

Self-assessment tool for youth policy



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Introduction

One of the priorities of intergovernmental co-operation in the Council of Europe in the youth field is to **promote and support the development of youth policies**.

It is the responsibility of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), which brings together representatives of ministries or bodies responsible for youth matters from the 50 States parties to the European Cultural Convention.

The CDEJ fosters co-operation between governments in the youth sector and provides a framework for comparing national youth policies, exchanging best practices and drafting standard-setting texts.

It is in this context that the CDEJ officially adopted the current **self-assessment tool for the development of youth policy**, and encouraged member States to use and disseminate it.

Background to the self-assessment tool

In the absence of monitoring mechanisms to follow-up on the Council of Europe youth sector's work, the CDEJ felt that there was an increasing demand from the member States' governments to develop "measurement" criteria and methods to assess progress made over time.

The CDEJ therefore felt that it was necessary to develop a set of **quality benchmarks** for youth policy, based inter alia on recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers (or, where appropriate, on texts adopted by other relevant Council of Europe bodies).

In connection with such benchmarks, a self-assessment tool with **standard indicators** was developed, so that the authorities responsible for youth could identify progress made over time in the development of their youth policies and opt for any necessary adjustments or changes.

This tool was developed to **help member States to self-assess their compliance** with the Council of Europe's **standards for youth policy**, and to serve as a basis for self-paced youth policy development.



Key principles of public youth policies according to the Council of Europe

Over the years, the Council of Europe has developed a variety of principles, objectives and values that should underpin youth policies.

According to the Council of Europe, any public youth policy should promote the following **principles**:¹

- a. To invest purposefully in young people in a coherent and mutually reinforcing way, wherever possible through an **opportunity-focused rather than problem-oriented approach**, by elaborating, among other things, standards and instruments of youth policy where necessary;
- b. To **involve young people** both in the strategic formulation of youth policies and in eliciting their views about the operational effectiveness of policy implementation;
- c. To **create the conditions for learning, opportunity and experience** which ensure that young people are enabled to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in both the labour market and in civil society;
- d. To **establish systems for robust data collection** both to demonstrate the effectiveness of youth policies and to reveal the extent to which 'policy gaps' exist in relation to effective service delivery to young people from certain social groups, in certain areas or in certain conditions;
- e. To **display a commitment to reducing such 'policy gaps'** where they demonstrably exist.

These general principles describe what a sound policy should be like. Member States are also encouraged to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policies they implement and be ready to fine-tune (or even abandon them) if they prove to be partially or wholly ineffective.

However, the current self-assessment tool does not directly focus on the key principles of youth policies described above. All stakeholders wishing to assess their compliance with these principles in their own context (whether at local, regional, national or European level) are encouraged to use the **toolkit** on quality standards **developed by the European Youth Forum (YFJ)**, which covers most of the principles listed above.²

The focus of the current self-assessment tool is different, as it addresses specifically **compliance with the Council of Europe's standards for youth policy**.

1. Source: "The Council of Europe and youth policy: support, assistance and resources for youth policy development in member States" (2016). These principles have been drawn from a variety of key Council of Europe texts on youth policy, including the terms of reference of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), the Compendium on Youth Policy (2012), quoting the final report of the Working Group on Youth Policy Indicators of 2003.

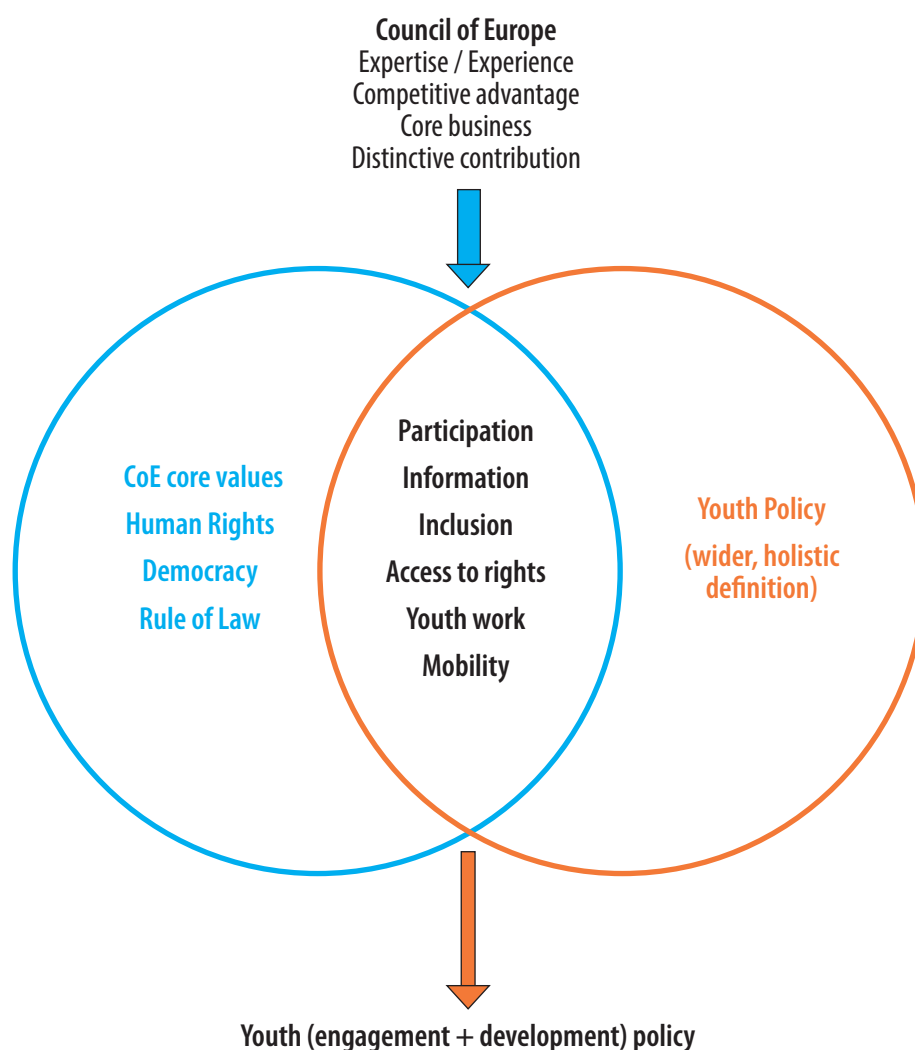
2. <http://youthforum.org/8-standards>.



Council of Europe's core standards for youth policy

According to the CDEJ, the scope and focus of the Council of Europe's youth policy should continue to promote the core values of the Organisation (human rights, democracy and rule of law).

The six main areas of intervention (see chart) of the Council of Europe's youth policy are based on standards adopted by the Council of Europe in the youth field (mainly Committee of Ministers' recommendations). They should provide the basis for any future youth policy development within the Organisation.



Summary of the main indicators with which to gauge progress in implementing Council of Europe standards

Area of intervention	Corresponding indicators
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth policy facilitates the active participation of all young people in decisions, especially those which concern them, and encourages them to engage as active citizens. ▶ The government recognises and supports youth organisations, youth councils and other youth initiatives or structures.
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth policy facilitates the provision of relevant youth-friendly information, and access of all young people to it, both offline and online. ▶ Youth policy creates opportunities for young people to develop competences for the management of information.
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth policy promotes the inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations in all areas of life (including education and training, employment and occupation, housing, health, sport, leisure and culture). ▶ Youth policy aims at preventing the discrimination, violence and exclusion faced by young people, irrespective of grounds.⁴
Access to rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth policy promotes and facilitates all young people's access to rights more effectively and removes any legal, administrative and practical obstacles. ▶ Youth policy fosters a co-ordinated approach to improving young people's access to rights with co-operation across all relevant policy areas at international, national, regional and local levels.
Youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The establishment or further development of quality youth work is safeguarded and pro-actively supported in local, regional or national youth policies. ▶ The competences of paid and volunteer youth workers guarantee the provision of high-quality youth work.
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Youth policy supports youth mobility, notably in order to promote a sense of belonging to Europe. ▶ Youth policy encourages the development of quality mobility projects.

4. As explicitly outlined in Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights or any other form established by the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

PARTICIPATION

Legal basis

- ▶ Recommendation [Rec\(2006\)14](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on citizenship and participation of young people in public life
- ▶ Recommendation [Rec\(2004\)13](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of young people in local and regional life
- ▶ Revised European [Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life](#) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- ▶ Recommendation [Rec\(2006\)1](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development
- ▶ European Convention on Human Rights, [article 11](#) (freedom of assembly and association)
- ▶ [Recommendation on participation of children and young people under the age of 18 and its Child Participation Assessment Tool](#)

Indicator 1

Youth policy facilitates the active participation of all young people in decisions, especially those which concern them, and encourages them to engage as active citizens

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully ⁵	No	Good practice examples
Youth policy helps young people to be active citizens, notably by providing them with learning opportunities and experience that will increase their participation in public life.				
Appropriate structures or arrangements are put in place thus enabling the participation of all young people, including those in vulnerable situations, in the decisions and debates that affect them.				
Exchange and use of good practices on effective and innovative participation at local, regional and national levels are encouraged.				

⁵. Or "in progress".

Indicator 2

The government recognises and supports youth organisations, youth councils and other youth initiatives or structures

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
The right of young people to associate with others to form bodies in which to collectively pursue common objectives is guaranteed.				
Youth organisations, councils and initiatives are provided with the space, financial means and material support necessary for the purpose of ensuring their smooth and effective operation.				
Independent youth organisations and youth councils exist at local, regional and national levels and play an active role in the development and implementation of youth policy.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

INFORMATION

Legal basis

- ▶ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2010\)8](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth information
- ▶ Recommendation [No. R \(90\) 7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe
- ▶ Other relevant Council of Europe's initiatives:
 - [Internet Governance Strategy 2016-2019](#)
 - Recommendation [R\(97\)20](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on "hate speech"
 - [No Hate Speech Movement Campaign](#)

Indicator 1

Youth policy facilitates the provision of relevant youth-friendly information, and access of all young people to it, both offline and online

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Youth information and counselling services are provided at local or regional levels.				
Youth information and counselling services are provided at national level.				
The forms and channels of youth information are adapted to the evolving needs and preferences of young people, including new information technologies.				
Young people are involved in developing youth information content and channels.				
Youth information and counselling services specifically address the needs of disadvantaged young people.				

Indicator 2

Youth policy creates opportunities for young people to develop competences for the management of information

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Information/digital literacy, including critical thinking, is part of formal education.				
Information/digital literacy, including critical thinking, is part of non formal or informal education.				
Youth policy raises young people's awareness of the risks they face as consumers and creators of online information, including with regard to protecting their personal data.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

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Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

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INCLUSION

Legal basis

- ▶ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2015\)3](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights (ENTER)
- ▶ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on young people's access to rights

Indicator 1

Youth policy promotes the inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations in all areas of life (including education and training, employment and occupation, housing, health, sport, leisure and culture)

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Youth policy specifically takes into account the needs of young people in vulnerable situations.				
Concrete measures are provided to promote the inclusion of all young people, especially in and through youth work, mobility, participation and information.				
Youth policy creates bridges to the education policy, in order to promote the inclusion of young people.				
Youth policy creates bridges to the employment policy, in order to promote the inclusion of young people.				
Youth policy creates bridges to the housing and healthcare policies, in order to promote the inclusion of young people.				

Indicator 2

Youth policy aims at preventing the discrimination, violence and exclusion faced by young people, irrespective of grounds⁶

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Concrete measures are in place to enable all young people to assume their active role in society without discrimination.				
The specific vulnerability of some young people in relation to discrimination and stigmatisation is acknowledged, and measures are developed to address this problem.				
Measures promoting cohesion and positive relations between people from different backgrounds, including in and through youth work, are in place.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

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Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

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6. As explicitly outlined in Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights or any other form established by the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

ACCESS TO RIGHTS

Legal basis

- ▶ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on young people's access to rights
- ▶ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2010\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Indicator 1

Youth policy promotes and facilitates all young people's access to rights more effectively and removes any legal, administrative and practical obstacles⁷

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Youth policy contributes to removing the barriers to accessing quality education and training opportunities for all young people.				
Young people are supported to overcome the difficulties they encounter in securing stable and meaningful employment and the negative consequences of precarious life situations.				
Measures are foreseen to cater for the specific needs of young people related to social and healthcare.				

Indicator 2

Youth policy fosters a co-ordinated approach to improving young people's access to rights with co-operation across all relevant policy areas at international, national, regional and local levels

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Youth policy ensures that human rights education and education for democratic citizenship are available to young people.				
Stakeholders involved in youth issues across all relevant policy areas communicate with each other and cooperate in order to improve young people's access to rights.				
Reviews of existing and planned legislation or programmes that promote and guarantee young people's access to rights are carried out, and complementary supporting measures are introduced.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

7. Access to those rights included in Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)7](#) which are already covered in other areas of intervention (e.g. participation, inclusion), whether at the level of indicators or assessment criteria, are not specifically addressed here.

YOUTH WORK

Legal basis

- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2017\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work

Indicator 1

The establishment or further development of quality youth work is safeguarded and pro-actively supported in local, regional or national youth policies

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Strategies, frameworks, legislation, sustainable structures and resources supporting youth work are developed.				
Equal access to youth work for all young people is promoted through effective co-ordination with other sectors and with related policies.				
Youth workers and young people are actively engaged in youth work development.				

Indicator 2

The competences of paid and volunteer youth workers guarantee the provision of high-quality youth work

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
A coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers is developed.				
Any such framework takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of youth work.				
Stakeholders, including youth workers and young people, are involved in developing this framework.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

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Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

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MOBILITY

Legal basis

- ▶ Resolution (91) 20 instituting a partial agreement on the Youth Card for the purpose of promoting and facilitating youth mobility in Europe
- ▶ Recommendation R (95) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth mobility

Indicator 1

Youth policy supports youth mobility, notably in order to promote a sense of belonging to Europe

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Specific policy provisions, programmes and opportunities for learning and discovery encourage young people to be socially, culturally, educationally and economically mobile.				
Information and counselling services on youth mobility opportunities are available.				
Mobility projects promote a sense of belonging to Europe, notably through the Council of Europe values and principles of intercultural learning.				

Indicator 2

Youth policy encourages the development of quality mobility projects

Self-assessment criteria	Yes	Not fully	No	Good practice examples
Mobility projects respond to quality principles, such as the guidelines provided in the "European Charter on Quality in Learning Mobility in the youth field".				
Knowledge on and best practices in youth mobility issues are generated and shared in order to support better policy solutions.				

Positive trends which will enable further progress

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Areas for improvement and possible follow-up

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The need to associate young people with European values and, more specifically, with the Council of Europe's core values (human rights, rule of law, democracy) is crucial. The Council of Europe has always fostered an understanding of youth policy based on shared European values and on a sense of belonging to Europe.

It is in this context that the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) officially adopted this self-assessment tool for the development of youth policy.

The tool was developed to help member States to self-assess their compliance with the Council of Europe's standards for youth policy, and to serve as a basis for self-paced youth policy development. It is hoped that this practical tool will enable member States and other stakeholders to highlight and share good practices and to measure progress over time.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

