

Workshop on the future Youth Action Plan in the EU External Action

5th Eastern Partnership YOUTH FORUM- 23 Nov 2021

In 23 and 24 November 2021, the 5th Eastern Partnership Youth Forum was organized by the Slovenian Presidency of the Council DG NEAR and SALTO. The Forum, focused on youth participation in democratic processes, gathered youth workers, active and critical young people and youth policymakers from the Eastern Partnership countries, the European Union and its Member States.

On 23 November, as part of a discussion on the future of youth policy in the Eastern Partnerships, there was a dedicated workshop on the future Youth Action Plan (YAP) in the EU external action. The objective was to collect inputs from East Partnership Youth Forum stakeholders to the ongoing targeted consultation on the Youth Action Plan in the EU External Action.

23 Nov 2021// Group 2.1 Action Plan on Youth in External Action

Topic	2.1 Action Plan on Youth in External Action
Harvester	Olga Poddubnaya
Keynote Speakers	Ana TORRES FRAILE DG INTPA Youth Team, European Commission
General overview	
Topic(s) that you identified as the most important from the plenary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of the Youth Action Plan in the EU external action • The process of creating this plan • The ownership is very important in this process, that young people from EaP really has a say and can • The participation should be underlined as a right, so young people really should have access to participation on local and international levels. 	
Please give a general overview of the things discussed/talked about. <u>Please remember: related to the topic of the plenary!</u> (Try to keep it to a maximum of 200-250 words! Bullet points are fine!)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth in action plan – Global document and there is the intention to take regional 	

specificities into account, how exactly is unclear at the moment

1. What could be considered a **successful** Youth Action Plan? What would you like to see **accomplished by 2027**?
 - Inclusion
 - Covering the gaps that other initiatives are not covering
 - Including a component of building on what has already been achieved - collecting results, following up with policy implementation, evaluation
 - One that ensures young people are involved (considered) across all programmes and budgetary lines
 - One that considers young people as a resource to solutions related to them.
 - One that brings added value related to young people in terms of respecting their "specific" situation of being YOUNG
 - Increased level of youth engagement
 - Sustainable and meaningful engagement of youth in decision-making processes
 - Young people being considered not as an issue, but a solution for the existing challenges
2. Based on your experience, what are the **main challenges for meaningful youth participation**?
 - Communication channels
 - Young people can use support to shape better their messages and target the right decision makers. Content should be there, but "packaging" is also important
 - Insufficient financial means
 - Political obstacles
 - Lack of awareness about the ways how to be involved
 - Lack of trustness that it makes sense
 - Unemployment problems
 - not having an ecosystem approach. To make it meaningful and sustainable it is worthy working with youth, intermediaries (youth workers / youth organizations), building capacity of policy makers (targeted), and supporting mechanisms for dialogue
 - Most importantly - follow up with the agreements and decision points after dialogue between youth and decision makers, since sometimes decisions / recommendations stay on the paper and no one comes back to them
 - Lack of understanding why youth participation is important
 - Indifference of governments to youth participation
 - Lack of knowledge about conditions for appropriate participation (RMSOS)
 - There are always other priorities for decision makers
 - Lack of labour market regulation
 - Lack of overall understanding of the terminology on what is participation/empowerment

- Low rate access to the information in rural areas
 - Low trust rate to the state
 - Lack of communication between the state and the youth
 - Tokenistic instruments for youth participation
 - Pro-state structures, who pretend to embrace youth participation
3. In addressing those challenges, where would the **EU action have the biggest impact in strengthening youth participation and empowerment**? What concrete EU support measure or initiative would you recommend?
- Support mechanism for youth initiatives at local community level
 - Bolder support for democracy and democratic movements as many challenges stem from the inability of youth activists in non-democratic countries to use classic instruments of fostering youth participation (youth councils or cooperation with the governments,)
 - International platforms for sharing good practices of youth participation
 - Improving the national / regional / international youth participation mechanisms and empowering them to take stronger role in decision making / advocacy for youth related matters
 - Windows (special funds) for specific countries or regions. For example it could be a special Belarusian Youth Window which could provide different resources to support young people and youth organisations in Belarus
 - Guiding
 - Mainstreaming youth
 - Monitoring progress
 - Training for trainers
 - ToT on youth advocacy
 - Financial support to the right actors in the field
 - Establishing programs for support of rural youth
 - Funding of the NGOs initiatives
 - Monitoring the process

Details

What were the main challenges stressed by the speakers?
Please describe the speakers' perspective on youth problems. (Write this information in bullet points + please identify the speaker!)

- Take into account regional specificities

- Ensure real participation of young people and not just tokenism
- Work in the countries where there is lack of trust towards national governments

Did they focus on a specific group of young people? Which one(s)? Why?

Please describe if they spoke about youth from a particular country or background. (Write this information in bullet points.)

There was a question of what could be done in relations to Belarus situation, what could be done to support people from there? There are lots of problems with implementing the project there. This is similar to other regions and countries like Syria, so maybe there are some strategies that can be used.

There is a focus on youth participation and engagement, taking into account shrinking space for civil society and other obstacles for participants.

N/A

Did they propose any changes? Which one(s)? Why? (Write this information in bullet points. If not mentioned, leave blank.)

N/A