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NOTE

from:	Council General Secretariat
to	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council
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Subject:	Draft Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on Youth Work

At its meeting on 11 October 2010, the Youth Working Party reached an agreement on the draft Resolution, as set out in the Annex.

The Permanent Representatives Committee is accordingly invited to forward the text to the Council for adoption and subsequent publication in the Official Journal.

**RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,
ON YOUTH WORK**

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council:

RECALLING THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THIS ISSUE AS SET OUT IN THE ANNEX, IN PARTICULAR THAT :

- (1) The Treaty provides that EU action is to be aimed at encouraging the development of exchange programmes for young people and socio educational instructors (hereafter called “youth workers and youth leaders”) and the participation of young people in democratic life.
- (2) The European Parliament and the Council adopted the Youth in Action Programme by Decision No 1719/2006/EC. This programme, which has been increasingly successful in all the Member States, contains an important component devoted to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field.
- (3) The Council adopted a Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) on 29 November 2009. Supporting and developing youth work are regarded as cross-sectoral issues within the framework.
- (4) The conclusions of the European Council of 17 June 2010 where the European Council looks forward to the presentation of the other flagship initiatives before the end of the year¹.

¹ Doc. EUCO 13/10.

IN THE LIGHT OF

The 1st European Youth Work Convention of 7-10 July 2010, Ghent (Belgium), which highlighted the importance of youth work.

AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT

- As outlined in the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (hereafter the “renewed framework”), the objectives in the youth field are:
 - create more and equal opportunities in education and in the labour market, and
 - promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.
- The renewed framework outlines eight fields of action² in which cross-sectoral youth policy initiatives should be taken and where youth work can contribute. Other important action fields in this regard are human rights and democracy, cultural diversity and mobility.
- The Council agreed that under this renewed framework ‘youth work’ is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people.
- A number of guiding principles should be observed in all policies and activities concerning youth work, namely the importance of promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination, respecting the rights and observing the principles recognised inter alia in Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, taking account of possible differences in the living conditions, needs, aspirations, interests and attitudes of young people due to various factors and recognising all young people as a resource to society.

² The eight fields are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, creativity and culture.

- The fight against poverty and social exclusion is one of the key commitments of the European Union and its Member States. Social exclusion damages the well-being of citizens and hampers their ability to express themselves and participate in society. The fight against poverty and social exclusion is to be pursued both within the European Union and externally, in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- In all the Member States, countless children and young people, youth workers and youth leaders coming from different backgrounds, participate in, benefit from or are active in a rich and diverse range of youth work activities. These activities can take place in many contexts, addressing different issues that affect their lives and the realities in which they live.
- Youth work takes place in the extra curricular area, as well as through specific leisure time activities, and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation. These activities and processes are self-managed, co-managed or managed under educational or pedagogical guidance by either professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and can develop and be subject to changes caused by different dynamics.
- Youth work is organised and delivered in different ways (by youth led organisations, organisations for youth, informal groups or through youth services and public authorities) and is given shape at local, regional, national and European level, dependent e.g. of the following elements:
 - the community, historical, social and policy contexts where youth work takes place,
 - the aim of including and empowering all children and young people, especially those with fewer opportunities,
 - the involvement of youth workers and youth leaders,
 - the organisations, services or providers, whether they are governmental or non-governmental, youth-led or not,
 - the approach or method used taking into account the needs of young people.
 - In many Member States local and regional authorities also play a key role in supporting and developing local and regional youth work.

RECOGNISE THAT

- Young people are an integral part of an increasingly complex society. They are shaped by a variety of different influences and environments, the home, school, the work place, peers and the media. In this context youth work can play an important role in young people's development.
- Youth work - which complements formal education settings - can offer considerable benefits for children and young people by providing a wide and diverse range of non-formal and informal learning opportunities as well as appropriate targeted approaches.
- Youth work invites young people to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions by giving them an active role in its development and implementation. Youth work can provide a comfortable, safe, inspirational and pleasant environment, in which all children and young people, either as individuals or as part of a group, can express themselves, learn from each other, meet each other, play, explore and experiment.
- In addition to this, youth work should provide the opportunity for young people to develop a wide range of different personal and professional skills, free from stereotypes as well as key competences that can contribute to modern society. Therefore it can play an important role in developing autonomy, empowerment and entrepreneurial spirit of young people.
- In transmitting universal values regarding human rights, democracy, peace, anti-racism, cultural diversity, solidarity, equality and sustainable development, youth work also can have added social value because it can:
 - promote social participation and responsibility, voluntary engagement and active citizenship;
 - strengthen community building and civil society at all levels (e.g. intergenerational and intercultural dialogue);

- contribute to the development of young people's creativity, cultural and social awareness, entrepreneurship and innovation;
 - provide opportunities for the social inclusion of all children and young people;
 - reach young people with fewer opportunities through a variety of methods which are flexible and quickly adaptable.
- Youth work therefore plays different roles in society and can contribute to youth related policy areas, such as lifelong learning, social inclusion and employment.
 - Youth work, whether it is undertaken by volunteers or professionals, has a considerable socio-economic potential – as it can produce economic activity, provides infrastructure, create economic benefits and increases (youth) employment. The labour market can benefit from the personal and professional skills and competences acquired through youth work by both participants as well as youth workers and youth leaders. Such skills and competences need to be sufficiently valued and effectively recognised.
 - The Youth in Action programme provides an important contribution to the quality of youth work at all levels, as well as the development of competences among youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work, by providing learning mobility experiences and networking for youth workers and youth leaders.

ACCORDINGLY AGREE THAT

The following principles should be taken into account in implementing this resolution:

- Young people, youth organisations, youth workers and youth leaders, youth researchers, policy makers, other experts in the youth field should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of specific youth work initiatives at all levels;

- The roles and responsibilities of any actors involved within their respective spheres of competences, should be respected;
- Better knowledge and understanding of youth work needs to be gathered and shared;
- Instruments mentioned in the renewed framework should be fully used to integrate a youth work perspective and to implement specific youth work initiatives;
- Youth work should pay particular attention to the involvement of children and young people in poverty or at risk of social exclusion.

AND THEREFORE INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

- Promote different kinds of sustainable support for youth work, e.g. sufficient funding, resources or infrastructure. This also implies removing barriers to engaging in youth work and where appropriate create strategies on youth work.
- Support and develop the role of youth work in implementing the renewed framework, especially the contribution of youth work to the objectives in the different action fields.
- Involve, where appropriate, local and regional authorities and actors to play an important role in developing, supporting and implementing youth work.

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO

- Develop a study to map the diversity, coverage and impact of youth work in the EU and to have a follow-up on youth work in the EU Youth report.
- Support European youth NGO as well as smaller initiatives to stimulate a strong European civil society and further youth participation in democratic life.

- Enhance the quality of youth work, the capacity building and competence development of youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work, by providing learning mobility experiences for youth workers and youth leaders.
- Develop and support the development of user-friendly European tools (e.g. Youthpass) for both independent assessment and self-assessment, as well as instruments for the documentation of competences of youth workers and youth leaders which would help to recognise and evaluate the quality of youth work in Europe.
- Provide sufficient and appropriate European platforms such as databases, peer-learning activities, and conferences for the continuous exchange on innovative research, policies, approaches, practices and methods.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE TO

- Create better conditions and more opportunities for the development, support and implementation of youth work at local, regional, national and European level.
- Fully acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society.
- Enable youth work to further develop its quality.
- Support the development of new strategies or enhance existing ones for the capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders and to support civil society in the implementation of appropriate forms of training for youth workers and youth leaders.
- Identify different forms of youth work, competences and methods that youth workers and youth leaders share, in order to develop strategies for enhancing the quality and recognition of youth work.

- Promote the employability of youth workers and youth leaders and their mobility through a better knowledge of their qualifications and the recognition of the skills acquired from their experiences.
- Promote and support research in youth work and youth policy, including its historical dimension and its relevance for youth work policy today.
- Make sufficient information on youth work available and accessible via mechanisms like for instance European and national campaigns on youth work, and to enhance synergies and complementarity between initiatives of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other actors on local, regional, national and European level.
- Promote opportunities for exchange, cooperation and networking of youth workers and youth leaders, policy makers and researchers at local, regional, national, European and international level.
- Within the context of youth work, promote, where appropriate, the development of a systematic assessment of skills and competences required for any form of training aiming at acquiring knowledge and upgraded skills.

ENCOURAGE CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH TO

- Increase the accessibility of youth work for all children and young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities.
- Promote diverse forms of training of youth workers and youth leaders active in civil society in the field of youth in order to guarantee the quality of youth work.

- Evaluate existing youth work approaches, practices and methods and to continuously invest in their innovative development through new initiatives and activities based on the real life experiences of children, young people and youth workers and youth leaders.
- Exchange information and good practices, cooperate and network at local, regional, national and European level.

STRESS THE IMPORTANCE

In the context of the implementation of a competitive, inclusive and sustainable Europe 2020 Strategy:

- of recognising the crucial role of youth work as a provider of non-formal learning opportunities to all young people,
- of ensuring that youth work is fully incorporated into the Youth on the Move initiative as well as other programmes/policies that will equip all young people, in particular those with fewer opportunities, with the relevant skills and key competences needed for the society and economy of 2020 and beyond.

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POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, on Social Inclusion of Young People³.

The Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of 14 February 2002 on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth⁴.

The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 28 May 2004 on the Social Integration with regard to Young People⁵.

The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 19 May 2006 on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field⁶.

The Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 22 May 2008 on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

The Council recommendation of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union⁷.

Decision No 1198/2008/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)⁸.

The Council decision of 27 November 2009 on the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship (2011)⁹.

³ OJ C 374, 28.12.2000.

⁴ OJ C 50, 23.02.2002.

⁵ doc. 9601/04.

⁶ OJ C 168, 20.07.2006.

⁷ OJ C 319, 13.12.2008.

⁸ OJ L 298, 07.11.2008.

⁹ OJ L 17, 22.01.2010.

The Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 11 May 2010 on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty¹⁰.

The Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting Lifelong Learning and the "new skills for new jobs" initiative¹¹.

The Communication from the Commission 'Europe 2020', A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth¹².

The Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe¹³.

¹⁰ OJ C 137, 27.05.2010.

¹¹ OJ C 135/8, 26.05.2010.

¹² COM(2010) 2020 Final.

¹³ Resolution CM/Res (2008)23. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November 2008 at the 1042nd Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.