. Second, the EU policy context and the EU funding has made possible the development of local programmes such as local employment projects aimed at young people.

Finland has had similar experiences. Both the European Voluntary Service and the Youth for Europe programmes have had positive influence on the mobility of Finnish youth, and EU's Social Fund has subsidized workshops for young unemployed people and apprenticeship contracts during the late 1990s. Also, Austria, the Netherlands, Iceland, and Liechtenstein have experienced positive effects of the EU exchange and mobility programmes.

The British report accentuates not only the importance of the EU exchange and mobility programmes, but also the initiatives in the fields of education and training of youth: SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI, Erasmus, Comenius and Lingua. The British report concludes that the programmes of the European Union have resulted in a range of national initiatives and have also created closer ties with other member countries. And, at the moment, inspiration from youth policy arrangements, methods of co-ordination and services of the EU as well as individual European member states are in the foreground of the discussion of youth policy in the UK.

The effect of the EU on Greek youth policy is similar. The Greek report states that there is no doubt that the European Union with its directives and initiatives has influenced the development of youth policy in Greece to at large extent – both the funding of youth work and the youth legislation have been influenced. Without the pressure from Europe, the Greek government would not include youth in its priorities.

Even though the national reports do not question the EU programmes, it must be mentioned that there is a danger that EU funded projects and programmes will replace national youth policies – that the national governments do not accomplish their responsibilities to develop their own youth policy.

4.2. Council of Europe

One initiative which has gone rather unnoticed, but which might have a political impact in the long run, is the model of multi-lateral evaluation of national youth policies set up by the European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the Youth Field of the Council of Europe: Each country will produce a report on the national youth policy which will be reviewed by a committee of five international experts. At the moment the youth policies of Finland, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, Romania, and Estonia have been evaluated (Council of Europe, 1999; Instituto de la Juventud, 1999; Ministry of Education, 1997; Ministry of Health Welfare and Sport, 1998; National Board for Youth Affairs, 1999; Stafseng, 2000b)[10]. According to the national Finnish report on youth policy, the evaluation of national youth policy for the European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the Youth Field has been essential in lining out the Finnish youth policy. However, these evaluations are not mentioned as important policy instruments in the reports form Sweden, Spain or the Netherlands.

4.3. United Nations

The International Year of the Youth initiated in 1985 by the UN is mentioned as a turning point of national youth policies in one of the country reports (Spain), but in general, the youth policy work of the United Nations – including the many resolutions, declarations and conventions – does not seem to have had a major impact on European youth policies, but this apparent lack of UN influence can also be a result the omission of United Nations in the guidelines for the national reports.

4.4. Bilateral Cultural Agreements

In addition to the multilateral co-operation within the EU and the Council of Europe, several bilateral cultural agreements include a young people's clause which promote the exchange of members of youth organizations from the two countries involved as a way to expand the knowledge about the other country's reality, and promote a greater contact between the public institutions of such countries, as a means for exchanging information and experiences on youth policy. In the reports from Portugal, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Germany, and Finland, this

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[10] It should also be mentioned that the Council of Europe support the so called "National Correspondents for Youth Research" that develop ideas for the Council of Europe, produce an annual *Youth Trends Report* and organize seminars for youth researchers.

kind of bilateral cultural agreement is mentioned as a tool for international co-operation, but it is probably also of importance in other countries.

5. ISSUES OF YOUTH POLICY

5.1. Stated Aims and Key Concepts of Youth Policies[11]

As appears from the few national accounts of the historical development of youth policy, there are two opposing but interlocked images of youth which have had decisive impact on the aims of national youth policies in Europe: The image of "youth as a resource" and the image of "youth as a problem". According to the first image, youth represents the idealized future; youth is a receptacle of the values that each generation transmits to the next, and, therefore, a societal resource which must be given the best opportunities for development. But, at the same time, youth is also perceived as a problem, as a source of danger or a period of vulnerability in response to which protective measures must be devised. The two images are not contradictory but supplement and accentuate each other.

These simultaneously held but opposed images can be found in both historical and current youth policies throughout Western Europe, and in most countries both images can be found side by side in national youth policy documents, but the emphasis and the priorities given to them change from time to time and vary from country to country. Typically, the image of "youth as a resource" prevails in periods of stability, economic growth, and social reforms while the image of "youth as a problem" prevails in periods of economic crisis, of political instability, and when youth in society and in the media are being presented as "dangerous", "deviant", "criminal", "violent", etc.

These overall images – or paradigms – of youth as a resource rather than a problem are normally only indirectly phrased in current youth policy documents. But in some countries "youth as a resource" has a central position as a key-concept in the national youth policy. This is the case in the Scandinavian countries, in the Netherlands, in Portugal, and in Italy. However, the phrasing of the image of "youth as a resource" varies: The Danish government's youth policy states that young people are not only a future societal resource but also a resource in themselves, as youth. The Swedish government has proclaimed that young people's

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[11] It should be noted that the sources of the key concepts analyzed in this section are very different. In some countries the key concepts are part of the official governmental aims for youth policy, in other

commitment, creative abilities and critical thinking should be utilised as a resource, and the Norwegian government wants to make the resources represented by young people visible. In the Netherlands, the key-concept within this positive image of youth as a future resource is "empowerment" which is furthered by young people's right to fully realize their own strengths and capabilities. In Finland, the concept "empowerment" is not used, but the meaning is the same when the Finnish youth policy emphasizes young people's right to construct and the responsibility for constructing their own future. The resources and the power of youth to influence and change society is underlined in both Portuguese and Italian youth policy documents: the specific role played by young men and women in the development of the country, and their leading role at cultural and social levels must be supported (Italy), and young people are full citizens and agents of social and cultural change (Portugal).

Although the image of youth as a societal resource is most visible in youth policy documents from the countries mentioned above, the same image – accentuated to a lesser degree – can be found in aims of youth policy in most European countries.

When youth is considered to be a societal resource, the development, the growth, and the promotion of these resources become the major aim of the national youth policy. Hence, "the development of youth" is a very common objective of national youth policies. The desire to further the development of the youthful potentials may have different forms: eventful youth (Denmark), active and experimental youth (Finland), respect for young people's needs (Belgium), the support of social and personal skills (Germany), development of youth's strengths and opportunities (Netherlands), quality of youthful life (Greece), personal and social development (Ireland), responsibility for own development (Norway), are some of the key-concepts used to comprehend the developmental aspects of youth as a societal resource. Another variant of the same comprehension of youth is the common emphasis of youth's autonomy and independence, which are key-concepts in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

All variations considered, the social and personal development of youth is a major and explicit youth policy aim in all countries except – judging from the national report – Portugal, Austria, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom, Iceland and France.

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countries key concepts are derived from major policy documents while in some countries the key concepts are the result of the national rapporteurs' own interpretation of the national youth policy.

The image of youth as a problem, or as a potential problem, is represented in the national youth policy documents in three different ways: as problems with societal integration, as problems with participation, and as problems connected to cultural or social deviance and variance.

Integration of young adults into the institutions of society[12] is the major aim of youth policy in a number of European countries where youth policy aims at helping the process of growing into society (Germany), promoting social and economic integration of young people (Portugal), struggling against social exclusion (Greece), securing the social inclusion of the new generations (Italy), and at the occupational and vocational integration (France). In these countries, youth policy concepts are aimed at the transition from youth to adults in general: the achievement of the basic adult societal roles at the labour market, at the housing market, and as members of one's own family. As these roles are not readily available to every young adult, the integration of youth into society is seen as a problem that must be dealt with politically.

Youth as a problem (or a potential problem) is also the focus of more specific aims of youth policy, and "prevention" of social problems and of deviancy in any form is a key concept in countries such as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Spain, and France. The social problems included in these preventive aims of youth policy are poverty, dropping-out, social exclusion, health problems such as AIDS, discrimination, addiction, violence.

As mentioned above, a special variant of the concept "youth as a problem" is the incidence of non-participation of youth as voters, as public debaters, and in associative life. The majority of the European countries in this study addresses this problem with specific youth policy aims. The key-concepts are: Political and societal participation and influence (Finland, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, Spain, Austria), active contribution (Denmark), active or civic participation (Portugal, Netherlands, Ireland, Luxembourg), influence on their own life situation (Norway), associanism (Spain), influence on how society is organized and being part of the action (Ireland).

While most political aims and key-concepts can be categorized within the two major contrasting images of youth as both a resource and a problem, other significant concepts must be left outside this classification: equality and rights.

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[12] In general, societal integration is the superior concept which embraces both participation and the compliance with cultural and social norms, but throughout the national reports the concept of societal integration is used in a more narrow meaning, namely as integration as adults to the labour market, to the housing market and in family relations. On the other hand, the concept of participation in society is oriented more towards participation as citizens in public debates, in elections and in associative life, i. e. political participation.

Equality and solidarity as general key-concepts in youth policies can be found in Norway and in Spain, while policy statements from Finland and Austria specifically stress the equality between generations. In Austria, the social security system is described as a "contract between the generations" and this contract is the fundamental basis of youth policy in that country.

The rights of youth are emphasized as policy aims in Greece (young people's rights in general), Ireland ("right to exert their influence"), Finland ("right to construct their own future"), and the Netherlands ("right to information in order to realize own strengths and capabilities").

These national aims and key-concepts are only to some extent reflections of different national traditions and fundamental priorities within youth policy. They are also influenced by specific, current societal problems and the actual living conditions of youth in each country. Countries with a high rate of youth unemployment are likely to give priority to societal integration of youth and the prevention of the effects of social exclusion in the form of poverty, marginalization and deviancy. Likewise, countries with a declining rate of political participation among youth are likely to favour policy aims that underscore participation of youth. Furthermore, the aims and key concepts are also coloured by the political ideology of the party or the parties in power at the time when the central policy documents were adopted. Hence, the differences between the countries do not necessarily reflect national differences in youth policy aims but rather similarities and differences in the ideology of the political parties in power.

However, the national aims and major concepts also reveal some patterns, which are correlated to other key features of youth policies in different countries. As mentioned above, there are signs that indicate a correlation between the concepts of youth and the overall aims of youth policy. In countries, where "youth" in policy contexts is understood as young people – i. e. including children – there is also a tendency to consider young people as a vulnerable social group which must be protected against potential dangers and which must be supported in order to prevent obstacles of the social and psychological development of youth. Conversely, in countries with a more narrow and adult-oriented youth policy concept, the main stress will be laid on youth as a human and societal resource and as a social group which is supposed to be able to manage if it is given the right conditions of growth.

Based on these correlations, a picture begins to emerge of three clusters of countries: The Scandinavian countries in which main emphasis is put on youth as a resource and as a process of development, which must be supported and advanced by society. In these countries, the main current youth problem is considered to be the lack of participation in the political system and the furtherance of participation is the main objective of youth policies. In the Mediterranean countries – including France in this particular case – and in the British Isles, however, the major

youth problem is the prolonging of the youth period, the social exclusion of youth and the dangers which youth and young adults face in this kind of transition period. In these countries, the image of youth as a potential problem is predominant, and the aims of youth policy are characterized by the wish to integrate youth into society as adults. Unlike these two clusters of countries, the rest of continental Europe shows many traces of both the dominant images of youth, and the youth political aims are a mixture of participation and protection.

5.2. Principal Target Groups of Explicit Youth Policy

Only few of the national reports address the question of principal target groups of youth policy, but among the reports on this issue one apparent tendency can be identified: In countries which put special emphasis on the image of youth as a human and societal resource, there is a tendency to define the target group of youth policies broadly, as the whole generation of youth. This is the case in Denmark, where the aim of including all youth in the youth policy is stressed in governmental policy documents, and this is also the case in Sweden where there is a tradition for policies encompassing all youth. Only if the general systems fail, measures towards certain groups are considered. In that sense, few public actions are targeted directly towards a specific youth group. An argument against targeted measures is the risk for stigmatization (Sweden).

In countries where the dominating comprehension of youth is a mix of youth as a resource and youth as a problem, the principal target groups is both youth in general and specific groups of disadvantaged youth. This is – for example – the case in Ireland where the two major youth policy aims are – on one hand – the universalistic conceived personal and social development of young people which is provided by traditional mainline youth work, and – on the other– the provision of services targeted at specific disadvantaged or minority youths. However, these years there is an increased emphasis on programmes targeted at specific groups of 'disadvantaged' youths or young people 'at risk'. This raises questions regarding the relationship between general youth services and targeted services. Many Irish youth work organisations are concerned that funding for general programmes might be scaled back.

The same shift of priorities has happened in the Netherlands. In principle, youth policy is aimed at all young people aged 0 – 25 years, but during the last few years more and more attention has been paid to groups at risk. This policy is called preventive youth policy; its creed is to make life easier for young people and to prevent them from dropping out. Preventive youth policy focuses especially on the younger age categories and the disadvantaged young people.

The situation in Germany seems somewhat similar: Youth policies aim at the integration of all young people into society, but political priorities are always linked to specific target groups and

the development and integration of especially disadvantaged young people such as the unemployed; young migrants, young women, young people at risk (e.g. the homeless, young people on drugs, young delinquents, etc.). The same applies to Greece: The target groups of the most recent governmental youth programme are not only youth in the education system, but also specialized groups such as unemployed youth, girls and young women, young farmers, disadvantaged youth of urban milieus, socially excluded young people (young delinquents, drop-outs, young gypsies, young people with special needs, street children) and minority youth (young refugees, migrant workers).

In a country such as the United Kingdom, in which unambiguous priorities are given to the concept of youth as a potential problem, the major target group of youth policy is disadvantaged youth. Here youth policy is primarily concerned with individuals who are deemed to be excluded, or at risk of being excluded, from society: youth from disrupted families, youth with poor school performance, youth from deprived neighbourhoods, and youth with a minority background.

5.3. Educational Policies

The improvement of the qualifications of young people is the general aim of educational policies in all European countries. Among a staggering number of policy issues regarding education and training, two major strategies can be identified: One is to fight the high drop-out rates within secondary and tertiary education; the other is to improve the quality of schooling at all levels of the educational system.

Several studies evidence the correlation between lack of adequate qualifications and unemployment: young people who leave the educational system without a degree or diploma are much less likely to find employment and more in danger of being restricted to poorly paid jobs than youth with formal qualifications. Such studies is the background for programmes intended to reduce the drop-out rate and to promote higher completion rates; programmes that are described in the reports from Denmark, France, Greece, and Italy. Some of the measures being applied are 'second chance' schools for drop-outs, strengthened counselling, life long learning and fundamental reforms of the educational system. Another strategy to control the risk of social exclusion of youth without formal qualifications is finding ways to recognize the qualifications acquired through informal education. The Open Youth Education in Denmark is such a strategy.

Efforts to improve the quality of the educational systems are always important but especially at times when youth run a high risk of being unable to complete the transition from school to

labour market and in countries where the educational system has suffered from insufficient funding. Both the Italian and the British national reports present ambitious programmes of increasing the quality of education at all ages – from preschool to university.

5.4. Labour Market Policies Specifically Targeted at Youth

Youth's occupational integration is a major concern in all countries except Iceland and Liechtenstein where there is no or only an insignificant youth unemployment. In all other countries, the high unemployment rates among youth during the 1990s have led to a countless number of initiatives to combat unemployment among youth; initiatives too numerous and too diversified to be treated within the limits of this report. However, one gets the indubitable impression that most measures aim at altering the conduct of youth: raising their qualifications, counselling of youth, training of job relevant abilities, etc. Measures that intend to compensate youth for their age-related handicaps on the labour market. However, fundamental reforms of the labour market which could facilitate youth's entry into the labour market seem to be absent.

5.5. Housing Policies for Young People

The access to affordable housing of the relevant size is a major youth problem in most European countries. The Netherlands is an exception. In this country, housing is not a problem because of the so-called 'starters' houses', i.e. suitable houses and apartments for young people. But in many other country reports, housing is mentioned as a problem and the trend among young adults to live longer in their parents' homes is a major indicator of the prolonging of the transition from youth to adulthood (Iceland, Denmark, Spain).

Most country reports on youth policies mention some kind of existing national housing benefits – either specifically for youth or general schemes open to youth – but housing does not seem to be the focus of the national youth policies these years. In Denmark – for example – housing for youth is not part of the governmental youth policy; instead of more and affordable housing, the greatest importance has been attached to renovation of the existing neighbourhoods; a policy that will result in a reduction of the number of housing which is in demand by young people. However, new programmes in this field of policy are being implemented in Portugal and Spain, two of the countries in which the lack of suitable housing for youth and young adults is most manifest.

5.6. Health Initiatives

Health policy directed towards youth is only mentioned in some of the national reports. This could be an indication of the minor importance of health initiatives within the framework of youth policy or it could be a result of contingencies. Health issues are emphasized in the reports from Austria, Finland, Iceland, Greece, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In these countries, young people are in the foreground as risk groups with regards to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, traffic accidents, mental illness, suicide, sexual health (AIDS etc.), and the life style of youth. However, the reports do not explicitly examine the extent to which young people are given sex education in schools.

Birth control and teenage pregnancies are given priority in Finland, in Greece, and especially in the United Kingdom, which has the highest number of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe. Programmes to halve the number of under-18 conceptions by the year 2010 have been set up in all four countries of the United Kingdom. For example, the Government's action plan for England involves a national campaign, better education in schools about sex and relationships, parental participation in prevention, advice and contraception for young people, a special focus for boys and young men, prevention for those at special risk such as young offenders, who will be given sex education and parenting classes, education and training of teenage parents, support for teenage parents, and housing for adolescents under 18.

5.7. Policies for Dealing with Deviant Youth

Especially in recent years, the growing concern over violence has been on the agenda for policies dealing with deviant youth and youth at risk. Either street violence – as in Denmark, Liechtenstein and in the Netherlands – or politically motivated violence as in Germany. At least in Denmark, the problem is a growing fear of street violence rather than a growing number of violent crimes. Even in countries where right wing violence or street violence are not perceived as social problems, there seem to be a political focus on polices towards delinquency and crimes committed by youth.

Two trends in policies with deviant youth can be identified. On one hand, the ideology of individual and parental responsibility for young peoples wrong-doings is prevalent at the moment, and this kind of ideology is often supported by a demand for custodial solutions to youthful crimes. These kinds of solutions can – among other countries – be found in Germany where juvenile penal institutions are increasingly becoming used for young offenders, and in

Denmark where crime preventive plans in recent years have mandated more prison-like seats in closed institutions for young offenders.

On the other hand there are several attempts to find crime preventive, non-custodial alternatives to prison for young people. Among these are community work (Finland and Denmark), mediation (Finland), specialized youth contact police officers (Austria), youth contracts (Denmark), offender-victim compensation (Germany, the Netherlands), and cautioning of juvenile offenders (Ireland).

5.8. Policies Towards Leisure-time Activities

Judging from the national reports, policies toward leisure-time activities for youth are not on the political agenda these years. Leisure possibilities are important elements in the extra-curricular youth work and in out-of-school education, and there is a whole range of public and third sector measures in this field of youth work, but with a few exceptions, leisure-time policy is not an issue of any importance and only few new initiatives and experiments are mentioned.

In the United Kingdom, sports and cultural activities are increasingly considered important elements in the fight against social exclusion and crime. Recent British research has proved that sports play a key role in promoting social inclusion, and that both arts and sports can make a difference in relation to health, crime, unemployment and education in deprived communities. As a result of these findings, the Department of Culture, Media and Sports has set up a new Youth Sports Unit with the purpose of promoting the benefits associated with sports in schools as well as in communities.

As accentuated in the Dutch report, competition from commercial providers of leisure-time activities is a growing problem: Technical, social and economic developments have created room for commercialization and individualization of the leisure of youth, and commercial services have partly replaced the traditional (voluntary or state funded) provisions. The experiences from Ireland show that – for example – lack of adequate computing services and on-line access in many youth clubs makes it difficult to attract young people. The Spanish report contributes to the discussion on the competition between commercial and non-commercial leisure-time services with an unique, new initiative: The youth association "Open until dawn" offers cultural and sports activities in municipal facilities – schools, libraries, museums, sporting facilities, swimming pools, etc. – at nights and during weekends. The purpose is to facilitate leisure-time possibilities as an alternative to the commercial offers during nights, and also to offer unemployed and poor youth alternatives to the commercial night life.

5.9. Policies Towards Associations of Youth

Although this issue is not adequately discussed in all country reports, there seems to be some kind of public support and funding of youth organizations and youth associations in most countries. But there is a marked difference between countries with and countries without a long and strong tradition for youth associations. In the Mediterranean countries, there is a growing number of youth who are organized in youth associations, and public authorities actively support this development. In – for example – Portugal the reinforcement of the associative movement has been a central pillar of youth policy. Support of the associative life is regarded as an important way of creating an adequate environment for the fulfilment of the civic, social, cultural, economic and political potential of young people. Similarly, the promotion of voluntary participation is considered of vital importance by the Greek government. The situation in the eastern part of Germany is similar: The "construction" of civil society – e.g. of youth organizations and other non-governmental organizations – is a major policy goal.

In the rest of Western Europe, the number of members of youth organizations and associations is either stable or declining. The declining rate of membership changes the conditions for youth policy: The importance of voluntary and statutory youth work, that used to play an important role in young people's leisure time, has diminished during the last decades. Young people nowadays are more reluctant to bind themselves to organized collectives, they move in a "free space" between various youth scenes and institutions and they are no longer permanently organized. Another consequence is that social networks, which used to help youngsters solve problems, disappear. This creates new demands on youth work and policy. Youth work will become more difficult and programmes for youth must be flexible and have a very short time limit because of the quickly changing youth cultures and interests.

In Denmark, the changing role of youth organizations and associations has led to a situation where public authorities are looking for alternatives to youth organizations as representatives of youth. During recent years, there have been some attempts to diminish the former monopoly of youth organizations representing youth. Many experiments with local youth councils, or other ways of entrusting young people with local influence, are without the participation of local youth organizations because the local authorities have actively tried to extend the youth representation to include non-organized youth at the expense of organized youth.

5.10. Mandatory Military Service and Compulsory Non-Military National Service

In Continental Europe there has been a long tradition for mandatory military service for young men, but during recent years several countries have replaced the draft with voluntary,

professional armed forces. This has happened in France, in the Netherlands (from 1997), in Spain (in effect from 2003), and in Italy (from 2005).

Mandatory military service as a youth political issue is only addressed in a few of the national reports. In Germany, the drafting of young men for military service has been a subject of intensive political debates but it has been preserved and is beyond controversy at the moment. For those who object, a mandatory civil service has been installed and it is being used by a large number of young Germans. Youth in mandatory civil service in Germany is a very important pillar for social services.

Military service – or civil service for conscientious objectors – are also still mandatory for young men in Denmark, but it has been proposed either to substitute the drafted army with professional military forces or to extend the mandatory service to include women who should either serve in the military or do civil service work. However, at the moment, there are no specific plans. In the rest of the countries with drafted armies, mandatory military service is not – at least according to the national reports – a youth political issue of any importance. Apparently, all countries with mandatory military service have legalized conscientious objection and the right to object to military service is not a political issue at the moment.

None of European countries included in this study has implemented a compulsory non-military national service except as an alternative for conscientious objectors. However, in Germany there are three voluntary, national service programmes offered to youth: voluntary work and community service, voluntary ecological work and voluntary work at monument preservation.

5.11. Monitoring and evaluation programs

Systematic and thorough evaluations of major national youth programmes seem to be the standard procedure in most countries except in Greece where there is a lack of reports discussing the results of youth policies and in Portugal where no evaluations have been conducted recently on the efficacy of youth policies.

While evaluations of national youth programmes are the norm in most countries, the same does not apply to local youth projects. In Norway – for example – methods and experiences are often documented in reports from individual municipalities, but these have not been systematized and presented in a form, which makes them accessible. In Denmark, local youth policy initiatives are often launched without any funds or without sufficient funds for evaluation of the programmes. And, if an evaluation is planned, it is often started either while the programme is ongoing or after the completion of the programme, which means that it is not possible to evaluate the effects of the programme, as data from the situation before the programme does not

exist. Another problem with evaluations of local youth programmes is that they are usually not published, and therefore inaccessible.

6. EMERGING TRENDS

6.1. Trends in Youth Policies and Youth Issues

The national reports pass on a large number of trends in national youth policies. In this comparative report, only major trans-national trends are included.

6.1.1 The "Contract Between Generations" and the Prolonging of Youth

In several countries there are concerns about the future of the "contract between the generations", i.e. the generational aspects of the social security system: the adult generation supports the rising generation expecting to be supported by the young generations when the former have grown old and become dependent on family and societal support. The concerns about the future of this system are based on two widespread trends.

Firstly, the demographic development. The decreasing number of youth in the Mediterranean countries and the stable number of youth in the rest of Western Europe will – in most countries – result in a distinct lowering of the ratios of youth to elderly within the next decade (Indicator A4, 1995; Indicator A5, 2010). This implies, most likely, an increasing tax and support burden on the younger generations or decreasing standards of living for the older generations.

Secondly, the prolonged youth period. In all Western European countries, the time youth spends on education and training before entering the labour market is rising, and in countries with high youth unemployment, the entering into the labour market is further delayed by the lack of jobs. The widespread phenomenon of prolonging youth is not exclusively the result of prolonged studies or difficulties in gaining access to employment, but also a result of a new "model" of socialization during youth; a model of experimentation, where adult identity is constructed through successive experiments, a series of social identity attempts. Social identities and aspirations are no longer defined once and for all, and youth is now a life phase in which identities and aspirations are tested and redefined.

The prolonging of the youth period and the new "model" of youth imply that the total number of years in which the new generations will be active on the labour market, and in which they contribute to the societal expenses, will decline. A trend that will intensify the effects of the demographic changes of the relationship between young and older generations. The concerns about the future of the "contract between the generations" have in most Western European

countries, led to the question of how quickly youth has to be integrated into the labour market, and which strategies are favourable. Educational and employment policies are the major instruments used to deal with these challenges.

In several countries, the policies dealing with the changed and prolonged youth period and the changes in the demographic composition of society have led to an interesting discussion of whether youth policy should be aimed at developing youth by "helping young people to be young", or whether it should instead be aimed at counteracting the prolonging of youth by helping young people become established in different areas of the adult world. To exaggerate the two alternatives, it has been debated whether the goal of youth policy is to develop youth or minimize it.

This discussion is related to the previously mentioned major philosophies of youth policy: youth as a resource as opposed to youth as a problem. A policy largely aimed at making it easier for young people to become established in the adult world runs the risk of contributing to the image of youth as a problematic period of life which should be minimized. In this way, the experiences of young people appear to be less valuable than those of previous generations. On the other hand, a policy which aims at helping young people be young, runs the risks of reinforcing the image of youth as a special group with special needs and interests. This in turn can, oddly enough, lead to young people being excluded from opportunities and rights which are considered to be self-evident for other groups of citizens.

This abstract discussion cannot be applied directly to the countries included in this study. In all countries, both perspectives are emphasized to different degrees in different policy areas. But there might be a correlation between the aforementioned differences in the dominating images of youth as either a problem or a resource and the accentuation given to either developing or minimizing the youth period – the available data does not allow a detailed analysis.

6.1.2 The Political Participation of Youth

The decrease in political participation – voting, membership of political parties, of youth associations and organizations, and representation in decision-making bodies – is a major youth problem in most Western European countries except the Mediterranean countries in which there is a growing societal participation among youth. The declining political engagement and traditional societal participation among youth is perceived as a threat to the future of the representative democracy, and a series of initiatives has been launched to counteract this tendency.

In the United Kingdom, discourses and policies which stress active participation in the democratic process form contexts in which youth issues have a distinctive status. In Sweden, youth participation is a main theme and is viewed both as a goal in itself and as a method to work with young people. In Finland, several experiments with alternatives to traditional political influence are being implemented: Tele-democracy, influence through the Internet, and through local youth parliaments. This kind of experiments can also be found in Denmark where one of the major policy areas – if not the major – is the political participation and influence of youth, and several programmes have been launched at both national and local levels.

In Austria, the possibilities of political participation for non-voting-age youth have become important issues in the past few years. In Luxembourg, the Ministry of Youth has launched its first action plan on youth participation, and a number of measures aimed at increasing young people's participation at the local level have been introduced. In Norway, the state aims at strengthening young people's democracy, and supports for the participation and involvement of children and young people in shaping and implementing activities and measures.

6.1.3 Explicit Youth Policies

In comparison with the situation in 1995 when the last report on youth policies within the EU was published (European Commission, 1995), there is a marked trend toward youth policies that are explicit, coordinated and legally formalized in more European countries. This has – to various degrees – happened in Italy, in Denmark and in the United Kingdom; countries in which, until recently, there was no national youth policy or coordination of youth policies across the traditional sectors.

Until 1998, there has been no explicit, national youth policies in Italy, but in 1998 youth policy was assigned to the Italian Minister for Social Solidarity who was charged with the task of co-ordinating youth policies within the framework of the development of policies to promote social inclusion of the new generations. The following year, the Italian government presented the first youth bill entitled "Provisions to support the participation, activities, and representation of young people in society". This bill has not been enacted yet but the Department of Social Affairs has gradually been assigned the "soft" function of co-ordinating and making policy.

Until 1997, no ministry or specialized services were responsible for the coordination of youth work, and there was no specific youth policy in Denmark. At that time, the individual ministries implemented various aspects of youth policy without any coordination across ministries. Since 1997, youth policies at a national level have been coordinated by the Government's Youth Committee (with 9 ministers as members) and an Interdepartmental Youth Committee with government officials from the same ministries. At the same time, the Danish government

presented the first overall youth policy programme including a number of objectives and initiatives. In spite of this development, youth policy is still not a major policy area, it does not have a high priority, and youth-related measures are still the responsibility of the respective ministers in charge of various departments. The new national youth policy in Denmark is more like a soft coordination of youth-related measures across different ministries than a planning and implementation of an overall youth policy. Also, it remains to be seen if the coordination of a cross-sectorial youth policy in Denmark is a trend or just a temporary change of policies. The coordination of youth policies was initiated by the present government led by the Social Democrats, but it is uncertain if a future non-Socialist government will support this kind of coordination of youth policy or not. In Denmark, history shows that Social Democratic governments promote youth policy while non-Socialist governments do not give priority to youth policy.

In the United Kingdom, the first tentative efforts towards a unified field of youth policy have only begun to emerge officially quite recently. However, the field of youth policy is still highly fractured. It has no centre and horizontally there is a lack of inter-departmental coordination at the national, regional and local levels, but during recent years, the contours of a national youth policy have become manifest. This has taken place primarily in the context of policies and initiatives aimed at tackling social exclusion and in the area of concerns with citizenship, and democratic participation at the local, regional and national levels.

6.2. Examples of Good Practice

Throughout the national reports, there are several examples of policies, programmes and projects that could serve as inspiration at local, regional, national and European levels. The following list is an overview of policies emphasized by the national rapporteurs as examples of "good practice".

6.2.1 Education
Open Youth Education is an alternative to traditional upper secondary education in Denmark. Over 2-3 years, participants plan their own route of learning – training, education, work experiences, voluntary work, travels – and this route is held together by a personal learning plan and a theme.

Peer education is a structured process where young people discuss with other young people a subject, which, by both parties, is felt to be of personal importance. Peer education is an alternative to the more traditional ways of dissemination of information among youth and a supplement to formal institutions of counselling such as student guidance and youth

counselling. In Denmark, it has proved to be a very successful and effective method of dialogue and broadcasting of information among young people.

The Dutch campaign *Safe School* is meant to motivate schools to create a safer school climate in cooperation with police, justice, healthcare, mental youth care and welfare organizations. Evaluations have shown that the co-operation with organizations in the neighbourhood of schools has improved. The main result of the campaign is that schools openly work on security and safety issues.

The Norwegian *Network for Environmental Education* is a collaboration involving schools, the environmental authorities, research institutions and voluntary organizations. The programme allows schoolchildren to help the local authority by monitoring water quality, energy use, or the internal climate at school; mapping and securing safe and pleasant footpaths, cleaning up recreational areas, practising energy conservation, etc.

6.2.2 Employment Policies

The high level of youth unemployment in Europe has led to a whole range of national, regional and local measures to combat unemployment. The national reports have given a few of them prominence as examples of good practices.

When the youth unemployment rate was very high, Finland implemented *Youth workshops.* The workshops are mainly run by local authorities, offering training and work to young people for a period of six months. The aim is to motivate young people for training, self-employment and work by providing the necessary knowledge and skills. The workshops have proved to be a serviceable tool for alleviating unemployment and its impact.

The German report emphasizes the national, regional and local policies regarding support to cope with difficulties in the transition from school to work. Some of these initiatives involve co-operation between child and youth services, schools and local businesses. Internationally, this system of transition has the reputation of being well organized, standardized and funded.

Denmark has implemented the *Strengthened Government Measures on Behalf of Youth*: Youth who qualify for unemployment benefits have a right and duty to receive education or training of at least 18 months' duration, after 6 months' unemployment. At the same time, unemployment benefits for this group of youth have been reduced by 50 %, and is thus at level with allowances and support in the ordinary educational system Evaluations of this programme show that the youth measures have been a strong motivation for many young unemployed people to go into education, training or employment before they would otherwise be covered by this scheme. The special youth measures have contributed to reducing youth unemployment to a low level.

6.2.3 Political Participation of Youth

Youth Policy in a Municipal Perspective is a Danish programme aimed at articulating and profiling the local youth policy across sectors and administrations. Experiences from this programme indicate that the successful municipal youth policy is defined more by the process than by the products achieved: the debates, the planning, the involvement of committed youth and the cooperation between the municipal administration and the young are the major results of the programme. The process of articulating a comprehensive and coherent local youth policy is not only a learning process for the young people involved, but also for the local administration.

Tele-democracy is a Finnish, internet-based channel for influencing local matters which includes the *Idea Factory*, which gives local youth an opportunity to share their views with the governing bodies of the city. A submitted idea is then open to discussion on the Internet, after which moderators refine the idea to a practical motion. After a positive motion, the proposal is taken to the local Youth Council, which in turn hands it over to the governing bodies of the city.

The Porsgrunn Model aims at developing a local "culture of participation" among young people. The model includes student councils in every schools and a municipal youth council elected among all youth, the appointment of contact-teachers and a children's spokesman, funds for "immediate actions" administered by young people, negotiations between local politicians and young people and an annual "children and youth week" (Norway).

Youth Forum for Democracy is composed of 16 members between the ages of 15 and 26, selected from all parts of Norway, representing a wide range of youth groups with various cultural and social backgrounds. The Youth Forum for Democracy is an advisory organ to the Government, on the local as well as the national level, on issues of youth and development in the society.

A working group of young people representing different organisations – called Group 2050 – intends to create and run a *Norwegian Youth Parliament*. Its programme includes training of young people from all over the country on how the Parliament and its specialized committees and the Government and its ministries are functioning. The "Youth Parliament" will develop its own priorities and produce a long-term programme and an alternative state budget in order to make the interests of young people more visible.

The *Youth Consultative Council* is a forum for youth policy discussion between governmental bodies and civil society organizations active in the field of youth, and according to the Portuguese report it is an outstanding example of "good practice" in youth policy in Portugal.

The Swedish award *The Youth Municipality of the Year* is awarded each year to a municipality which has been working successfully with youth policy and youth participation.

6.2.4 Fundamental Rights of Youth

Only the Norwegian report mentions the rights of youth as an example of "good practice". The rights of youth in Norway are statuted in several Acts: The Public Administration Act which provides children over 14 years of age with the right to speak on administrative matters involving them, the Local Government Act which enjoins municipalities to make information available, the Freedom of Information Act on the right to have access to documents, and the Planning and Building Act, which ensures groups affected by planning (including young people) the right to participate.

6.2.5 Policy Relevant Information on Youth

In Sweden, The National Board for Youth Affairs collects "good examples" and disseminates this information as a "bank of experiences". One example is the local youth councils, about a hundred in the whole country. Different models of membership and many working methods and forms of participation have been tried.

In Norway, municipalities use a variety of models to use young people as informants, which means systematic information on their reality, experiences and points of view. The methods of implementation of the concept of young informants include questionnaires and interviews, collection of statements from student's councils, children's and young people's councils, hearings for children and young people, review of conditions for children and young people, diaries, drawings of maps and registration of land use.

6.2.6 Criticism of National Youth Policies

The national reports on youth policies contain several examples of policies not achieving their objectives, and major policies areas not being addressed by specific policies. However, most of this criticism is very specific of individual countries, but there are also some general trends that seem to be of interest and importance in most Western European countries.

6.2.7 The Lack of Consideration for Individual Differences and Variations of Youth

In the national reports, there is widespread concord that youth is becoming more and more individualized and cannot be regarded as a unified age cohort any longer. The modern youth period is a period of experimentation, where adult identity is constructed through experiments, and social identities are no longer defined once and for all, but youth has become a life phase in which identities are tested and redefined.

This individualization implies a heterogeneous youth period which demands new policies. As noted in the Austrian report: The fragmentation of youth cultures implies that differentiated methods must be developed. With only one model of youth work it is not possible to reach all young people and this must also be taken into account when funding youth work. The British report concludes that a more inclusive and heterogeneous notion of a young person becomes more and more necessary, and this kind of criticism can also be found in the German report which gives an example of how standardized measures give rise to much complaint among youth.

6.2.8 The Favouring of Youth at Risk

Apparently in contrast to the above-mentioned request for heterogeneity in youth policies, some of the national reports also criticize the recent trend to give priority to programmes directed towards special groups of youth instead of general programmes. The focus on the groups 'at risk' runs the danger that policy direction, development and funding will follow the most recently identified group at risk and that the youth policy agenda will be colonized by the needs of young people at risk; and culturally it links the notion of young people narrowly with social problems and risk, thus homogenizing the notion of youth as social deviance or a potential for social deviance (United Kingdom).

The same kind of concerns can be found in the Irish report. The increased emphasis on programmes targeted at specific groups of 'disadvantaged' youths or young people 'at risk' raises questions regarding the relationship between mainline youth services and targeted services.

6.2.9 The Lack of Evaluations and Monitoring of Youth Policies

Among the national rapporteurs there seems to be general agreement – especially in the Mediterranean and the Scandinavian countries and in the British Isles – that the monitoring and evaluations of youth policies are inadequate, and that this lack of research of the effects of youth policies makes it difficult to identify more or less successful programmes and projects.

The Portuguese report articulates the criticism in this way: Lack of evaluation of public youth policies in Portugal is a general major obstacle to success. It hinders correction or reformulation of youth programmes, perpetuating any errors being made. A serious, independent set of annually performed evaluations on youth programmes could not only provide public authorities with precious information on the degree of fulfilment of the intended objectives, but also reinforce transparency and public accountability. The Greek report concludes that it is

impossible to discuss the effectiveness of youth policies, as there is a lack of reports discussing the results of youth policies in Greece.

In Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Denmark, many local youth programmes are evaluated, but not in a systematic way, and the results are not easily available to the public. In both Ireland and the United Kingdom, the problem with evaluations is that there are too many monitoring bodies: the different mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of youth policies is fractured and consequently there is a great deal of variation in what should be the criteria of success.

6.3. Areas of Co-operation and EU-youth Policy

Only a small number of the national reports propose areas of co-operation within the frame of an EU youth policy. This is a list of the proposals (no order of priority):

6.3.1 Research and Information

- Youth research on a European level is required, as trends, scenes and also problems tend to wander from one country to another. (Austria)

- The development of programmes concerned with networking information exchange at the European level. (Ireland)

- Support to local youth policy networks and exchanges among decision-makers in municipalities and cities. How do we learn from each other about local practices and solutions in the field of youth policy? (Sweden)

- Developing a European system of youth indicators with relation to living conditions, participation and values/attitudes which allows for comparisons. (Sweden)

- Implementing children and youth research at European comparative level; reporting regularly on the situation of children and adolescents and the development of youth policies in Europe. (Germany)

- Examining overall legal requirements in special areas of child and youth services in EU-member-States. (Germany)

6.3.2 Mobility and Other EU-programmes

- The issue of mobility must be taken up further, also with respect to disadvantaged youth and regions. (Austria)

- Existing EU programmes should not be so tight as to prevent combination: activity programmes of youth associations integrating complementary activities in a structured way should be supported and encouraged. (Portugal)

- Exchange programmes targeted at excluded fringes of youth or young people "at risk". (Portugal)

- European citizenship should be given a higher priority, being addressed through more than mere exchange programmes. (Portugal, Germany)

- Expanding European language training, especially for disadvantaged children and adolescents (Germany)

- Supporting young people's geographical, social and virtual mobility. (Germany)

- Supporting European youth organizations as well as European conferences and seminars with self-organization. (Germany)

- Supporting young people's development of an informed opinion in mind, and co-operating closely with the European Council in this regard. (Germany)

- Supporting European youth exchange programs and the European Voluntary Service. (Germany)

- Supporting and networking youth policy structures throughout Europe. (Germany)

- Supporting cultural and scientific productivity among young people on a European scale. (Germany)

- Supporting European youth festivals and other activities with a special cultural focus. (Germany)

6.3.3 Voluntary and Statutory Youth Work

- The recognition of voluntary work. (Austria)

- Promoting social integration and the inclusion of minority groups (ethnic, sexual, religious or other) into the communities in which they live (promoting trans-European volunteering schemes in projects targeting homeless people, immigrants, refugees and other kinds of integration actions). (Portugal)

- How can informal education through organizational and leisure time activities be recognized? (Sweden)

- Support to trans-national co-operation programmes promoted by youth associations. (Portugal)

- Training and qualification of youth workers: developing European standards for specialist training in child and youth services and youth work in the EU. (Germany)

- Developing European youth work and youth services policies. (Germany)

6.3.4 Employment Policies

- Especially in the context of unemployment, national borders are no longer relevant. We have to think in regional terms. (Austria)

- Contributing to create employment opportunities for young people – also on a trans-national basis – especially for those seeking their first working experience (through more ambitious exchange programmes, schemes of work practice in another member state, support to the learning of foreign languages by youths, etc. (Portugal)

- Youth unemployment, young people's influence and participation in the EU, youth exchanges and young people who are not currently making use of the benefits offered by the EU. (Sweden)

- Combating youth unemployment, social segregation and a lack of prospects. (Germany)

6.3.5 Protection and Prevention

- Media and youth protection. (Austria)

- Further exchange and comparison of models especially with respect to prevention programmes. Joint definitions of guidelines are needed. (Austria)

- Programs which aim at prevention of exclusion are getting more and more important. (Finland)

- Fight against drugs could also be one area of co-operation among EU-member states. (Finland)

- Combating xenophobic behaviour, discrimination, gender distortions and regional inequalities among young people (strengthening already existing trans-European programmes and creating new instruments). (Portugal)

- Protecting young people against violence and abuse. (Germany)

- Providing protection of young persons in the media. (Germany)

- Strengthening intercultural learning, tolerance and solidarity. (Germany)

- Combating right-wing extremism, xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism. (Germany)

- Preventing health risks: developing European health prevention policies for children and young people. (Germany)

- Juvenile delinquency: exchanging information and experiences on preventive measures in youth policy measures and child and youth services with regard to juvenile delinquency. (Germany)

6.3.6 "The contract between generations"

- The ageing of population and the diminishing of youth will get more attention in European youth policy in the future. It's getting even more important to get the youth to take active part in education and in social life. (Finland)

- The relation between low fertility rates in all of Europe and its relation to young people's living conditions, e.g. social welfare, parental leave, unemployment and temporary jobs among young people. (Sweden)

6.3.7 Societal Participation

- Voting participation and discussions on lowering the voting age. (Sweden)

- Leisure programmes should allow for more than sporting or cultural activities, extending preferably to the fields of social integration and civic participation. (Portugal)

6.3.8 International Relations

- The immigration and "brain drain" from developing countries will be big issues in the future. (Finland)

- Supporting youth policy structures in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and in developing countries. (Germany)

- Developing European partnership programs with young people from other parts of the world. (Germany)

7. MODELS OF EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICIES

A typology of European youth policies must necessarily – at the current state of research – be tentative and can only be constructed as a hypothesis. Such a typology implies several abstractions in which some of the differences among countries and variations within countries will be synthesized into transversal and overall features. The result is a number of models of youth policies; models which in an abstract and simplified way summarize the major features of youth policies within a cluster of countries.

The following typology is inspired by the typology of welfare regimes proposed by Duncan Gallie and Serge Paugam (Gallie and Paugam, 2000); a typology also used to analyze European youth work in the report on *Education and Training of Youth Workers in Europe* (IARD, 2000).

According to this typology, European welfare systems can be classified as the Social-Democratic welfare model (the Scandinavian countries), the liberal model (the minimal welfare states of the British Isles), the conservative model (the employment-centred model of mid-European countries), and the sub-institutionalized model (the Mediterranean countries). However, even if the typology of youth policy embraces the same geographic areas as the Gallie/Paugam classification, the youth policy models will be labelled according to important characteristics of youth policies: the universalistic model of the Scandinavian countries, the community-based model of the British Isles, the protective model of the Mid-European countries and the centralized model of the Mediterranean countries[13].

The universalistic model of youth policy is characterized by being comparatively new: It is the result of a reorientation of policies directed towards youth over the last 10-15 years during which period, youth policy in Scandinavia has developed from being scattered among several sectors to being co-ordinated within a ministry with the responsibility of the national youth policy. However, in this model there are no dedicated youth ministries and specialized youth sectors are either small or non-existing. In spite of the long tradition for a well developed welfare state, the civil society plays a major role in youth policies, and the state and institutions from the civil society co-operate in preparing and implementing youth policies. The Scandinavian model is *universalistic*: The target group is the whole generation of youth, which is defined as adolescents and post-adolescents up to the age of 25 years. Hence, the youth concepts used in youth policy is a narrow one, not including pre-adolescents. While youth unemployment used to be a major youth policy problem during the 1990s and youth unemployment has been the motivation for the development of national youth policies, the participation of youth is considered to be of major importance at the moment. In general, youth is considered to be a societal resource which must be developed – not only as an investment in the future but also as youth. Apart from the social and psychological development, the major aims of youth policy are autonomy and independence. These aims reinforce the already existing early attainment of adult status and early independence from parental authority among Scandinavian youth.

The mid-European model of youth policy is characterized by its long traditions. In the major mid-European countries, the outline of state youth policies emerged already during the interwar period or during the World War II. This long history of youth policies is probably the background of the extended youth concept in these countries: "Youth" in policy contexts is defined as "young people" and includes not only children but also young adults and young families. The dominant image of youth within this model is coloured by the wide youth concept:

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[13] The labels used are not compatible -- they do not belong to the same register of characteristics.

youth is perceived as vulnerable; as a social group that must be *protected*, promoted and supported. In this model, the strong commitment towards youth work and youth policy manifests itself in dedicated youth ministries, in powerful youth directorates and in major youth sectors. Just like the universalistic model, youth policies are initiated and implemented in co-operation among the state and the civil society. Also, the mid-European model of youth policy is comprehensive: The target groups are both special groups of disadvantaged youth and the whole generation of young people, and both the social participation of youth and the social exclusion of youth are regarded as important youth problems which must be controlled by integration, prevention of social problems and political participation of youth. This model of youth policy is institutionalized to a high degree and well-established within a legal framework: Although the current youth problems change, the principles and the organization of youth policy are stable.

The model of youth policy of the British Isles is based on a long tradition of *community-oriented* youth work, but traditionally, public interference in youth work has been limited, and although the trend is towards more a more co-ordinated youth policy, even today this model is characterized by a strong community emphasis. This emphasis is evident when the implementation of youth policies is "delegated" from the state to the civil society. The dominant image of youth is "youth as a problem" and the most important problems are the social exclusion of youth, the prolonging of the youth period and the societal participation of youth. The target group of public youth policies is primarily defined as different groups of disadvantaged youth and the major aim is the prevention of social problems. This model of youth policy is influenced by the minimal welfare state of the British Isles, but the growing problems with social exclusion of youth in recent years, have given rise to further development of this liberal model.

The Mediterranean model of youth policy is characterized by being rather new. While youth work and support have traditionally been the responsibility of families and the church, public authorities have, during the last 20 years, established structures and policies which could take over some of these responsibilities. Hence, explicit, national youth policies are newish to this model. The narrow age definition of the target group of youth policy – 15-25/30 years – must also be ascribed to this late introduction of national youth policies. Within this model, the Third Sector and the involvement of local authorities are rather weak, for which reason youth policies are *centralized* on a national, state level: Youth policies are mainly implemented by the state. Also, the rate of participation of youth in organizations is low – but growing – and the strengthening of this kind of participation is a major goal of youth policy. The high unemployment among youth and the subsequent prolonging of the youth period are major

problems that are being met by aims of enhancing the autonomy, the independence, and the societal integration of youth. However, unlike the Scandinavian model in which the major aims are very similar, the Mediterranean model is not universalistic in its scope: Specialized groups of youth are the primary targets of policies.

Table 1: Typology of Youth Policies

Model of Youth Policy	Countries[14]	Youth Ministry/Directorate[15]	Youth Sector	Dominant Image of Youth	Major Aims	Major problems	Target groups	Major age groups
Universalistic Model	Denmark Finland (Iceland) Norway Sweden	-/- +/+ -/- +/+ +/+	Minor or no youth sector	Youth as a resource	Autonomy Independence Development Political participation	Participation of youth	Whole generation of youth	13/15 – 25 years
Community-based Model	Ireland United Kingdom	+/+ -/-	Minor or no youth sector	Youth as a problem	Prevention of social problems Political participation	Prolonging of youth Social exclusion Participation of youth	Disadvantaged youth	Primary school – 25 years
Protective Model	Austria Belgium (France) Germany Liechtenstein Luxembourg Netherlands	++/+ +/+ ++/+ ++/+ ++/+ ++/+ +/+	Major youth sector	Vulnerable youth Youth as a resource Youth as a problem	Integration Prevention of social problems Political participation	Participation of youth Social exclusion	Whole generation of youth Disadvantaged youth	0 – 25/30 years
Centralized Model	Greece (Italy) Portugal Spain	+/+ -/- +/+ +/+	Major youth sector	Youth as a problem Youth as a resource	Autonomy Independence Integration Political participation	Prolonging of youth Social exclusion	Specialized groups of youth	15-25/30 years

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[14] Youth policies of Iceland, France and Italy are hybrids that cannot easily be classified within one of the four models of youth policies.

[15] +/ indicates that youth policy is allocated to one ministry; ++/ indicates a specialized and dedicated youth ministry; -/ indicates that there is not a youth oriented ministry.

8. APPENDIX

8.1. Comments on the Method of the Study of Youth Policy in Europe

The research method used in this study on youth policy in some Western European countries – reports from national experts on youth matters in 18 countries – has many advantages: The national reports are comprehensive and detailed accounts of the state of youth policy in the individual countries, and the accounts are based on national research, on first-hand knowledge of youth work and policy procedures, and on direct contact with sources in the form of statutes, evaluations and the relevant key persons. However, while this method has the potential of producing high quality national reporting, it also reduces the possibilities for comparisons among the different countries. In spite of the shared guidelines for the drafting of national reports, these have turned out very heterogeneous:

- In some cases, the country reports are based on already existing scientific research on youth policy, while in others the foundation is the rapporteurs' own – time-restricted and therefore superficial – research,
- some reports are mainly based on governmental aims and administrative plans for youth work, while others treat the actual state of youth policy,
- some reports are narrowly concentrated on what is nationally defined as youth policy while others include both explicit and implicit areas of youth policy.

This is the third comparative study of youth policies in the European Union. The two former studies – *Youth Policies in the European Union: Structures and Training* by C.G. Lazos from 1995 (European Commission, 1995) and *Young people in the European Community: Towards an agenda for research and policy* by Lynne Chisholm and Jean-Marie Bergeret from 1991 (Chisholm & Bergeret, 1991) – were both conducted by individual researchers who visited the different member states to interview persons responsible for youth policy at national, regional and local levels. In both cases, the results were much more superficial accounts of national policies than in the present study, but the reports from the EU member states were more homogeneous and hence more comparable than in the present study. And although these former studies lacked the detailed reviews of national youth policies, they benefited from the comprehensive views of there studies. Also – because of the homogeneity of the country reports and of the general outlook – they offered analytical possibilities which it has been impossible to achieve in the present comparative report on European youth policies.

There is no doubt that a combination of two research methods –reports written by national experts and a review of the national youth policy by outsiders – would be the ideal for the next study of European youth policies.

The two above-mentioned studies were affected by the sources applied: interviews with governmental officials and other key-persons involved in youth work at a national, regional or local level. The results were national accounts heavily influenced by official points of view and reviews that were uncritical towards the policies pursued. One might think that the method used in the present study – reports from national researchers – would lead to more independent and critical reviews of the policies implemented, but that is not the general impression. Most of the national rapporteurs have relied on information from governmental sources and the national reports demonstrate a startling solidarity with official attitudes and comprehensions.

In addition, many of the national reports are characterized by a preoccupation with a precise and detailed account of legislation, statutes, agencies, services, and measures directed towards youth. With a few major exceptions, the high level of details impedes a more analytical approach to the processes and trends of national youth policy.

As mentioned in the present comparative report, the majority of the national reports attaches the greatest importance to the national youth work, and in these reports, there is no distinction between youth work and youth policy. These reports are characterized by a static policy concept: youth policy is identical with the state of youth work. A profound knowledge of the organizing of youth work is, of course, a precondition for the comprehension of contemporary youth policies, but a division of the national accounts of youth work and of youth policy into two different reports would have been preferable because such an arrangement would have made the rapporteurs aware of the fundamental differences between youth work and youth policy.

The application of a more dynamic youth policy concept to the national reports might also have resulted in a more conflict-oriented perspective on youth policies. The fact that, fundamentally, policy is about power and the distribution of power and of wealth – among generations, among classes, and among regions – is unfortunately absent in the present study of European youth policies. This absence may be explained by the lack of conflicts within youth policy where the interests of the state and of the youth organisations are so inextricable that there is no room for undisguised conflicts of interests. But the background of the national rapporteurs, who are youth experts but not necessarily experts on policy and policy processes, might also enhance the absence. In this way, the present study is another example of the fact that youth policy does not attract the attention of political scientists or historians; researchers who might be able to supply

the study of youth policies with much needed analytical and historical points of view. Such points of view might also add the political parties to the study of youth policy actors. Even though it is obvious that governmental policy and policy aims are coloured by the parties of the government in office, this aspect of youth policy dynamics has neither been covered by the national reports nor by the comparative report.

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Part IV

Education and Training of Youth Workers

in Europe

1. INTRODUCTION

In this second part of the report on education and training for youth workers in Europe we will try to analyse the national portraits in a comparative way. For this analysis the national portraits provide the empirical basis. Additionally, European research literature on youth work has been used for strengthening the interpretation.

The objective of this comparative analysis is both to model the scenery of youth work in Europe and to outline trends and necessary developments to which a European Youth Policy might contribute. To this purpose a synopsis has been created in which all national portraits are summarised within a comprehensive framework (2.). As an access to the comparative analysis of this synopsis the different terms by with youth work and youth workers are conceptualised in different countries have been chosen by which a first approximate typology can be suggested (3.). This preliminary typology provides the background for assessing different focuses and contexts of youth work, i.e. differences in tasks and issues ascribed to youth work, methods applied and the institutional settings in which they are delivered (4.). These are the main aspects determining specific structures of education and training of youth workers and issues and trends of professionalisation that education and training of youth workers and the practice of youth work in Europe currently experience way (5.). On the basis of these aspects a provisional typology of 'regimes' of youth work is suggested (6.).

The aspects of Europeanisation of youth work are dealt with in two final sections. First current initiatives and their impact on youth work are assessed (7.). Finally, some recommendations are given how the role of youth work could be strengthened on the local and European level (8.).

2. SYNOPSIS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH WORKERS IN EUROPE

According to the guidelines adopted by the Steering Committee with regard to targeted report on education and training of youth workers which was translated into a questionnaire for informants and finally structured the national portraits (Part I of report) a synopsis was developed. This synopsis divides into the following categories:

- official term of youth work,
- education and training pathways (voluntary, professional, academic) including name of qualification, duration, providing institution, relation between theory and practice, and participants' employment destinations
- relevant settings of employment (public, voluntary, private)
- focus of youth work (issues and activities)

- extent of European influence

In order to improve the ‚readability' of this table some aspects have been focussed (most important training structures have been framed with bold lines as well as most important issues of youth work written in bold letters).

	Term[16]	Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)			Areas of employment	Contexts and Focus of Work	European Influence
		Voluntary Level	*Professional Schools*	*Higher Education*			
AUSTRIA	SP		*Professional schools:* 5 year full-time course 'social pedagogy', 10% practice *Colleges for Social Pedagogy*: • 2 year (full-time), 3 years part-time, mainly theory with practical elements • Further Training courses: certificates not recognised by public bodies, 2 years	• *Academy for Social Work*: Diploma in Social Work, 3 years, • *University*: Diploma in Educational Sciences Both courses with mainly theoretical focus	Private non-profit organisations hold the largest share in employment offers for youth workers	• **Organisation of leisure time activities** • offers for marginalised groups • counselling	Rather low
BELGIUM	YW SW	Education and Training in general are administered by the different language communities (Flemish, Wallonian, German-speaking and Brussels). Therefore not all pathways are found in every community.			Most youth services are run by private non-profit organisations, there is little differentiation in target groups between them and youth work run by public bodies	• **Youth clubs (leisure activities)** • **Youth information** • Marginalised groups	Rather low
		80 hours training course in youth work, certificate acknowledged by ministry	4 year part-time course, 80% practice, officially acknowledged *degree in education*	Polytechnics ("Haute Ecole"/ "Hogeschool"): 4 year course with 6-12 months stage leading to a *degree in social work* Universities:			

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[16] YW = Youth Worker (including Youth Instructors, Leisure Time Leaders); CA = Cultural Animator; SP = Social Pedagogue, Social Educator; SW = Social Worker (including Social Cultural Workers); YP = Youth Policy Professional

		Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)					
DENMARK	SP YW	Training by organisations for voluntary workers (in some cases informal ‚apprenticeship' character), partly coordinated by Danish Youth Association	*Youth Club Pedagogue* training courses: 1 ½ year further training for voluntary workers without qualification, run by private training centres.	*Social Pedagogy degree*: 4 year course or pedagogical colleges (including placement) addressing youth services and youth work, child care and special needs.	Public employment prevailing but voluntary and private sector increasing	• **Leisure activities (youth clubs)** • **Marginalised youth** • **Health and prevention** • Community projects • Unemployed Youth	Not (yet) relevant influence; Danish initiative to coordinate youth clubs in Europe (ECYC)
FINLAND	YW	Training for voluntary workers by non-profit organisations. Church organises training in brad scale. Coordination of voluntary training by the ‚Youth Academy' Youth and leisure instruction programme for adults: further training course with apprenticeship structure for adults with voluntary youth work experience.	‚*Youth and leisure time instructor*": 2 year degree in upper secondary education (3 years from 2001) – 20% practice. Employment in youth clubs, families and social prevention.	*Civic work and youth work/ leisure time*: 3,5 year polytechnic degree, 20-40% practice. Employment in management and planning of youth work. *Study of Social Pedagogy:* university master degree. Employment in research and management.	Majority of employment in public institutions; private and voluntary sector increase	• **Leisure activities** • **Unemployed youth** • **Health and drug prevention** • Prevention of social exclusion • Integration of immigrant youth • Youth participation by youth councils	Certain European influence on all levels of youth work and training (in both directions)

		Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)					
FRANCE	CA SE	*BAFA, BAFD and BASE* are three courses for volunteers leading to an officially acknowledged certificate which in certain cases provides access to professional schools	*1) BAPAAT:* apprenticeship model *2) BEATEP*: 8 to 24 months training alternating between theory and practice in a pre-selected field. 3) The *DEFA* training: full-time (3 years) or part-time (6 years), 4 months placement. *4) DEDPAD*: 2 to 3 years (750 hours of practice and instruction each)	*1) Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* (DUT). To specialise students can choose the option "animation sociale et socio-culturelle (ASC)". Three year university course leading to a diploma called *DHEPS* *2) "Diplôme Supérieur en Travail Social"*, a further education course for social workers	Majority of youth workers are employed by NGOs	• **Leisure time and sports / Summer camps** • **Youth information** • Young people's labour market integration	Not relevant
GERMANY	SP SW YW	Youth organisations and associations offer a huge variety of further training for volunteers. Only few of them lead to officially acknowledged certificates	1) Professional training for *Social Assistants:* 2 year school-based training 2) Professional education and training for *Social Educators:* 3 to 4 years (1 year of practice) *3) Professional Academy* for the Social Sector: 3 years degree (theory and practice alternating).	*1) University Diploma in Educational Sciences*, direction of Social Pedagogy: 4 years plus 6 months of stage *2) Polytechnic Diploma in Social Work / Social Pedagogy:* 3 years plus 1 year of practice	Majority of youth workers are employed by NGOs	• **Open youth centres** (mainly leisure activities) • Cultural activities • Counselling • Projects for unemployed youth • Assistance in school home work • After-school facilities	Rather low, increasing the number of students passing a certain period of study or practical stage abroad

		Education and Training Pathways **(length, practice/theory and type of qualification)**					
GREECE	SW CA	*Associations* may offer targeted training courses for the leisure and cultural sector. Access is not free but mostly requires a high school degree. *The Orthodox Church* runs 1 year training courses in counselling (including theory and practice) Access with high school degree. Certificate is not publicly acknowledged.	*Private Vocational Training Centres* offer training courses for employment in the cultural, sports and leisure (often in commercial settings) – ca. 500 hours theoretical and practical learning.	University degrees (Social Work, Social Sciences): Theoretical studies including counselling, health, addiction etc., not youth work specific. *Polytechnic degree in Social Work:* Practice-oriented 3-4 year degree preparing for youth and social services *General Secretariat for Youth* provides *further training courses* (150 – 220 hours).	Public sector is most important. Also the Church is important mainly with regard to marginalised groups. Associations and private providers involved in leisure time activities	• **Youth unemployment** • **Leisure time and sports / Summer camps** • **Health and Addiction** • **Counselling**	Not relevant
ICELAND	YW	Training at voluntary level exists but not coordinated	Not relevant	*Youth work diploma*: 1 ½ year university course with a small practice element (7%) *B.A. in Social Work*: 3 year degree with different directions of specialisation	Public employment prevailing but voluntary sector increasing	• **Health and addiction** • **Counselling** • Political education • Leisure activities • Youth unemployment • Gender issues	Not relevant in training, partly relevant in practice

		Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)					
IRELAND	YW SW	Voluntary associations providing non-standardised training for volunteers (traditionally strong influence of Church declining)		*1) Master of Social Science / Higher Diploma in Youth and Community Work*: 2 year post-graduate course *2) Master of Social Work*: 2 year full-time course with practical placements *3) Bachelor of Social Science in Youth and Community Work*: 3 year course with practical part, in some cases access without post-compulsory qualifications	Highly based on voluntary work, within youth organisations, still professionalisation grows	• **Leisure activities** • **Youth at risk** • Youth clubs	Growing influence in University education
ITALY	CA SE YP	The situation is influenced by a general lack of national youth policy and the late implementation of local youth policies with considerable local and regional differences			Employment in public and voluntary sector (voluntary sector increases by taking public tasks)	• **Youth information** • Vocational counselling • Leisure time activities • Prevention of Social Exclusion • Education and training counselling	European influence in developing education and training structure
		Voluntary organisations and cooperatives offer a broad range of short and longer training courses. Partly these can be considered as further training for those starting to work as professionals in local youth policies without having appropriate qualifications.	*Professional educator in non-formal education*: 4 year university degree incl. practice. Besides the introduction of a 3 year degree.				

		Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)					
LIECHTENSTEIN	SP	Training without certification by youth organisation	See neighbour countries Austria and Switzerland, only further training offered	See neighbour countries Austria and Switzerland	Local authorities are the main employer	• **Youth clubs** • Youth information	n.a.
LUXEMBOURG	SE CA	Non-formalised training courses	Education at Polytechnics: a) Professional school level diploma b) Higher education level: Either 3 years full-time or 6 years part-time course leading to a educators' diploma Both courses include equalised shares of practical, technical and theoretical training Alternative: Studies in France or Belgium		Main employment provided by local authorities and charity organisations	• **Information and counselling** • **Youth clubs** • Youth accomodation	Rather high degree of internationalisation
NETHERLANDS	YW SW	Voluntary youth associations may offer training for volunteers without stringent coordination.	Social Cultural Worker, Social Pedagogical Worker, Social Service Worker: 2 to 4 year degrees organised in four levels (modules) of degrees provided at Regional Education Centres. 60% practice training	*Higher Vocational Education (UPE) in Cultural and Social Education (CMV)*: 4 year degree equivalent to polytechnic level; practice experience is integrated. (until 1990 special ,youth work' programme in UPE)	Employment in non-profit organisations and local services to a similar extent	• **Youth information** • **Open youth work (leisure)** • Young offenders • Offers for marginal groups • Culture and Arts • Youth Unemployment	No substantial influence

		Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)					
NORWAY	SW SP	Training at voluntary level exists but it is neither coordinated not very relevant due to low influence of private and non-profit organisations	*Social and health work:* 4 years course in public secondary education (2 years school, 2 years on the job) employment as assistants in kindergardens and youth clubs.	*Social pedagogy degree:* 3 years course at State University Colleges providing a qualification in social pedagogy (social work, child care, youth at risk); 6 months practice placement included.	Employment mostly in public authorities. However, increase of private agencies.	• **Health and prevention** • **Counselling** • Leisure activities • Needs and problems of young immigrants.	Not relevant
PORTUGAL	CA SE	Training at voluntary level increases and is coordinated by the Portuguese Youth Institute.	*Social work and Social Education:* 3 year courses at professional and technical professional schools plus a 6 month placement Employment in child care or youth services	1) *Bachelorato in social work*: 3 year degree at polytechnic level with 30-40% practice 2) *Licienciatura in social work*: 4 year university degree (placement included) Employment of both in management and professional positions.	Mainly public sector but increase of voluntary sector.	• **Leisure and sports** • **Measures for unemployed youth** • Youth information	European Influence introduced via Portuguese Youth Institute
SPAIN	SW SE CA YP	Voluntary youth associations offer training for volunteers which may be coordinated by regional adult education centres (with certificate)	Higher Technician for Social Services / Socio-cultural Animators: 2 year course at regional professional schools with a balance between practice and theoretical instruction.	Social Work and Social Education: 3 year university degree leading to management positions in local youth services and to work with specially disadvantaged youth; 50% practice and study .	Employment mainly in local authorities but voluntary sector increasing	• **Youth unemployment** • **Prevention of social exclusion / marginalised groups** • **Leisure activities** • **Counselling**	Relevant for developing practice and training

		Education and Training Pathways **(length, practice/theory and type of qualification)**					
SWEDEN	YW	Voluntary organisations provide training for certificates and sometimes further training certificates	Youth Worker Training: 1) 3 year course in upper secondary education, 100% theoretical instruction (health, leisure and social prevention) 2) 2 year degree in Folk-High-Schools, theory and practice balanced (focus on organisation of leisure)	Youth Work Degree: 4 year course with a high level of theoretical study (80-90%) the main focus being health and prevention.	Employment in local services and in youth associations (more or less balanced)	• **Health and prevention** • **Leisure activities** • Gender issues • Political education	Not relevant
UNITED KINGDOM	YW SW	Several voluntary organisations offer partly acknowledged training courses		*1) Diploma in youth and community work* in higher education: 2 to 4 year full-time courses *2) Bachelor courses* in various combinations (full- and part-time, distance learning), usually one year additional to diploma *3) Post-graduate courses at Universities*: 2 years leading to a degree in Youth and community work or Social work	Voluntary organisations and community centres run by community-based groups or local authorities are the main employers	• **Youth clubs** • **Community work** • Youth at risk	Low

3. OFFICIAL TERMS AND UNDERLYING CONCEPTS OF YOUTH WORK

One of the most striking aspects in comparing youth work and the education and training of youth workers in Europe is the diversity of terminology. One of the greatest difficulties in this research has been to explain informants what kind of information was needed and even what the study was about. At first sight a dividing line between North and South could be drawn reflecting that interlocutors in Southern European countries often didn't understand – or misunderstood – the English term ‚youth work'. Many of the first answers referred to labour market conditions of young people (‚working youth'). Therefore, it showed very quickly that the aspect of official terminology was crucial and therefore was included into the questionnaire. We assume that on the one side language reflects cultural values, perceptions and interpretations of social reality, i.e. assumptions on 'normality'. On the other side the differentiation of various types of youth work implementation is influenced by some cultures and languages being more close than others.

Also if the diversity of terms was by far greater (in total we received more than 30 terms which were – more or less literally – translated into English) we arrived at identifying five different concepts standing for different traditions, different contexts and settings and different tasks of youth workers:

- *Youth worker:* Beside its self-evident dominant role in Ireland and the United Kingdom ‚youth worker' can be considered to be a central term in Northern Europe including the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium. Beside his dominance from being the English term its approximity to the terms applied in this broad spectrum of countries it is the most encompassing term including the provision of leisure time activities for young people in general as well as more social policy oriented tasks with regard to the prevention of social exclusion of marginalised groups (often to be delivered at the same time). Whilst representing in most cases a sub-discipline of social work mainly in the UK and Ireland an independent professionalism has been developed. In contrast to social work which is considered (by youth workers) to be merely case-oriented youth workers claim a more radical and community-oriented approach.

  Youth work is the state's responsibility for the fact that the evolution of youth as separate phase of the life course (as a result of establishing and extending public education) and the increasing dynamics and requirements of youth life (Mørch & Laursen, 1998).

- *Cultural animator:* If ‚youth worker' is the dominant term in Northern Europe, ‚cultural animator' is the complementary for the countries with Roman languages. It is predominantly related to the organisation of leisure time activities. In this perspective the organisation of summer camps and the supply of sports activities play an equivalent role to open youth work and group-related activities. The term stands for the increasing necessity to initiate leisure activities of young people and to compensate with disembedded life-worlds. The context dependency with regard to Southern Europe can be explained with the rather late engagement of public institutions in youth issues and youth policies. The latter for a longer time than in protestant contexts had been restricted to families' or Church responsibility. Due to the lack of a comprehensive youth and social policy framework different directions for different issues (leisure time, care, youth unemployment etc.) have been developed (cf. Filtzinger 1993; Lorenz 1996; Akin & Douard, 1998).

- *Social worker:* Social work on the one hand is the general discipline in which youth work and in the mean time also cultural animation are located on the level of higher education and professional knowledge. On the other hand in many contexts youth work professionals are referred to as social workers. Again there are different connotations: where youth workers in general are referred to as youth workers this means that youth at first is seen as a social group which might come into conflict with general norms and interests and/or having specific needs (which however occurs as well for old-aged people, disabled, etc.); the term can be used parallely to youth workers or cultural animators distinguishing facilities for young people in general from measures addressing especially marginalised young people; and finally there are modifications of the term towards „Social Cultural Workers" (as in the Netherlands or Belgium) again subsuming young people under a general approach regard to the cultural needs of different social groups.

- *Social pedagogue/Social educator:* Though deriving from different (Northern versus Southern) traditions social pedagogy and social education in this context might be dealt with together. Both concepts refer to the necessity of a combination between the rather resource- and conflict-related discipline of social work and the educational needs of vulnerable social groups, as for example young people. This educational aspect regarding extra-school or non-formal learning processes considers the necessity that socialisation and social integration in complex societies can nor be provided by family

and everyday life in a sufficient way but needs institutionalised and professionalised compensation. At the same time if reflects the professional and scientific move of social work towards an academic professional and a science-based discipline. Whilst Social Pedagogy is relevant in Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden, Social Education is the complementary in France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy (cf. Scheipl, 1997; López Blasco, 1998). In the UK and Ireland on the one side, Belgium and Greece on the other side it has not been referred to in the reports.

- *Youth policy professional:* This term is also restricted to Southern European countries in which youth policy were introduced relatively late. It reflects that – without being based on a specific qualification – youth policies were implemented by local authorities who tried to incorporate the function in their administrative organisation. Still, the term refers to a variety of occupations from merely administrative functions to the management of youth information centres or direct face to face counselling (cf. Montanari, 1993; Seibel, 1995).

4. ISSUES, METHODS AND SETTINGS OF YOUTH WORK

4.1 Tasks and Issues

Already in the last section it has been mentioned that youth work has been developed differently across Europe. This differences regard time as well as the role and function of youth work. In all countries – also if related to sometimes different sub-directions (see above) – youth work can be characterised as a mixture of leisure activities, non-formal education and socio-political responsibilities. However, the priorities in the objectives of non-formal education and of socio-political tasks vary considerably:

- *Leisure activities:* The organisation of leisure activities probably is the most common aspect of youth work across the 18 European countries. Probably it is also the most constitutive for the professional identity of youth work as it leads to the specific informal character of youth work based on relations of trust between adults and young people. It reflects the necessity of socialisation for youth life as a separate biographical demand (compared to socialisation only with regard to adulthood) as well as the decreasing spaces and opportunities of young people to appropriate youth life in modern structured spaces – urban and rural. A quite recent development is the increase of outdoor activities which also represents a combination of leisure and preventive aspects

as often addressing groups to which specific socialisatory needs are ascribed (cf. Deinet & Sturzenhecker, 1999).

- *Cultural Activities:* Originally subsumed under the area of leisure activities organised in youth work settings since the 80ies cultural activities (performing arts, figurative arts, media) have gained an independent status within youth work. Whilst in some countries specific directions of cultural youth work (Germany), social cultural work (Netherlands. Belgium) or community arts (United Kingdom) have been developed it has not been possible (in this study) to identify a specific (terminological) link between cultural animation and youth cultures. Beside the intrinsic value of aesthetic expression and agency the growing attention paid to youth cultures sensibilised youth workers for young people's needs with regard to spaces, equipment and skills to develop youth cultural styles actively (i.e. not only in the context of consumer culture; cf. Willis, 1990). It has also been demonstrated that performing arts represent an excellent means to increase young people's competencies for coping with youth transitions (see below): self-confidence, social and communication skills, orientation and biographic competencies (Banha et al., 2000).

- *Work with Marginalised Groups/Prevention of Social Exclusion:* The strongest legitimation of youth work (with regard to funding institutions) derives from its responsibility for marginalised young people. It often is characterised as a socio-political 'fire brigade' to make social conflicts – in form of young people hanging around and making trouble – disappear from the streets. This coincides with socio-spatial or community-related approaches. Youth clubs and youth centres often are located in under-privileged areas addressing primarily the local youth (in bigger cities additionally centres with a more youth culture related infrastructure may exist). Priority target groups are migrant youth, street children, youth from deprived areas (suburbs), or (e.g. in Eastern Germany) violent groups of nationalist and racist youth. In this respect an approach developed with regard to drug-addicted youth has been adopted which has caused a sharp debate: 'accepting youth work'. It starts from the assumption that these young people (mainly men) need social recognition and that their (deviant) behaviour is a form to claim recognition. However, it has shown sometimes difficult to keep the balance between recognition (but normative clarity) and support of racist violence. In the last decade the increase of inter-cultural issues and inter-ethnic tensions has lead to an increase of youth work and youth work debate addressing migration, racism and

xenophobia. However, it is difficult to identify clear directions in this discourse as often the same terms are applied for work with autochtone and allochtone youth (cf. Van Reenen, 1995;).

Another approach related to marginalised young people is outreach work and/or streetwork. It reflects that young people not always have positive expectations towards any form of public intervention. In certain cases it might be easier for them to engage within the safety of their social life-worlds (cf. Deinet & Sturzenhecker, 1999).

- *Youth unemployment:* With regard to youth unemployment or – in order to adopt a wider and less problem-oriented perspective – youth transitions the attitudes of youth work show subtle but still significant differences. In the South we find a clear responsibility of youth work (as part of local youth policies) and the provision of counselling, support and even training and employment opportunities perhaps is even the most important task of youth work. In the North youth workers are ambiguous with regard to their role in the transition system. On the one hand, they recognise the increase of risks of social exclusion connected to rising youth unemployment and the mistrust of young people towards bureaucratic structures of employment service and training institutions (Drury & Dennison, 1999). On the other hand they fear to lose the credibility of being youth culturally aware and trustworthy if involved in measures funded and ruled by the employment service. They object to being misused as 'social fire brigade' and claim education and labour market policies to take their responsibility. In Sweden, youth work to a certain extent has been supported and relieved by this stress at the same time as the National Youth Act ensures that all policies affecting young people have to be shaped in a youth-oriented way. For youth work this means that potentially the own expertise is recognised and valued if involved in labour market programmes and/or that state institutions are more aware of youth-specific needs and requirements when designing specific programmes (thus reducing the responsibility of youth work to engage in other social and policy arenas) (National Board, 1999).

- *Gender Issues:* The attention for gender-specific demands in youth work has experienced a variable development over the last decades. In countries with a developed youth work infrastructure – initiated by feminist groups and youth workers – a girl-specific focus has been developed which often has lead to offers explicitly addressing girls and young women. Similar to other areas of social policy and social science this has caused a double reduction: gender was reduced to female socialisation and being a

girl was introduced (only) as a social disadvantage neglecting girls' strengths and interests of being treated equally. Mainly in Northern Europe in the meantime a certain awareness of masculinity and boys' particular needs has emerged (supported by increasing male violence against individuals from a different ethnic background). At the same time, under the notion of 'gender mainstreaming' policies have been developed aiming at introducing gender as a cross-sectoral principle in social work, social policy and social science. Whilst this might lead to a 'de-ghettoisation' of actions for equal opportunities at the same time it starts to undermine spaces in which girls and young women can develop their interests and strengths independently from pressure and competition with young males. It is increasingly criticised that 'gender mainstreaming' – regardless of its positive intentions – might evoke a 'backlash' in gender policies (SPI, 1999; Oechsle, 2000).

In (southern) countries in which youth work has been implemented only recently, gender aspects have been limited with regard to females' equal opportunities in entering the labour market whilst areas as girl-specific leisure, counselling or education are the exception rather than the rule.

- *Health and prevention:* With regard to the preventive function of youth work health issues (mainly smoking, drugs, alcohol, sexual practice) have always been one of the central topics of youth work in all contexts. Besides, mainly in bigger cities the existence of a significant and visible drug scene normally leads to the implementation of street workers with double function: caring and controlling. Though being on the agenda in most youth work contexts, the preventive aspect has received a specific attention in Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland) where it is the top priority of youth work objectives (Laursen & Mørch, 1998; Mørch, 1999. It is exactly in health issues where the most innovative experiences of peer education (see above) have been made. In other countries (e.g. Germany, Netherlands) specific approaches in health education and counselling have been developed in the context of girls-specific youth work (cf. Preiss et al., 1996; for first models addressing boys see Winter & Neubauer, 1998).

The attempt to summarise the distribution of tasks and issues across Europe carries the risk of simplification. Still, there are some trends: Whilst open youth work has a clear self-understanding as providing youth cultural infrastructure (mainly space) in Northern countries this is far less the case in Southern Europe where targeted programmes (summer camps, single

cultural or sports activities) prevail to be of high importance. As regards socio-political aspects we find a diffuse (but integrated) responsibility in countries with an open youth work tradition whilst in countries with a later development of public youth work (which is also more dominated by the concept of cultural animation) the level of integration is youth information rather than youth culturally structured open spaces. This especially is true with regard to youth unemployment representing one of the most important issues in Southern European youth work whilst in the North there is a debate whether youth work is the appropriate actor for combating youth unemployment.

4.2 Methods

The methods applied in youth work reflect the intermediate position of youth work between young people's life-worlds and cultures on the one side and the institutional task of contributing to the prevention (and/or hiding) of social conflicts and social exclusion.

- *Open youth work – Cultural animation:* In the course of the history of youth work the development has been from organising leisure activities for young people to organise them together with them. In contrast to associative youth work addressing youth related to a certain socio-cultural milieu (e.g. confessional) and working with more or less defined groups an important type of public youth work – developed mostly in Northern Europe – is ‚open youth work‘. Open youth work provides a space (e.g. a youth centre or youth club) which is principally open for all young people from the respective community or territory. The space (and time, i.e. programme) mostly is only partly pre-structured by youth workers but is supposed to be actively appropriated by young people themselves. From the 70ies onwards open youth work has developed a self-understanding as infrastructure for youth culture development. Open youth work however is not restricted to leisure activities. However, leisure activities are the context in which other social and educational tasks as for example counselling and integration of marginalised young people are embedded (ECYC, 1999; Deinet & Sturzenhecker, 1999). Though coming from a different starting point concepts of cultural animation in the meantime also refer to principles of self-activation and participation and are organised increasingly community-based. The same accounts for its opening towards activities as counselling, conflict-solution etc.

- *Peer Education and Participation:* A further development of the principles of open youth work is the approach of ‚peer education‘ which has mainly been put on the

agenda of Scandinavian youth work (Laursen & Mørch, 1998; Mørch, 1999). It starts from the assumption that in individualised democratic societies young people increasingly have to be accepted as agents of their own biographies and integration processes, i.e. to organise youth life themselves. Beside, it points to the fact that educational issues (e.g. with regard to health) are more likely to be effective (and credible) if organised by peers than by adults. Participatory models gain attention all over Europe with regard to the increasing reference made to the concept of 'active citizenship'. However, the implications of participation and citizenship are rarely reflected (Stevens et al., 1999).

- *Counselling:* With its increasing socio-political function in the context of addressing marginalised youth, health education, youth unemployment etc. counselling has become one of the most important issues and methods of youth work. Still, there are different approaches: counselling „on the door-step" as usual in open youth work (which can be interpreted as part of a more general approach of low-threshold social support; cf. Böhnisch et al. 1998), counselling in specific counselling agencies with defined consultation hours. It is the aspect of the increasing influence of social work and even more of social pedagogy / social education on youth work to have lead to an enormous professionalisation and specialisation of counselling techniques. To a certain extent however this stands in contradiction to community-related approaches which still are important aspects of youth work identity, mainly in the UK and Ireland.

- *Youth Information:* Youth Information is a rather recent development in youth work which is composed of different streams. In some countries it has been introduced additionally to an already existing youth work infrastructure or in terms of youth work modernisation (France, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway). In these cases it refers to the increasing challenge of orientating in a more and more complex post-modern world. In other countries (Italy, Portugal, Spain) it has been one medium of implementing youth work which until then had not been developed yet. Even more, youth information had to compensate with a lack of youth related leisure activities, youth cultural infrastructure, and targeted counselling for young people all together. In many Italian regions it even has adopted the task of careers advice and provides space for assistance for young entrepreneurs. Where developed however, youth information has revealed to be a powerful instrument of coordinating and initiating various youth related policies and activities. However, it has shown that the utilisation of youth

information in most cases is limited to those with self-counselling and consciousness regarding their needs of orientation. These young people either need further counselling (how to deal with information) or first have to be motivated and activated to engage in active orientation processes (CYRCE, 1995; du Bois-Reymonds & Hübner-Funk, 1999).

Across different contexts youth workers have tried to found a "biased professionalism" towards young people. This perspective has been strengthened by the concept of empowerment describing an attitude rather than a method of social practice (Rappaport, 1981; Barry, 1995; Roche, 1997). Empowerment relates to the objective of encouraging individuals to achieve subjectively relevant goals, to respect their identities and life plans and to increase their competencies for individual agency: to open access to resources and opportunities rather than making them fit into pre-defined measures. These ideas have gained attention especially in the context of post-modern constellations which have raised a broad scepticism against the welfare state's orientation towards standardised patterns of biography. However, the term shares the risk of the normative concepts of social integration constitutive for youth work – participation - to be hi-jacked and abused by institutions subsuming every kind of enrolment into programmes and measures as empowering and leading to participation. For youth workers this entails the risk to lose one the most important pre-requisites of their work: credibility (Banks, 1999).

4.3 Settings and Contexts of Youth Work

It has already been mentioned that different pathways of developing youth work have lead to a different role of the actors involved. In almost all countries under investigation the level of the *national state* is restricted to youth policy legislative, to monitoring and – sometimes together with regional actors – in providing education and training. *Regions* – if involved – mainly are responsible for education and training of youth workers. The most important level of policy and practice is the level of *local authorities*. In all countries it is the local level where youth policy competencies are strongest or at least become concrete.

Whilst in the southern countries (in this case France definitely is not a southern country) where youth work and youth policies were developed rather late local authorities still are the most important employers of youth workers. This has to be interpreted as the necessity of any public regulation in a context in which a comprehensive framework has not yet – or only marginally – been developed (cf. Montanari, 1993). However, due to constraints of public spending the role of the *voluntary sector* increases. Interestingly, the same accounts for the Nordic countries. This can be explained by the high importance given to youth work as non-formal education towards

societally relevant objectives. In other countries there is either a balance between public and voluntary sector (United Kingdom, Netherlands) or even a dominance of the voluntary sector (France, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Austria). These are contexts in which the principle of subsidiarity has not been restricted to family and Church but in a certain way been modernised, extended to secular forms of voluntarism (Third Sector) and implemented in the administrative structure of public service delivery.

This discussion has referred to the delivery of public youth work. In nearly all countries however we find a structure of voluntary youth work associations alongside – and to a differing extent interlinked with – public youth work. In countries with a corporatist structure of the voluntary sector (e.g. Germany), through the institutionalisation of subsidiarity, the voluntary sector could cope with secularisation and individualisation by becoming a semi-public actor highly involved in processes and mechanisms of public administration. In the South however, with its sharp rupture between and shift from Church to public (local) responsibilities new forms of voluntarism have emerged, e.g. cooperatives, initiatives etc. some of which represent a modernised form of confessional associations whilst others have totally detached from old socio-cultural bonds. In principle, we find a professionalisation of youth work also in the voluntary sector leaving the traditional milieux and increasingly engaging in the delivery of public youth work.

Whilst traditionally voluntary and associative youth work addressed ordinary youth (except Catholic and Orthodox Church providing services for marginalised groups already under the traditional division of labour between State and Church in the South) the shift to 'socio-pedagogisation' and 'socio-politicisation' of youth work increases the engagement of vountary associations also in this regard - however delegated by public authorities.

Finally, increasing attention has to be paid to *private actors* which mostly engage in providing commercial leisure activities – or compete with voluntary actors for public funding. In some cases – instead of a diversification – this has lead to legitimatory problems of public youth work. Where young people use youth work only as one aspect of leisure and youth cultural activities (leading to a decline of participants in youth work) alongside a highly diversified leisure industry, funding institutions may either ask youth work organisations to professionalise and commercialise their activities (to attract either participants or sponsors or both) or to concentrate on socio-politically relevant issues (marginalised youth, after-school facilities etc.).

The shift from public to voluntary and private actors on the one hand is legitimized as a decentralisation of youth work towards the life-worlds of addressees. However, it also has to be seen in the light of cuts in public welfare and a privatisation of social services. Public tasks are 'outsourced' and voluntary and private actors compete with regard to the lowest price. This means that professional standards as well as social protection of youth workers risk to be undermined considerably (cf. IRIS, 2000).

5. STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The different institutional settings and traditions of youth work are reflected by a kaleidoscope of education and training routes which lead to what brings people into what we can now call "youth work".

Among the huge variety of professional trajectories which can be found all over the countries studied, there are some lines of convergence and commonality as well as clear divisions according to the angle under which we look at them.

5.1 Degree of Specialisation

One of these angles is the position of youth worker education and training among professional and academic disciplines. One line of convergence among the majority of countries is that higher levels of training seem to be related to a lower level of specialisation of the training people working in the field are undergoing. While in a huge part of the countries in this study have specialised training for youth workers on a professional education level, in most of them, at an academic level, youth worker training tends to be part of the bigger context of social work, social pedagogy or even the social or educational sciences.

This overall tendency can be differentiated along the already mentioned divide between countries with a stronger "social education" and "social pedagogy" tradition on the one hand and the ones where youth work historically has evolved from different contexts, like community work in the UK, for example.

At the level of professional education, the social pedagogy / social education tradition leads to a differentiated system of training routes like in Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. In these countries, higher education training routes for youth work professionals are more or less integrated into social pedagogy, educational sciences or social sciences. The latter – together with studies in social work are the common pathway at the higher education level with the more social and community work oriented countries.

Youth-work specific routes in higher education have been established only in a few of these countries like in Iceland, Finland, Ireland, the UK and Sweden.

5.2 Theory and Practice: Matters that matter...

A second angle closely related to the aforementioned historical roots of youth work is the set of subjects which are judged to be relevant for the training of youth workers. Common grounds are the basic theoretical knowledge about socialisation of young people derived from the different social sciences: sociology, psychology, social policy, education. In most cases, the studies feature knowledge about target group related issues (youth, handicapped, women, migrants) or health related issues.

On the technical level, subjects included in the courses vary according to wether youth work is designed as a standalone course or whether it is integrated into other disciplines. This set of technical skills may include any combination of the following subjects:

- law
- methods of social work (case management, group work, community work)
- personal skills (counselling, rhetoric, etc.)
- communication and conflict management

A common trend, at least at the higher levels of these pathways, is the integration of management and project management skills into the respective curricula. According to the degree of specialisation, especially on the level of vocational training, the courses provide training of practical skills related to music, theatre, dance, video, computer etc.

Compulsory job placements or practical exercises are used to interlink theoretical and practical contents of training, in almost all countries. However, in most cases this approach is limited to the professional school and polytechnic level, while on the academic and university level practical elements are seldom found. Exceptions to this are university studies in Germany, Italy, Ireland and Sweden. The rate of practical parts on the training routes vary between 10 and 80 per cent.

5.3 Standardisation and Recognition

Another angle under which the lines of difference and similarity can be analysed is the degree of standardisation of youth worker training and the official recognition of the certificates acquired in these forms. On the voluntary level, almost in every country, a variety of short-term training has been developed. These courses are often organised by non-government youth organisations.

However, only few countries have standardised systems of monitoring and certification of this kind of training. In some countries, roof organisations at a national or regional level coordinate these training activities, as – among others - in Belgium. One outstanding exception is France where the certificates acquired in these short-term courses are standardised on a national level. What's more, the qualifications acquired in these courses even partly are recognised as an equivalent for general education certificates which are required to enter into higher education.

In almost all other countries, the qualifications obtained in voluntary youth work are not recognised in the higher levels of youth worker training. Nevertheless, many training routes only allow students with practical experience in the field.

5.4 Professionalisation

The discussion on training structures for youth worker is another evidence for one common trend across all countries in this study. There is a tendency towards higher qualified personnel in youth work nearly throughout all countries. This trend has different backgrounds and different starting points, however.

One of these starting points can be found in those countries where public policy for young people from a historical perspective is relatively "young". In Italy, Spain and Finland, to mention only three among them, professionalisation is an ongoing process on two levels: on the one hand, mainly local authorities are creating publicly funded positions in the field of youth policy. As one consequence of this development, the same bodies offer further training opportunities in the field of youth work / youth policy. On the other hand, universities and polytechnics have started to offer training routes which are partly specialised in that direction. It cannot clearly be said whether and how these two lines of development exactly are interlinked, but they obviously differ from the development in the countries where youth work has developed under different circumstances.

In these countries where publicly funded youth work has a longer tradition the same trend – more better qualified persons work in the field of youth work – has different reasons. Among others, one of these reasons is the general trend towards higher proportions of students acquiring higher education certificates in the majority of European countries, especially in Scandinavia. Besides this overall trend, also the already mentioned debate on a shift within the nature of youth work might be held responsible for processes of professionalisation. In many countries, youth work more and more is targeted at youth at risk and other special target groups. Along

with this, the profile of youth work often is altered in a way that counselling and other specialised tasks and skills are integrated into it.

Another path of professionalisation, which is partly overlapping with the first one, is the trend of professionalisation within the sector of voluntary organisations. In countries like Spain or Italy for example, voluntary organisations take over more and more youth-related services which have been offered by public bodies. This process of extending the principle of subsidiarity leads to a process of professionalisation within these organisations.

A phenomenon which is interesting in this context is the way experiences in the field of volunteer work are validated by the respective training systems. The examples of Ireland, the UK and some parts of Scandinavia can be interpreted as attempts to increase the value of volunteering experience by granting access to higher education to people who have been working in the voluntary sector. In Ireland, this explicitly is set out as a strategy of increasing societal participation of young people.

One circumstance which is extremely favorable to such an opening is an education and training system which already is flexibilised and modularised, like the one in the UK. In this system with very low standardisation of qualifications, access to higher education is much more dependent on work experiences than on general education certificates. A high proportion of mature students is one consequence of this. Another particularity of this model is that the different pathways and levels of training are not very much closed up against each other and therefore individuals can combine the different ways of training more easily.

Another example of how the value of volunteering experiences can be increased are the apprenticeship models of youth worker training introduced in Finland and Denmark. In these models, experiences from voluntary work are integrated into the training curricula.

6. REGIMES OF YOUTH WORK

If one tries to develop a comparative typology of national constellations of youth work – which in this place will only be possible as a kind of hypothesis – it appears useful to consult Esping-Andersens typology of welfare regimes (1990): social-democratic, liberal and conservative. However, given the particularity of contexts in southern Europe it appears to be even more

appropriate to refer to the development of this model by Duncan Gallie and Serge Paugam (2000) who re-define social-democratic regimes as universalistic, the liberal ones as minimal, the conservative as employment-centred and add as a fourth model the sub-protective welfare states in mediterranean countries. As a hypothesis we want to suggest the following adaptation of this typology with regard to youth work:

- *Universalistic/paternalistic*: In Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, less Iceland) youth work is developed as a civic infrastructure addressing young people as citizens, i.e. universal access to youth work is central as well as participatory structures. At the same time the state has a strong interest in educational objectives (e.g. health) to be integrated in this participatory structure. The stress of peer education is one consequence of this contradictory structure.

- *Liberal/community-based*: In the countries characterised as liberal/minimal welfare states (United Kingdom and Ireland) youth work has been developed in a surprisingly universalistic way. There is a high commitment of local authorities to provide an infrastructure of youth clubs. The lack of national support and interest enables a strong community-orientation.

- *Conservative/corporatist*: In countries with a conservative welfare state we find a more corporatist structure of youth work. On the one side there is strong interest of the state of providing socialisation towards the standard biography. Therefore the socio-pedagogical aspects are as important as in Scandinavian countries but with a different focus. On the other side this objective is delegated to voluntary actors which to a high extent are in'corporated' into local, regional and national administration.

- *Mediterranean/sub-institutionalised*: Whilst Esping-Andersen referred to southern European countries as conservative (due to the corporatist role of the Catholic or Orthodox Church) Gallie and Paugam rather stress the considerable loss of (socio-cultural) relevance and influence of the Church which has lead to a deficit or vacuum of regulation (2000). The often only responsibility of local authorities has lead to high regional differences according to local resources and political interests. Together with a newly constituting Third Sector they only slowly manage to fill these gaps.

Table 1: Regimes of Youth Work

	Dominant Concepts	Main Issues	Main Settings	Education and Training	Countries
Universalistic/ Paternalistic	Youth Worker/ Social Pedagogue	Leisure Counselling Health/Prevention	Dominance of local authorities	Dominance of higher education (soc. pedagogy). Parallel recognition of informal pathways	Denmark Finland Iceland Norway Sweden
Liberal/ Community-based	Youth Worker	Leisure Community Work Marginalised Youth	Balance between local authorities and voluntary sector	Mainly higher education (youth and community work degrees); strong focus on broadening access.	Ireland United Kingdom
Conservative/ Corporatist	Youth Worker/ Social Pedagogue/ Cultural Animator	Leisure Counselling Marginalised Youth	Dominance of voluntary sector	Social Work (and Cultural Animation) qualifications on professional education as well as on higher education level.	Austria Belgium France Germany Liechtenstein Luxembourg Netherlands
Mediterranean/ Sub-institutionalised	Cultural Animator/ Social Educator	Youth Transitions Youth Information Leisure	Dominance of local authorities	Process of development on voluntary, professional and higher education level	Greece Italy Portugal Spain

7. EUROPEAN DIMENSIONS

Answering the question for European influence on national and local youth work requires to consider different actors as well as different dimensions. Relevant actors are the European Commission (mainly DG Education and Culture), the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum as well as networks as networks addressing education and training of social professions like ECCE (European Centre of Community Education) and youth work practice like ECYC (European Confederation of Youth Club Organisations).

Relevant dimensions are the European influence on education and training pathways for youth workers in Europe, the integration of a European dimension into national curricula, and the introduction of new concepts and objectives through European discourses.

The *European influence on youth work education and training* reported in the national portraits gives the following picture: in countries in which youth work is well established European influence is not considered to be very important and strong. This means that processes of professionalisation and scientific development not necessarily are linked to parallel processes in other European countries. Nevertheless, there are some initiatives to engage in European cooperation. These initiatives however are limited to single persons, organisations or university/polytechnic departments. In contrast, in countries with a more recent introduction of youth and youth policy the impact of European cooperation is significant. To a certain extent this has been developed without support of European agencies. For example, the orientation of southern European countries towards the French model of cultural animation is older than cooperation organised by the Commission or the Council. The strong orientation of southern countries towards France may have two main reasons: the similarity of socio-cultural models and of language (see also section 2). Apart however, European programmes have been used to implement and develop education pathways training. Interestingly, the most important means haven't been programmes addressing youth policy but programmes related to education (SOCRATES) and the European Social Fund (ESF; e.g. Portugal) (see below). In most countries this has concerned the development of higher education in social education (Italy, Spain). In Portugal, the National Youth Institute also has used these funds for developing further training on the voluntary level.

One of the best established *networks* for the education and training of social professions is ECCE (European Centre for Community Education) established in Koblenz (Germany) in which higher education institutions from 19 European countries are organised. One of the main activities is the exchange of students and teachers, another one the joint development of a European curriculum for social professions. ECCE receives its most funding through the Commission's programme SOCRATES. Most of the participating institutions have started specific degrees in European Social Work (e.g. Cork in Ireland and Koblenz in Germany) (Lorenz, 1998; ECCE website). This as well accounts for ECYC (European Confederation of Youth Club Organisations) based in Copenhagen (Denmark). Compared to ECCE it is only in an initial stadium – also with regard to finding corresponding concepts for Open Youth Work in other cultural contexts. Based on the practice of open youth work it is concerned with developing a curriculum and modules for initial and further training related to the specific demands of open youth work (ECYC, 1999).

The most important means by which the *European Commission* intentionally has tried to develop the Europeanisation of youth work has been the programme YOUTH FOR EUROPE and its successor the YOUTH programme. Whilst the strands regarding youth initiatives and youth exchange have addressed youth work practice the ‚joint actions' addressing youth associations and organisations and the short study visits for youth workers, group leaders and youth work responsibles directly referred to the creation of European professionalism of youth workers across the member states. An overview over some programmes of this action suggests that the majority of seminars were related to the socio-political aspects of youth work rather than to leisure and youth cultural issues (cf. Deutsches Büro Jugend für Europa). Despite the size of the programme (compared to others) it could not influence professional youth work deeply as being restricted to the level of further training.

Further training activities have been developed through a partnership of the Commission with the *Council of Europe's Youth Directorate.* Observers of European youth policy comment this as the merge of the Youth Directorate's developed knowledge and competence in intercultural youth policy and youth work training with the European Commissions power in terms of financial means. The partnership programme with the European Commission on European Youth Worker Training means a development of youth worker training on two dimensions (compared to the short study visits which are continued parallely): firstly, through the Council of Europe members a wider Europe is addressed; secondly, the training courses run by this programme represent a professionalisation of European youth worker training as regards duration, depth of contents and issues of training:

- Training for Trainers Course,
- Training for Trainers Working in Central and Eastern Europe,
- Training Course on Organisational Management,
- Training Course on Youth Information and Counselling,
- Training Course on Project Management and Trans-national Voluntary Service,
- Training Course on Intercultural Learning and Conflict Management

Compared to youth workers from EU member states – for whom the majority of the contents of training wasn't new and who participated rather for a vague interest in European cooperation and for making contacts – this programme has been highly appreciated and used by youth workers from *Central and Eastern* Europe (47% from EU countries, 53% from Non-EU countries). If one considers the parallel efforts and means of EU and Council to develop 'the' civil society in these countries, European engagement in youth work training has also to be seen

as development aid policy, even more with regard to the future extension of the European Union and the integration of many Eastern members of the Council of Europe (cf. Stein, 1999).

The *European Youth Forum* is the European platform for voluntary associations in the youth field. It intends both to represent youth politically via coordination (also if the subsuming youth associations as 'natural' representatives of youth might be misleading as mostly organised by adults with more or less youth cultural credibility) and to create standards for non-formal education (European Youth Forum, 1999).

However, Europeanisation not only has had (different) impacts on structures of education and training but also on professional debates carried out in national youth work contexts.

A practice approach strongly supported and developed by European actors (Commission and Council) is the concept of *youth information*. This has lead to the foundation of ERIYCA the European network for youth information which has also developed a European Charter of Youth Information (cf. CYRCE, 1995).

Another highly important issue transported via European programmes is the topic of *intercultural learning*. This relevance on the one hand is due to the emergence of racist and xenophobic violence in almost all European countries in the 90ies. On the other hand, since the launch of the first youth programmes (PETRA) the European Commission pursues the objective of creating a European Identity among the younger generation. In the late 90ies this has been turned into the objective of *European Citizenship* (see European Commission 1997; 1998). Due to its closeness to a discourse on Youth and Citizenship in the UK the notion of citizenship has spread much wider than it could be expected by only being a YOUTH FOR EUROPE objective. However, if these discourses are able to realise the potentials inherent to the respective concepts has not yet been proved. In the concluding section we want to give some recommendations for a European Youth Policy how to secure their integrative effects.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY

Despite of the diversity of concepts and realities of youth work across Europe there are some general recommendations that might be derived from the analysis with regard to the development of youth work in a European framework and by European youth policy.

Recognising and Empowering Youth Work

Regardless of its professionalisation and institutionalisation youth work represents a 'soft' element of youth policies which is increased in case of social conflicts becoming manifest and reduced in times of cuts in public spending. This weak position is even increased by a structural aspect that in certain sense is exactly the strength and potential of youth work: being situated between young people's life-worlds and institutional structures. This intermediate position weakens youth work in a twofold perspective: the more youth work is engaged with marginalised groups carrying the stigma of being disadvantaged 'losers' the more youth work and youth workers themselves risk to be marginalised, devaluated and stigmatised as professionals; and the strength of credibility – in the sense that youth work suffers less from the communication gap between young people and institution than other institutions do – in a bureaucratic perspective may be interpreted as a lack of professional knowledge and skills ("just talking") which is difficult to measure in its effects and outcomes. However, given the individualisation of young people's integration into society and the mistrust against institutional (systemic) structures of integration, this professional openness (or open professionalism) needs to be strengthened and supported by decent salaries, equipment and institutional guarantees to avoid occasional funding according to political climate. It has to be acknowledged that (a broad concept of) youth work represents an infrastructure for social integration. In order to achieve this status it has to be open for all young people and at the same time it has to be open for being shaped and influenced by young people themselves.

If youth work is expected to empower young people youth work and youth workers need empowerment and recognition themselves.

Leisure or Prevention?

Also with regard to the never ending oscillation of youth work between leisure and youth culture on the one side and socio-political responsibility on the other openness has to be maintained. Only if rooted in (or committed to) youth culture youth workers remain credible with regard to institutional tasks (e.g. working with drug using youth or engaging in programmes for unemployed young people). A one-dimensional instrumentalisation of youth work will undermine its potentials in both directions.

Broadening the access to qualification and professional youth work

Youth work in many cases is characterised by a dividing line between professionals and volunteers. At the same time it is based on principles of participation and depends on credibility as a life-world oriented social institution. In this perspective it is apparently crucial that access

to education and training, i.e. to qualifications and professional status in youth work, is not restricted to a well educated middle class. Young people themselves (marginalised or not) hold a good deal of expertise with regard to the implications and needs connected to growing up in late modern societies. This is true especially for the Central and Eastern European countries. European engagement in developing youth work and respective education and training must not neglect the potentials and experiences developed in this contexts by imposing professional standards taking their universal validity for granted.

As experiences mainly from Ireland (but also the UK) or from suggest teach the broadening of access to qualifications and professional positions is possible (without losing professional standards out of sight) and fruitful in terms of undermining principles of participation and life-world orientation. It has shown that systems that are based on or at least open for modularised education and training pathways are more likely to fulfil these demands than systems which are both standardised and stratified. But also the French model (as well as some Scandinavian) teaches the lesson that practical experiences can be certified and thus diversify pathways towards qualified and professional youth work as well.

Practical and context experience should be accepted as a criterion of access to education and training which is at least as recognised as school qualifications.

Diversification and Standardisation

With regard to the development of professionalism various routes should be accepted and supported: diversification (e.g. leisure and culture as well as socio-pedagogical) as well as standardisation (e.g. basic knowledge regarding late modern youth and basic skills in counselling and project organisation). The intermediate position of youth work requires this internal differentiation as well as the debate on priorities (which however has to be lead as a professional debate and not as a political debate tied to budget constraints).

European Dimension

Given the weak position of youth work at the local and even more at the national level European Youth Policy should stress the empowerment of local youth work as a highest priority before asking for the development of an - additional - 'superstructure'. As long as youth workers struggle with recognition in their everyday practice Europe will remain an additional demand rather than an empowering resource. The same accounts for European Identity and its implementation in the catalogue of objectives of youth work and education and training of youth workers. If contributing to young people's everyday lives in a subjectively relevant way

as well as enabling youth workers to empower young people in their everyday work practice European Identity can be expected to follow as a natural consequence. International exchange or European voluntary service without a doubt contribute to this objective but tend to remain limited to participating individuals and often to concrete situations.

Participation and Citizenship

European discourses have contributed to increase the attention to the concepts of participation and (active) citizenship (cf. Chisholm et al., 1997; European Commission, 1998). However, these terms are in danger of losing their normative and integrative potentials by being referred to in an inflationary way by all kinds of institutions – even those young people experience as highly alienating and controlling. In contrast to these developments these terms have constantly to be sharpened. Especially in contexts of individualised social integration the understanding of participation and citizenship in contexts of integration programmes has to be redefined. Instead of being only the rhetoric objective legitimising 'any' kind of youth work or (increasingly compulsory) integration schemes for unemployed young people the property of youth work - providing young people with the opportunity to influence the measures and structures they are involved in - has to be re-established as the only and one interpretation of participation: participation now and right from the beginning instead of educating for participation in future.

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