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Introduction:

The study “Participation of youth in civil society in promotion of reforms in the EaP countries” was initiated by the National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM) with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic implementing the project “Strengthening the youth cooperation in the Eastern Partnership countries”. The main aim of the project was to stimulate youth participation in civil society in the Eastern Partnership region. Partners of this project were National Youth Councils from Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. The projects partners’ long-term goal is to increase visibility of youth NGOs from the EaP countries through strengthened advocacy actions and cooperation at policy level and promotion of dialogue with the EU institutions.

One of the main components of the project was elaboration of the study aiming to identify the role of young people in promotion of reforms in the Eastern Partnership countries. Furthermore, it aimed to analyse mechanism of cross-sectoral cooperation between civil society and public institutions and design recommendations to strengthen youth participation in decision-making in the 6 EaP countries - Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and the Republic of Moldova. In the long run this study aims to become a measure to stimulate changes in the EaP region, particularly in the field of youth policy implementation through application of recommendations, adoption of new participatory mechanisms and capacity building measures.

About the study:

The study was based on a secondary research analysing a number of reports, studies, policy documents and legislation. Additionally, to support the report and check the findings, several primary discussions with local experts were conducted and the data gathered was incorporated in to this study. The following responsibilities and aims were set by the contractor: to elaborate the concept and the methodology of the study; to analyse reports from each of the EaP country in the regional context of youth policy; to evaluate the existing mechanism of involvement of youth in promotion of reforms in the EaP and need of a such mechanisms; to identify obstacles for cross-sectoral cooperation between civil society and public institutions in each of the EaP countries; to

elaborate recommendations related to the youth participation in promotion of reforms in the EaP region.

The structure of the study consists of the following chapters: Introduction; Research methodology; General overview of the Youth participation situation in the EaP region; Country reports; The EaP youth participation in European youth policy development; Recommendations. The study has 50 pages, 24 sources and 8 illustrations.

The study was based on desk research, analysing the secondary data available on the internet page of the Youth partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe (<http://www.youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>), country reports, questionnaires, youth policy and youth work reviews.

The study was finalised after presenting it on the Conference on youth policy in the Black Sea region, organized on 15-16th of October 2012 in Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova. The feedback and comments of the participants and experts were incorporated into the study.

Different open sources of information were available about the EaP countries, Youth policy, programme documents and these sources were successfully used. See the list of resources in annex no. 1. While analyzing the existing secondary data: country reports, comparative papers it was difficult to notice trends, find similarities and common challenges due to different approaches of the authors preparing the reports. Some of the reports were based on constructive criticism and adequate proposals to improve youth situation in Ukraine and Belarus, other reports were praising achievements or highlighting only positive developments of the youth policy. The challenge of lack of data was overcome by adopting the expertise of the regional experts and researchers who prepared the study.

Special acknowledgement for:

Experts, practitioners and civil servants, residing in the EaP region, which contributed to the development of the study and were involved in shaping youth policy in their country. Your experience insights and recommendations became the fundament of the study.

About the Institute for Policy Research and Analysis:

The study was conducted by the “*Institute for Policy research and analysis*” (www.institutas.eu), Lithuania. Operating since 2011 and having a specific focus on public policy development in Lithuania, the EU and the EaP region. The main fields of action: research, capacity building, policy development and consultations. Study development team: Nerijus Miginis (lead researcher), Marius Ulozas, Eglė Vasiliauskaitė and Vytautė Rupeikaitė.

Research methodology:

To conduct a successful analysis, the essential and primary step is to develop a research methodology meeting the set aims and goals. The following mixed research methodology was used. It was based on 2 main theoretical aspects: systematic approach – research methodology used to analyse complex policy systems, and the RMSOS approach¹ – a theoretical model naming the main efficient youth policy aspects, which are necessary for youth participation. The RMSOS approach also serves as a structure for the study. Moreover, the applied research indicators were also able to meet the complexity of youth participation research and the set aims by the contractor.

Systematic approach

While analysing youth policy it is essential to cover whole public policy system (areas of education, social, health and etc.) and indicate the causalities, based on systematic approach. According P. M. Senge² systematic approach is the ability to see the full picture, name the causal links, not naming the change as a separate event. And, most importantly, researching youth participation in civil society is to have a holistic approach. The system and its performance determine success and failure, rather than outside factors. Youth policy, as the fundamental structure for youth participation, is a complex open system, which interacts with and is influenced by the whole public policy field.

RMSOS approach

The RMSOS is a fundamental approach on a youth participation stated in the revised European Charter on the participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. The RMSOS is an acronym from five keywords: Right, Means, Space, Opportunity and Support. It represents the main

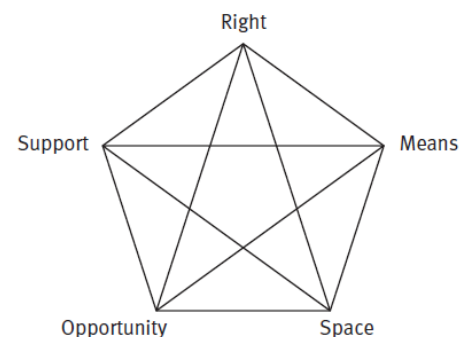


Illustration No. 3

¹ "Have your say" manual on revised European Charter on the participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life pages 37-39

² Senge P. The Fifth Discipline. 1999, Auckland: Doubleday. Pages 10, 27–32.

factors having an influence on youth involvement, youth participation and essential aspects for shaping youth policy.

Each of the five aspects focuses on a different support measure, but they are closely interrelated, and they all have to be fulfilled for young people to enable their full participation in activities or decisions making processes that interest them (e.g. youth policy), in order to contribute to building a better society.

Indicators for analysis

To assure efficient implementation of the study on youth participation in the 6 states of the EaP and reach the set aims it was important to structure the outcomes of the analysis. Following research indicators were used in accordance with the research methodology.

Indicators used:

- multi-level policy involvement in shaping youth policy;
- youth participation in decision-making;
- practical implementation of cross-sectoral cooperation networks;
- state structures for funding youth policy implementation;
- coherence with the EU/CoE youth policy and the Eastern Partnership Roadmap;
- policy fields, institutions/actors involved in to shaping the youth policy;
- how the principles of co-management, parity and equality are being implemented;
- how the agenda of youth policy is being developed;
- allocation of resources for youth policy implementation;
- visibility of the youth policy;
- practical implementation of the youth policy;
- monitoring of youth policy implementation and change of youth situation.

Overview of the EaP region

To shape regional overview the RMSOS approach was used. The context of youth policy development of the EaP region and situation has common trends in all the 6 countries. This chapter will be constructed from the following parts: *youth rights* where the situation on youth rights will be discussed; *means* – social situation of youth and common trends; *space* – structure for youth participation in the youth policy and enabler of changes in the civil society; *opportunity* - when and on which issues youth is involved in consultations and participation in civil society; what *support* exists for the active participation of the young people.

The *Space* aspect mainly focuses on youth participation and youth involvement structures. This aspect will be investigated more thoroughly in country-by-country analysis, because it is an essential factor analysing youth participation in the civil society.

This chapter provides a short overview of youth situation based on the EaP country information, youth policy and youth work situation reports, synthesis of the reports published in the European Union and the Council of Europe youth partnership web page (<http://www.youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>). For more detailed information we recommend to follow the provided link to analyse the reports.

The social, economic and political situation in the EaP varies from country to country even though all countries have a common 70 years history being a part of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the situations are also different in the youth participation in civil society. But the study, using the existing data trends, managed to identify common challenges.

Youth participation in civil society is enabled through youth policy and its implementation in the country. A common trend appeared while analyzing youth policy in the countries of interest. The youth policy in the EaP region is double sided. On one end it integrated European youth policy trends and quality criteria in the legislation, but on the other end it emphasized on the post-soviet topics such as patriotic education, military participation and education on family values. The same features of youth policy one can find in the EU member state policies which historically were in the Soviet bloc (e.g. Baltic countries). It is not possible to characterise this feature as positive or negative, it should be named as a regional youth policy peculiarity.

Youth rights

In the last 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union all six nations were developing their states. The six countries took the model of constitutional republics, where the main citizen rights were stated in the national constitution. All 6 countries have signed the main human rights documents linked to youth issues: the UN children rights convention and the human right convention. Each country has policies and policy papers directed at youth. The youth policy documents are defining youth, as a group of citizens of a country whose age range is from 14 to 35 years old. The age varies from country to country, for example, Belarus and Ukraine have lower age limit (14), but no upper age limit, while Moldova and Armenia have the same age ranges for youth, which is 16-30. Important fact to mention is that in the most of countries analytical divisions of sub-groups of young people do not exist. Therefore analysis of participation of various youth groups such as rural youth, young refugees and etc. is not possible.

Youth policy documents have been developed from the beginning of early nineties, when countries were restoring independence. According to the Synthesis report on youth policy and youth work in the EECA Law "On general principles of State Youth Policy in Belarus", adopted in April 24, 1992 in Belarus it was the earliest youth policy document in the region. During two decades a lot of youth policy concept papers, youth strategies, youth policy implementation plans and laws have been adopted in all countries, and youth policy is continuously being developed by the National youth councils, Youth ministries, NGOs and international donors. Youth rights are stated and regulated by laws on Education, Labour Code, Family Code, and Law on Military Duty etc. It is a positive sign indicating that youth policy is still being developed and recommendations in these documents could be applied. The common feature of the region was that youth policy had a strong connection with the educational system, because the youth policy in these countries started from student youth movements. The countries have obvious social youth issues therefore it is not strange that aims and priorities of youth policies have social emphasis. Such policies try to solve youth employment, housing and youth health issues. The tendency is understandable when analysing the socio-economic and demographic situations in the EaP countries.

Although youth has rights, but the level of participation is relatively low and there are a series of reasons defined in the countries overview chapter of this study. The Human rights watchman

organizations report violence of police and army in the region, the violation of rights for demonstrations, free access to information and freedom of speech. According to the legislation youth can use their rights and freely participate in civil society and political life, but often the local reality is different.

Generally, youth is not active in politics, culturally young male are more active than female in politics, but the situation is changing. Moreover, the youth supports political changes in the communities taking part in revolutions (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus), protests and demonstrations in all countries. It suggests that the youth is an important part of civil society, which supports and promotes political and social changes in which they trust.

Means – social situation of youth

Young people constitute a big part of societies in the EaP region ranging from 25 % of all population in Moldova up to 31% in Ukraine. The majority of young people live in urban territories of countries, for example, up to 79% of youth in Belarus. Moldova is an exception where only 49% of youth live in urban territories. Youth is a significant group of society hence it is not odd that social issues are essential for the future development of these countries. In the EaP region the youth unemployment is an especially important social issue. The level of youth unemployment reaches up-to 70 % (according to the office of Statistics of Georgia), the situation with youth unemployment leads to other issues such as internal migration inside the countries, as young people are shifting to the cities to get education and a job or cross-border migration such as emigration to Russia or the EU countries. Human trafficking and HIV/AIDS prevention are other common and important social problems in the region. Other challenges for youth were getting accommodation and getting support for business start-ups.

Situation is difficult but there is enough evidence that all countries developed policies aimed at solving the social issues of young people and have developed practical tools such as programs, housing programs and project grants, to involve civil society and ease social issues. NGOs, international organisation and donors are actively involved in solving the above-mentioned issues creating educational programs, peer-educator networks, youth centres, and small grant support schemes.

Youth is indicated as a priority group in the region by Moldova and Georgia, but still huge efforts have to be made to achieve sufficient level of favourable conditions for youth. More efforts have to be made and resources allocated. It is important to note, that social benefits for youth, housing and employment are vital tools to have active level of youth participation in civil society. As long as young people will have worry about their social challenges, think how to survive, they will not be able to allocate enough time and energy to participate in civil society life. On the other hand, all responsibility should not lie on the shoulders of the state, because in the EaP region other social problems are equally important. Young people, NGOs should take a more active role in solving the issues. The best way to involve youth is to consult them on the important social issues and involve them in the decision-making through co-management structures. Generally, social issues are the major obstacles for youth participation in the civil society.

Space – youth participation structures in the civil society

Space in the RMSOS model is understood as existing structures of youth policy implementation for the young people to initiate changes and take part in decision making as full members of the civil society. The efficiency of the youth policy system can be easily evaluated through the existence of youth participation structures, the principles used for their creation, management; legitimacy of youth representation, accessibility and attractiveness to young people. The EaP region youth policy implementation structures and youth participation in civil society has a common characteristic – all countries have the National Youth Councils. The NYCs to different extend are seen as a partners in dealing with youth issues. Moreover, experts from the region mentioned the fact, that although in the legislation the opportunity to take part in decision making and consultations should be open to young people and youth organizations, the rights are often reserved to specific organizations, which are supporting or not criticizing the state. As a result the organizations which confront and criticize the state are not involved in the policy development.

An exception is the Belarusian National Youth Council, whose activities are illegal in the state and they are working “underground”. The Belarusian NYC is active at the European level and not in Belarus. According to the national report they are not seen as a representative body due to the reason that the NYC is not cooperating with the local youth field actors.

The National Youth Councils of the EaP region are members of the European Youth Forum (JYF), this clearly shows that the EaP youth policy is linked to the European level youth policy. But on the other hand the latest document produced about the EaP region was in 2001-2003. This is a sign for the NYCs the EaP to take action and bring back the region to the European youth policy map.

Never the less there are still clear youth policy development needs in terms of youth participation structures. Typical youth participation structures for the region are consultative bodies, near different structures and institutions. Their role often is more symbolic and often not working. Young people are invited to join, but their legitimacy is limited as they are not elected by other young people. The countries have consultative bodies, but only few co-management structures exist. Regional and local youth participation structures are not developed systematically and there is a need for establishment management principles and performance quality standards. Moreover, the local structures and national structures are not connected in anyway. It is important to develop systemic link between the local and the national youth participation structures. By assuring the link between local and national levels, the youth representation would become more legitimate and the system would develop a bigger reach for young people. The youth reach and participation issue would diminish through development of youth work systems in the EaP countries.

Opportunity – which youth issues are consulted and how they are participating in civil society

As stated above, youth is mentioned as a priority in the region, numerous youth policy structures exist and policy papers are being developed and implemented. However, there is no significant proof of prior consultations with youth and the main stakeholders in the youth sector- youth work organisations and youth NGOs. Moreover, youth is not consulted in other policy fields on youth related questions and issues like education, health and social issues.

For future development of youth participation it is important to develop a youth work and non-formal education programs based on youth needs. Also it is necessary to involve youth in consultation process and moreover direct decision-making through co-management structures.

Support for youth participation

While analysing support structures for youth participation it is important to note, that the most important aspects are youth information, financial support, youth work and youth training. The global reality and the trends in the region show that the life in recent years is rapidly changing due to the growing importance of information society. The youth information is an essential aspect of youth support in participation in civil society. Most of the countries in the EaP region announced youth information as important priority. But existence of youth information strategies or papers on youth information was not found. Information is being developed and spread in all countries. Youth information networks exist and implement their information dissemination work. Only in the Republic of Moldova youth is involved in creation, collection and dissemination of information. The main challenge is that the youth is seen as consumers rather than providers of information and the full potential of involvement of youth in to media activities is not used. Youth information is being developed in the region and the first steps are already taken. However, it is important to develop strategies aimed at youth information and broader the use of media activities to involve youth to participate. The EaP countries have to adapt to the emerging realities of information society. In the EaP region a number of youth consultative bodies near to the institutions exist. The variety of youth councils, pupil councils near municipalities, youth prime ministers, pupil parliaments also are operational. Often some of them have a symbolic meaning. Although it is important form of youth participation in decision-making process, but it is observed, that these structures lack openness, transparency and legitimacy of representation. It can be observed overlapping consultations structures at various levels (e.g. local, national). Moreover, there is a lack of youth policy implementation systems, were the local councils would be connected to national councils and interest of youth from the regions would be represented to the structures on the national level. The principle of subsidiarity – that issues connected to youth are analysed and decisions are made at the level where they are most.

only making its first steps in these countries. The research needs to be recognized by institutions and academic society should join in for common action.

Newly developed youth policy papers and programs are not based on evaluation of current situation, prior actions, consultations with youth and pre-policy. One of the biggest obstacles for evidence-based youth policy development is political segregation in the field of youth, active participation of ideological youth organizations, which have a strong link and identity with political parties. Big fear of political opposition and protest exists. National and especially local youth policies need to gain political immunity.

Also it is important to analyze other sphere: funding for youth policy and implementation of programmes. Country reviews indicate funding as one of the most essential problem. In the most of the countries the budgetary sources for youth affairs are limited, an exception is Azerbaijan. Challenges such as mismanagement, lack of transparent mechanisms of resource distribution, political limitations on support for youth activities (and usage of youth resources for political reasons), absence of independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms measuring the effectiveness of expenditures hinder allocation of bigger grants for youth policy.

Other important issue is that some of the NGOs do not see the need to cooperate with local institutions or state institutions, because received grants from international organizations or funds are bigger. The NGOs dependence on international and local grants creates a lot of challenges for the 3rd sector and cross-sectoral cooperation. On one hand the NGOs are dependent on funding of institutions and in case of economic recession or donors leaving the country the NGOs might have to stop their work, due to the lack of funding. Therefore it is essential to develop social entrepreneurial skills, in order to reach sustainability of the NGO sector and their independence form institutional funding, to be able to have cross-sectoral cooperation as equal partners.

Country reports

Armenia

Youth policy development in Armenia was named a growing political priority in recent years. Youth participation in civil society, social and political life is seen as one of the ways of solving youth social issues. In the last years youth policy in Armenia has made improvements due to policy papers development and actions taken by the state. Analysis of 2009 and 2011 reports on youth policy in Armenia noticeable improvements in youth policy implementation were noted.

A typical trend in the EaP region is the duality of youth policy in these countries. Armenia is not an exception. On one hand the modern European youth policy principles of youth participation, youth consultation and co-management, youth taking active role in solving their issues. On the other hand the post soviet reality were youth policy was dealing with issues such as patriotic education, emphasis on classical perception of family and volunteering in military service.

In Armenia youth participation and youth policy derives from the education field and (typically for the EaP region) has close bonds with social policy. The young people face a lot of social issues such as: youth unemployment (over 50% according to the data presented in reports), youth housing, financial challenges, health issues, access and quality of education and others.

In the past few years Armenia has made active steps in developing the legal basis for youth policy. It created more opportunities for young people to have an active role in civil society. For a long time the Concept on State youth Policy, 1998, was the main youth policy document, but future development in the area were made by launching documents such as the Youth Policy Strategy for 2005 – 2007, 2007; The Youth Policy Strategy for the years 2008-12 and the Work Plan providing the realisation of the Strategy of State Youth policy for 2009-12. These documents were supported by the National Youth Report of Armenia made by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in 2006 and 2008. As well the state introduced another important document – the State Concept on Non-Formal Education in Armenia in 2006. It is possible to note that the state is starting to gather data on youth and not only developing directions in youth policy field but as well planning tangible actions that should assure implementation of set aims.

The analysed documents illustrate, that in the recent years for the Ministry of Youth and Sports it was essential to develop a cross-ministerial, integrated approach to help in overcoming different youth issues in the most efficient way, not overlapping and competing with each other.

The youth participation in civil society was mainly realized through various types of youth NGOs, student unions, youth clubs and non-formal youth groups. Student movements in the country involve up to 40% of total students into their activities.

In the education system, the Law on Science and Education the co-management structure defines that in all decision-making bodies of the Higher Educational Institutions have to take into account student votes. The students have to delegate 25 % of the votes. It is an important achievement, but yet to be executed due to manipulations of adults and awareness of young people.

Co-management structures exist at the national level. It was introduced in Armenia in 2000, when the Council on Youth Affairs was formed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. This structure is composed on 50/50 basis- half of representatives from youth NGOs and the other half from state bodies dealing with youth affairs. This structure was involved in the important youth policy developments.

The National youth council of Armenia was created in 1997 and it comprises of over 60 organizations, and became a full time member of the European youth forum in 2004. This shows that youth are represented and have the participation opportunity at international and national levels.

The political participation of young people is low in Armenia. Less than 5 % of youth belong to political parties. Moreover, the trust of youth in political parties and participation in elections is very low as it is considered ineffective. This is a big challenge for the youth policy mechanism, which aims raising the level of participation of youth in decision-making processes.

One of the directions for upcoming years in the youth policy field is to raise the trust and participation of young people in the youth policy field, social and political participation, informing about available possibilities and existing participation structures.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Armenia set the priority to develop a regional and local youth councils because the national youth council alone cannot sufficiently represent young people. According to the analysed reports it is clear that the national youth policy and participation in international youth field is already implemented in Armenia, but in the field of local participation there is a gap. The reports mention that urban youth has more opportunities to participate in

cultural, commercial and non-commercial leisure time activities. The situation in regions is totally different. The development in the youth policy field in Armenia should take a clear direction. In the next youth strategy it is necessary to develop a rural youth policy and implementation mechanisms and structures. It is essential to create local youth councils, consultative bodies near the municipalities. In ideal case it could be co-management structures, for the young people to participate in the democracy processes. As well a crucial step is to create a link between regional and national youth policies, developing a national system of youth representation. This would assure legitimacy and transparency of youth policy implementation.

Moreover, provision of youth work and youth informational work should be created in rural areas. After collapse of the Soviet Union, the Pioneer houses were closed and level of youth leisure time activity provision, sports activity provision dropped substantially. The infrastructure is still there, but it has to be filled in with content based on youth needs and modern youth work methodologies.

From 2006 the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs started to establish regional youth centres all over Armenia. These centres aim to make youth policy more accessible to regional youth and increase the level of their participation. These centres were a space for young people in the regions to organise various types of youth activities and leisure time activities. The infrastructure is fairly equipped. But reach for youth was poor. In 2009 - 2010 the staff of these centres was trained in the framework of project aiming to improve the quality of services provided and to reach more rural youth. This good example should be continued by the state.

Another future direction for youth policy development in Armenia is the formulation of an evidence-based youth policy. The knowledge based policy development is a future trend not only in the EaP countries, but also in Europe.

Azerbaijan

Youth policy in Azerbaijan is one of the main priorities of the national government. In Azerbaijan youth is a part of Social policy dealing with important youth issues. The youth policy implementation budget in Azerbaijan is steadily increasing and is one of the biggest in the EaP region. Separate budgets and programs in the country exist for solving youth issues like housing,

unemployment, entrepreneurship, and assistance to talented youth, sports, health and other issues.

In the youth policy field a lot of laws and strategic documents on youth was developed. The law "On youth policy" adopted in 2002, was the first document defining aims and priorities, and basic elements of the youth policy system. As well five year State Program "Youth of Azerbaijan" in 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 were developed with defined actions, aimed at improvement of situation of young people, their socio-economic conditions, health care and moral-patriotic education.

The most popular way of participation in civil society for youth is through the NGOs. According to the data from the report on youth policy and youth work implementation there were more than 200 registered youth non-governmental organizations. The National youth council of Azerbaijan – the National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAYORA) was registered in 1996, now it unites 74 organizations. It is the biggest network representing youth and their interests. In the year 2000, NAYORA became a member of the European youth forum.

It can be concluded that the national youth policy is well developed. There are youth structures cooperating with the state and as well a link to international youth policy framework.

A specific aspect in work of the national youth council of Azerbaijan - NAYORA, is that it is always close to the state government, having members of the parliament on the board of the organization. This can be considered as a way of promoting youth interests, but only as long as it is not biased and the National Youth Council is speaking up against the government in the name of the youth, assuring that interests and rights of youth are met.

In the data analysed there was no significant evidence on existence of co-management and youth consultation structures at a national level. This could be an area for future youth policy development in the country.

The main state body responsible for youth issues is the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The structure of General Department on Youth Affairs is linked to youth policy fields assuring efficient implementation. The Ministry has a Centre of scientific researches on youth issues. But in the report, data on youth research done was not presented.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan supports youth NGOs, student unions with social project support through grant system and provide capacity building activities.

Youth policy in Azerbaijan was implemented in the following areas: patriotic and civic education; crime, HIV / AIDS, crime prevention; supporting talented youth; youth entrepreneurship and employability; support to young families; active participation of youth in public – political life of the country; international cooperation. The youth policy implementation areas were typical for the EaP region. The policies were socially directed, but at the same time had a post-soviet characteristic (patriotic education).

The unique feature of Azerbaijani youth policy aims to assure equal rights for woman. According to the national reports this priority is up-to-date, due to the challenges for woman seeking employment and participation in other social spheres of life.

The provisions of youth leisure time activities are well developed. The main focus of youth policy in the country is devoted to implementation of mass events, youth actions, youth camps and youth sports activities. No data on long term youth work and methodologies was found. The proposal is to develop activities based on youth needs. Provision of youth work and network of youth centres, creating space for youth participation and self-realization could be a strategic step trying to increase the reach of the state youth policy.

There was no data provided in the country reports on youth political participation in Azerbaijan. No data was provided on a number of young people joining political parties or political youth movements.

There was also no data about youth participation in civil society in regions and rural areas. For the young people to fill in the gap of participation in rural areas and regions it is essential to develop youth participation structures. Such as co-management structures, for the young people to be able to join the decision-making process on youth issues at a local level. As well youth consultative structures such as youth councils in the municipalities need to be created, for the stakeholders to approach youth when they deal with youth issues.

Azerbaijan has a developed national youth policy and is participating in shaping international and European youth policy. The next steps, shaping policies directed at youth, could be a development of rural youth policy and implementation mechanisms and structures. Moreover, a clear system linking local and national youth policy levels should be created.

Youth information actions should follow the developments and introduce the opportunities created by the state.

Belarus

While talking about Belarus it is important to notice that there were two different periods of youth policy development in the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first, successful, stage was in the beginning of the nineties and then followed by the change of political system. The youth policy in Belarus has the oldest roots in the EaP region launching the first State Youth Policy. The Law on general principles of the State Youth Policy in Belarus was adopted in 1992 and is still valid today. This document defines the main principles of youth policy implementation in Belarus. The main principles are: combination of state and public interests, with the interests and rights of young citizens; scientific validity; consideration of the interests and needs of young people; protection of rights and interests of young people; transparency and openness; participation of young people in design and implementation of Youth Policy. The principles formulated are up-to-date even after 20 years, but it is a pity that the political regime does not implement them.

After the change of the regime Belarus became one of the most isolated countries in Europe and participation of young people in the civil society has the biggest obstacles. Political participation of youth or use of freedom of speech is prosecuted by the Belarusian state power structures.

These days the Belarusian state is putting emphasis on implementation of social policy and youth policy directed at solutions of youth issues. The Young people in Belarus face these social challenges: emigration, health issues, human trafficking, drug abuse, youth criminality, HIV / AIDS, youth housing, challenges in mobility. The Modern State Youth Policy in Belarus sets these directions: Improving living conditions of young people (youth employment, economic support for young families); youth leisure time activities directed at civil, spiritual, moral, patriotic and environmental education of youth, promotion of sports and tourism. As the report on youth policy and youth work in Belarus states: youth participation in civil society in Belarus happens in the areas chosen by the state. It clearly means that youth is welcome to participate and share their opinion as long as it is social, sports, culture, patriotic education and tourism field related. Political participation and criticism of the regime is persecuted.

In Belarus following youth participation, youth policy implementation structures exist:

a) from the state side the department of youth affairs under the Ministry of Education is responsible for youth policy implementation. It has 159 representations at local (municipal) level

and approximately 200 people involved. To conclude the state has a clear youth policy implementation structure.

b) in the NGO sector a variety of youth organizations exists which make up to 10 % of all NGO field. These organizations can be categorized in 2 groups: 1st recognized and supported by the state and 2nd formally existing organization which struggle to survive. The later also trying to cope with state limitations and regulations.

Organizations like the Belarusian Committee of Youth Organizations, the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, and the Belarusian Republican Pioneer Organization are pro-state organizations, supporting the state, their initiatives and actions. These organizations cannot be considered as strong partners or youth representatives, due to their dependency on the state.

The second group of youth organizations focuses on solving social issues of youth. As mentioned previously the State policy set the social field as a priority. As long as the youth participation and actions of NGOs and international NGOs are in the social field they can be implemented. Moreover, the state has developed tools regulating the NGOs, through constant check up of accountancy and other formal requirements.

The National Youth Council of Belarus – RADA was closed by the state and now it is operating underground. They are more active abroad in the European youth forum, taking part in shaping European youth policy. But according to the national report they are not active in Belarus and therefore not able to represent the interests of youth and youth organizations. RADA is the representative from the first youth policy stage. They are calling themselves the representatives of the alternative youth policy in Belarus, which is expected to be implemented after the change of the political rule.

It can be concluded that young people are not involved in to the decision-making process. Not only because youth councils, consultative bodies, co-management structures do not exist in Belarus, but also because the youth NGOs are not perceived as social partners in the policy development. Even the participation of youth in the 3rd sector is limited.

Moreover, young people have limited rights and limited freedom of participation in political, social, economic and cultural development of the civil society. And on the other hand young people themselves are not interested in participation and youth policy field, because they do not believe in being capable of bringing the change.

The state is implementing the program “Youth of Belarus”. The Council of Ministers every 3 years launches new programs to solve the most important youth issues. The last time “Youth of Belarus” was launched for the period 2006-2010. “Youth of Belarus” program had the priority to join state youth policy stakeholders for cross-ministerial cooperation and cross-sectoral cooperation with the NGOs. The co-operation was aiming to solve following issues: improvement administration of youth policy, increasing the quality of youth life, improving education system and patriot-education programs, reducing youth unemployment and analysing the importance of values and family. On one hand the mentioned priorities analysing official documents can be evaluated positively. On the other hand when mentioning the other priorities, especially the reduction of the level of political extremism among youth and consolidation of the youth movement to build a strong and prosperous Belarus, shows the hidden agenda of the state.

The priority of Belarusian youth policy is strengthening the international youth cooperation. But the state dictates to which direction the cooperation should be developed. Formal obstacles exist for international cooperation with the EU countries and implementation of the EU youth projects and regional development projects. While cooperation with the EaP countries is welcomed and supported.

A lot of emphasis on professional social work is set in the country. Social programs are being launched, professionals are constantly raising their qualifications, but still there is a need for further competence development, new approaches and methodologies in working with youth.

Youth research is fragmental, statistical data is gathered by the office of statistics, the main figures are available, but analysis of trends and social picture of youth is not delivered. Hence once can conclude that the Youth Policy does not really meet the needs of young people.

On the paper Belarus has the strongest youth policy in the EaP region. But practical implementation and constrains in the area of youth rights make it the least friendly country for youth participation in the civil society.

In the ideal situation aiming to improve the participation of young people, they should get the rights and take the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process. Freedom to participate in political, social, economic and cultural development of the society should be received. Also a mechanism allowing youth to access to information should be in place and most importantly the state should support youth initiatives and NGOs.

Youth participation in the social sphere is welcome and supported by the state. NGOs can use the space to develop actions and programs, involve young people in to various activities, and provide them life competences. Youth work is one of the priority areas in Belarus, development of youth need based methodologies, sharing practice with other countries, providing training can become a good tool for development of youth emancipation and integration in to the society. Moreover, through youth work young people's participation would be enabled.

Georgia

Georgia and young people in the country are in the constant change caused by political changes (revolutions), economic recessions and armed conflicts. These changes and challenges slow down the development of youth policy. However, the country youth policy report frames: these challenges are not a reason for excuse, but a motivator to act. Young people have a number of opportunities to take action and participate in the civil society development, in the transition process developing the rule of democracy. The conflicts over the territories in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have created social issues with internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. A lot of youth policy, social policy is directed at social inclusion and integration of these groups, this is a specific youth policy challenge in the EaP region.

These conflicts attracted attention of international donors who are trying to assist the state in solving different social issues. But the main challenge for different actors is competition between each other at a local level. This challenge is caused by the following reasons:

- There is no clear distinction between the national level and the local level implementing youth policy and other policies as well. The activities at grass-root level often are provided by actors coming from local, national and even international level. Youth leisure time provision in conflict areas is provided by the local municipality, local NGOs, international donors and a number of ministries (Youth and Sports, Integration and Justice) as well as political parties.
- Cross-sectoral and cross-ministerial cooperation does not exist. Cooperation and common action planning is not done and as a result provision of activities is very similar or identical. The most popular activities are CV writing workshops, sports activities, English language

courses, knowledge competitions – KVN/KBH and project writing training courses. As the provision of activities is very similar in the final outcome the various organizations are competing for the young people who are interested in taking part. In the conflict areas up to 3 youth centres might exist (a municipal, ministerial and one funded by international donors) and in the neighbouring municipality- none. The cooperation could enable wider reach of youth and more efficient planning and use of resources.

- The provision of services is not based on youth needs and research of situation. Due to this reason provision is similar and youth participation is very low.

Good examples of youth participation in the civil society in Georgia exist. The recent example is active involvement of youth in the Georgian parliament elections in 2012, when the youth was promoting different political parties.

According to the state report Georgian youth policy documents lack structure and more important implementation action plans stating the process of achieving defined aims. Moreover, they do not include clear definitions of essential youth policy terms: youth work, youth policy, non-formal education, youth participation and principles of youth participation in decision-making process. As well pre-policy development and gathering of evidence should be improved.

It took a decade for Georgia to develop youth policy document, the main obstacles were economic, territorial conflicts and revolution. Two policy drafts were developed since 2001, but they were not implemented. Only in 2012 “National policy of youth of Georgia” was launched accompanied by the support actions implemented by the “Children and Youth National Centre” and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Georgia. The actions were supported by the UNICEF office in Georgia. Youth affair coordinators and youth workers were trained in the process as well as consultations on youth participation and youth work structures in 17 municipalities were done. Also prior to the launch of “National youth policy of Georgia” document, the UNICEF in co-operation with the Ministry of youth and sports of Georgia hired international experts to consult the National youth policy development. This can be shown as an excellent example of support of international donors and as well a good example of cooperation in the youth field. The mentioned actions together with the 2009 National report on Georgian youth are the first steps in the direction of evidence-based youth policy development and youth research. But the good practice and development in this direction has to be continued. The stimulus for these developments was the creation of the

Ministry of Youth and Sports of Georgia. The lack of youth policy legislation and clear youth policy implementation structure are hindering youth participation in civil society. This challenge is being diminished at this moment through implemented reforms in the youth policy field, but it will still take some time.

Social issues such as IDP's, migration, economic situation, youth unemployment, youth housing and other issues linked to youth are the main challenges for youth participation in the civil society. Youth is focused on solving their issues, as it does not allow them to take more active role in the civil society. More attention of the state should focus on solving these issues, especial the youth unemployment, which according to the presented data in analysed reports reaches up to 70%.

Other challenge for youth participation in the civil society is existence of alternative youth participation structures at the same level. The National youth council of Georgia and the National youth organization forum are the youth participation structures at the national level in Georgia. These structures work at the national level formally competing for the recognition and political weight in shaping the youth policy. It is essential for those structures to develop cooperation in order to be able to represent the interest of youth and serve as a platform for youth participation in civil society. Efforts were made in beginning of 2012. Also the structure of youth policy implementation in the country should be developed as this would increase youth participation and improve representation and legitimacy.

A lot of emphasis of the state implementing the youth policy is put on mass activities such as Camp "Patriot", which is organized annually since 2004 and this leisure time activity involves up to 30 000 young people. According to the reports it is evaluated as not effective way of spending state money, and not making any long-term change in the situation of young people. The youth policy funding is generally small due to different state programs. But on the other hand one can observe funds allocated for student unions or the city of Tbilisi has a huge budget for youth policy. The general conclusion- youth is not a priority for the state right now. The state should put more emphasis on informational activities as youth lacks general access to information, provision of youth work and non-formal education and through it seek long-term change in general youth situation.

State should put specific efforts in regional and rural youth policy development and implementation. The young people have more opportunities to participate in civil society in the big cities. This and other reasons cause inner youth migrations. The rural youth policy should become a

priority for the country in the next years. Moreover, mobile youth work should be developed and framed according to the specific requirements of the country and villages that are distant from administrative centres.

Ukraine

Ukraine is the biggest country in the EaP region population-wise and territory-wise. The scale and the size make additional challenges for youth participation in the civil society and strengthen the need for a clear youth policy implementation structure.

Youth participation in civil society in Ukraine has examples when youth were supporting political changes in the country – the Orange revolution. As well in 2010 youth and students NGOs spoke up against the decision of the state to introduce paid service in higher education. National protests were organised as there was a need for direct actions, because other mechanisms were not working. In Ukraine student council exists, the aim of the consultative body is to represent students' issues and cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Science.

From these examples it is possible to draw several conclusions: youth is able to mobilise, speak-up and promote their interests. And on the contrary it suggests that when decisions on important youth issues are made the process is completed without consultations and opinion of youth. This shows that the state does not involve young people in solving the issues related to youth problems. Moreover, the consultative structures become only a decoration, being not even incorporated in the youth policy implementation process.

Often the main way to participate for youth in policy development process is through direct actions as the state is not open for a dialogue. Alternative way to take part in youth policy development is through ideological youth organizations, closely cooperating with political parties. For the NGOs it is very difficult to take part in policy development.

Youth policy in Ukraine is not an exception in the EaP region. There is a huge lack of cross-sectoral and cross-ministerial cooperation. Youth policy is aimed at solving social issues of youth. At a local level Ukrainian youth policy is being criticized that it focuses on solving social issues of the society and not giving enough attention to integration of youth in the society and emancipation. Different

state bodies and ministries are dealing with youth social issues, as there is a lack of cooperation, common actions and overlaps exist. Therefore, one can conclude that youth policy is fragmented. As mentioned in the youth policy and youth work report on Ukraine, Youth policy in the state is dealing with consequences and is not dealing with the problem. The youth policy developments are not based on youth research, youth event needs or interests. Often the developments are reactions of the state to recommendations of international community. Frequently Ukraine sees the youth as a social problem, than a resource to find solutions.

Young people are active in Ukraine, but the state is not ready for youth participation in civil society development. It is declared, that the state uses participative approach, but often the existing structures are not working. The state could use the potential of young people, but at first the attitude should change towards young people. Discussions and dialogue with youth should be welcome. And a clear national youth policy implementation structure should be developed to assure the reach, representation and legitimacy of the representation.

In the analysed data it is mentioned that there is a need to develop recognition of volunteering, youth work and non-formal education. Ukraine is developing close cooperation with the EU and introducing the European youth policy standards and principles. But programs are declarative and principles are only partly introduced. These principles are trying to be adapted to the Soviet traditions such as patriotism education, work with talented youth and mass youth activities.

Youth in Ukraine face important challenges: limited mobility due to visa regulation of European countries and access to information for youth. In rural areas lack of opportunities to participate is present. Political parties' structures and church structures are available and often youth joins the existing opportunities. If local structures would adapt to youth needs and gain methodological support they could fill in the gap, by establishing youth centres, youth information centres and creating educational programs based on youth needs.

In Ukraine there is a clear necessity to create a steady youth policy system with tools for implementation (participation of youth) and evaluation of youth policy efficiency. These days the situation of youth depends on political situation in the country. Organised youth is a part of political parties, youth leaders are politically biased. According to the youth policy and youth work report in Ukraine, situations of interest conflict often happen in youth policy funding matters. It often happens that civil servants, politicians and the NGO leaders represent the same structures in processes of public consultation or division of resources. Aiming to break this conflict it is

necessary to develop youth policy implementation system, national and regional structures. This aspect of the youth policy is not only specific for Ukraine, but as well for the EaP region.

In Ukrainian youth policy there is no specific focus and integration strategy for inclusion groups (LGBTQs, HIV/AIDS infected, disabled, social/financial, disadvantaged and refugees) and young people belonging to ethnic minorities (Roma and Crimean Tatars).

A specific characteristic of Ukraine and a challenge for its policy is strong regional differences and approaches towards youth education in the fields of language, religion, patriotic education, leisure and volunteering. In the country strong political and social polarization is present. In turn, it raises interregional conflicts. This is a field of action for youth work and non-formal education. To accomplish the set task it is important to recognize youth work and develop training system of youth workers.

Republic of Moldova

Youth policy in the Republic of Moldova is constantly developing. In the region, Moldova is one of the leading countries developing and implementing aimed youth policy. The youth participation in the civil society in Moldova is enabled through continuous development of youth policy legislation such as the law on volunteering, which was adopted in 2008. Also the annual youth policy implementation plans are being developed. A variety of youth participation support structures such as the Youth resource centres exist all over the country, different types of youth consultative bodies exist in the country at a local, regional and national levels. The significant number of structures does not assure higher level of youth participation as in the country it reaches only 11%. However it is one of the highest levels of youth participation in the region.

Different consultative bodies, youth councils co-exist at the same level. They are often overlapping and there is no clear division competence and connection between the bodies. The main challenge for youth participation in civil society and at the same time implementation of youth policy in Moldova is the lack of clear youth policy implementation structure. In the state sector the main responsibility for formation and implementation of youth policy is in the competence of the Ministry of Youth, which does not have any formal link to the local level, were the youth policy is implemented by the departments of Education and Sports in the municipalities, which are under

the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The cross-ministerial cooperation between the ministries is happening through participation of the Ministry of Education in the consultative council of the Youth Ministry. Moreover, the link in the NGO sector does not exist between the local and national NGOs.

The general diagnosis is that the youth policy is fragmented as stakeholders in the youth field are not equally represented. The National youth council (CNTM) has a strong connections and recognition by the state actors, which allows them to represent the interests of young people at the highest level of political discussion. The voice of the CNTM could be strengthened if consultations on youth policy issues would be implemented nationally, before important decisions are made. The youth councils, which exist all over the country at various levels, could be used as a platform for youth consultations using the structured dialogue method. This would involve more young people to speak up and as well partly solve following issues: lack of link between local, regional and national levels; provision of consultations with young people before youth policy decisions are made and provide evidence for future youth policy development.

The evidence-based youth policy development is taking first steps in Moldova. The National youth council implements more research work, hiring experts to prepare policy reviews and other analytical work. This makes Moldova a good example in the region.

Another modern youth policy development direction is creation of co-management structures. In the 2011 the co-management structure at the state level was created, the process got stuck due to a too high rank of representation as the chairman was the Prime Minister, and it was difficult to maintain constant work due to busy schedule of the chairperson. But the co-management structures are being developed and in 2013 a pilot project will be launched in the country.

Information work is done while implementing the youth policy. Moldova involves youth not only to be active consumers of information, but also incorporates it in information production. Moreover, youth media centres are operating in the country and creating youth involvement and positive leisure time opportunities. However, a more strategic approach to youth information should be created, due to small reach of the actions presently done.

Youth policy in Moldova has a strong link to social policy due to big amount of social challenges for youth: unemployment, worsening health conditions; brain drain, illegal migration and human trafficking; housing problems. Those problems are solved by a variety of ministries, and a direct link to the Youth Ministry does not exist. State is providing different social programs to combat

these challenges. The interesting example is youth housing program in rural areas, when after fixed period of time person working in a rural area is granted a free accommodation. The youth policy has a strong link to social policy, but the Ministry of Social Welfare does not belong to the cross-ministerial cooperation structures.

Youth is actively participating in the civil society through the system of education (e.g. pupils' councils, student councils, student unions- organizations helping to reach the active and educated youth). In Moldova a lot of youth resource centres exist for labour, entrepreneurship, media activities and other resources, but youth work in the country still needs to be developed providing training for youth workers and support materials. This could be a direction for youth policy development in Moldova.

The National development strategy of the Republic of Moldova indicates youth as a priority. The national youth strategy is due to finish in 2013 therefore it is essential to use the time for national youth policy evaluation, evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and pre-policy development process based on consultations with young people.

A proposal for development of youth policy in Moldova could be promotion of the Ombudsman for children rights to the Ombudsman on children and youth rights. This practice implemented in Flanders community, Belgium by merging children and youth policy, enabled bigger recognition of youth issues, as children issues were already a developed system.

Participation of the EaP youth in European youth policy development

All reviewed Eastern partnership countries stated that the European cooperation is an important priority for them. Some countries as Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia clearly indicate their interest in the European Integration. The EaP countries as a group are potentially good platform for development of future cooperation with the EU and stimulate bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks between the EaP states and the Union. In 2011 the Eastern partnership civil society forum published a background paper: "A Strategic Roadmap for Civil society in the eastern partnership" after a meeting in Poland. This document provided ideas how civil society in the region could be developed and for this study it is interesting how youth in the EaP countries can participate in changing civil society and what role the EaP region youth has in developing and influencing youth policies.

The European Neighbourhood policy fosters implementation of reforms in the EaP region aiming to support the states transition to democracy. That way, the EaP countries earn the right to receive more financial and political support. The EaP countries have to contribute with their own resources in order to get the financial support. This financial and political initiative strengthens the relations of the EaP and the EU.

The cooperation in the EaP countries has four areas, namely: democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with the EU policies; energy security and contacts between people. The strategic roadmap for civil society indicates that the EaP region governments with some exceptions become an obstacle for reforms. The EaP states are interested in economic cooperation, energy security, but do not tend to reform its participation and governance systems because of the fear to lose power, the change of *status quo*.

The changes in the EaP region can derive from two sources - the institutions and civil society, which is able to become a self-organised institution. The Civil society plays a crucial role in providing input to policy change, and asking governments for accountability. Civil society can initiate democracy promotion and market-oriented reforms. According to the EaP civil society forum in the last years it was difficult to promote changes due to economic reasons (e.g. economic recession) and resistance from the state side.

The young people in the EaP region during the last 20 years had a lot of influence and strive for changes in political situation and changes in society. Youth movements and young people themselves took an active role promoting the ideas they supported and protested against situation where they were not happy. At present situation civil society did not reach the level of non-satisfaction to initiate change. Youth will take a vital role in the development of the civil society and will take active part in changing their societies.

For future development of the EaP region close cooperation with Europe is essential. For the development of youth participation in civil society in the EaP region cooperation with the EU can be a good opportunity to share practice, provide financial incentive for development in the participation field. Moreover, the youth participation in civil society is a quality indicator of democratic processes in the country.

The EU member states, institutions have different attitude towards cooperation with the EaP region and individual countries. Often a more positive attitude is linked to the common historical, cultural past. The EU member states that were in the Soviet bloc have closer cultural heritage, hence closer cultural cooperation within the region. The same situation is seen in the cooperation in the youth policy and youth field.

During the Polish EU presidency in second half of 2011 a clear priority was the EaP region, in turn, youth field was also not an exception. During the EU youth conference in Warsaw in 2011 young people and the EU youth ministers were discussing about cooperation with the EaP in the youth field. Moreover, the representatives from the EaP region were invited to join the discussion. During the Lithuanian EU presidency, in the second half of 2013, emphasis will be made on cooperation with the EaP regions as the country plans to organise conference related to youth field. As stated above, there is a positive attitude toward the region from the EU member states and willingness to share good practices and stimulate learning from each other.

A specific tool for sharing good practice from the EU and the EaP region is the EU “Youth in Action” program in particular The Eastern Partnership Youth Window is a significant financial initiative to develop the youth field and youth participation in the region. Through allocation of additional funds for the years 2012 – 2013 and creating the opportunity for organization coming from the EaP region to apply for grants from the Executive agency of the “Youth in Action” program - a big stimulus for the youth field has been created. International actions in areas of youth work development, entrepreneurship and creativity, good practice sharing and inclusion of rural youth

bring NGOs and institutions together to cooperate on important topics such as youth unemployment and development of youth participation.

A special role in this process is played by the SALTO EECA Resource centre and the Multipliers of “Youth in Action” program in the EECA region opening up the opportunity for NGOs from the EaP region to use the programme to cooperate with the EU countries. In the country reports these structures are highlighted as the most effective structures supporting youth participation in the EaP region.

The Council of Europe also does significant work by funding different actions through the European youth foundation and youth policy development. The Youth partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe managing the youth policy knowledge centre is a non-replaceable resource for information on the EaP youth policy and youth situation.

The National youth councils from the EaP countries are doing active work representing youth from the EaP region in the European youth forum (YFJ). Being members of YFJ, the EaP National youth councils are contributing to the European youth discussion. Through this structure the NYC are taking part in shaping European youth policy, cooperating with institutions such as the European commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. National youth council participation in YFJ is considered as a general strength of implementation of youth policy in the EaP region. The connection from national youth policy level to European / international level is much better developed than the connection from local to national levels in the EaP region.

The youth sector has two main directions to increase their participation of the EaP youth in European youth policy development and civil society development. Firstly, it tries to influence the EU neighbourhood policy implementation in the EaP countries, through participation in the EaP civil society forum. Secondly, purposefully continues contributing to the European youth policy development.

At the same time it is essential for the National youth councils (NYC) from the EaP countries to have a common agreement and a vision on youth situation and youth participation in the region. Only through joint initiatives it is possible to contribute to development of the Youth participation in the civil society in the EaP region. Moreover, joint advocacy actions will support the position of the NYC in the EaP region in the dialogue with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and even the European youth forum (YFJ). A common vision and guidelines for the future of the EaP youth participation in shaping the European youth policies should be defined by a policy paper

society in the EaP region. This development would ensure long-term planning and complex actions by NGOs in the youth field, from the EaP countries aiming for concrete changes in civil society and participation of young people. Moreover, the overall aim of the programme is to invite youth to participate in shaping the future of Europe. The best way of doing it for the youth from the EaP region would be through an international cooperation and youth projects.

For efficient youth policy development in the EaP region the ideal next step could be development of common youth policy strategies by countries, especially by the ministries responsible for the youth policy development. In the European Union common actions and use of so-called Open method of coordination led to closer cooperation of states in the youth policy field and development of the *EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering, 2010-2018*. The Youth policy in the EU countries is the competence of the member states and the EU issues only policy paper recommendations. But the cooperation in the youth policy field lead to development of a common youth strategy and improvement of youth policy implementation in the member states, were the level of youth policy was very different. The main challenge for all the EaP countries will be to have a common agreement on youth policy, because countries have a different interest in cooperation with the EU and a generally different approach towards young people in their country.

Increasing the role of youth work and non-formal education in the region

Separate recommendations need to be developed for the NGOs, Institutions and other actors on development of youth work and non-formal education in the EaP region. During the last 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet bloc the EaP countries were developing youth policies. The state youth policies might be fragmental, systems are not yet clearly defined, elements of the system and connections are still missing, and hence a lot of things in the youth policy have yet to be developed. The level of youth participation in the region varies from 3 to 10 % of total number of young people. All country reports indicate that often provision of non-formal education and youth work are not based on the youth needs, but more oriented towards meaning-full leisure time activities and development of additional skills i.e creative skills. The practice often comes from the Soviet times and the activities implemented often are the self-realisation of the person working with youth and not the self-realisation of youngsters. Consequently only a small number of youngsters join in the activities, because only needs of a few on self-realizations are met. Often low level of participation is explained with lack of motivation for young people, even more often, the provision does not meet the needs of the youth or the approaches applied are not attractive.

Traditionally the provisions of youth work and youth policy structures in the region are aimed at the active youth who are easily involved in variety of different activities (e.g. extra-curriculum in the school, NGOs, student unions and other). The tendency in work with youth who are motivated and easily involved is again coming traditionally from the Soviet times. Generally the youth policy system is aiming at the youth with more opportunities, who are fully involved in the educational system. They have access to information and often see more opportunities in the EaP countries than their peers and take advantage of them. In this case the youth work and youth policy are becoming exclusive and not inclusive. This tendency is due to two reasons - a strong link of youth work and youth policy to the education system, which is generally aimed at skilled and more active children and youngster, and lack of competences of people working with youth. They are not being able to deal with involvement, individual work or specific challenges a person faces as a youth worker working with inclusive groups - the less active youngsters.

Another big challenge in executing youth policy through youth work is that in some countries, brightest example is Georgia, the provision of youth leisure time activities at local level (youth work is implemented locally where young people live) are overlapping. As there is neither a clear division of competence of institutions, as well local actions are done by municipalities, ministries, NGOs, political parties, international donors and the provision of activities is often very similar (e.g. doing project management training courses, writing CV courses, working with internally displaced people, sports activities and competition activities to show knowledge – KVN/KBH). The lack of division of responsibilities and competence, lack of cross-sectoral cooperation, provision of activities based on self-realization of people working with youth and not youth needs, leads to the involvement of the same active youth. The paradox is that the provision could be used to involve more youngsters, provide various participation and cooperation opportunities between institutions.

To solve the mentioned issues it is essential to develop a better understanding of variety of youth work methodologies, non-formal education principles and have a strategic approach in allocation of youth leisure time activity.

Strategies in the EaP countries should be developed on provision of youth work services, aiming to have a broader and inclusive approach: to reach specific inclusive groups or youth that is not participating in any other activities. First of all it is important to keep the existing activities if youth is participating as for some of them this provision is suitable and meets their needs. Secondly, developing and promoting alternative youth work methodologies. For example, open youth work aiming at inclusion youth groups, sub-cultures providing them a space to gather, safe environment and not pushing on leisure time activities or development of additional skills. Mobile youth work – when youth worker is not waiting for youth to come to him, but instead is going to remote villages and working with youth, where they are using existing infrastructure (schools, cultural centres, community houses). Street youth works in urban areas working with youth in the places where they gather (parks, shopping malls and etc). Thirdly, supporting the strategic development of youth work: with tools such as youth worker qualification, training courses and methodological support. A good examples from Georgia: in 2012 the launch of the new youth policy strategy was followed by support action implemented by the “Children and Youth National Centre” and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Georgia, with the funding from the UNICEF. Training courses for youth affair coordinators in municipalities, youth workers were implemented. It was followed by consultations

Recommendations for future development

According to the World Bank's World Development Report 2007, the following challenges make it difficult to develop successful policies directed at young people: first, a successful youth policy requires working across many sectors to develop one coherent, holistic and inter-sectoral strategy, with clear priorities and measures for concrete action. Second, youth policy fails because young people have not had a voice in the processes of design and implementation of the policies that affect them.

To develop participation of youth in the civil society future improvements in the youth policy of the EaP countries have to be made. The countries have to keep the direction of constant improvements and development in the youth field. In this chapter we want to highlight the main proposal for future development of youth policy in the EaP countries.

Recommendations for the EaP countries

The term of cross-ministerial cooperation is often mentioned in the political debate in the EaP countries, but youth policy today too often stands alone and is not integrated into the overall national development policy. To implement successful youth policy it has to be integrated. Ministries dealing with youth issues such as Education, Labour, Social issues, Military service, Economy, Health etc. have to cooperate while implementing youth policy and also assure that their own initiatives are not overlapping with initiatives of other ministries. A useful tool for implementation of integrated youth policies are common action plans, where different ministries take the responsibility to implement priorities and aims for the same strategy or sharing responsibilities and taking up task in other ministries plan (e.g. The Ministry of Education shares the responsibility for citizenship education in the youth strategy prepared by the Ministry of Youth).

To achieve integrated youth policy the NGO sector should be involved as much as possible. It is important to develop cross-sectoral cooperation involving actors from the 3rd sector, and youth through their structures to discuss youth issues.

The possible tools for involvement of youth could be the utilization, use of already existing consultative bodies (youth councils) inviting youth representatives to discuss upon youth issues.

The essential moment for future development in the youth policy field is to solve the following issues with the consultative bodies. Recommendations for work of youth council should be developed, stating how consultative bodies work, what are their working principles. Special attention should be devoted to state how the members of the councils from the youth side are nominated, aiming to assure legitimacy of the representation and representation of youth from various social background and regions.

Clear youth policy implementation systems should be developed in the EaP countries. A common tendency that local level youth policy is not connected to the national level, neither through the NGO structures, nor through state governance model. A clear national youth policy implementation models would assure bigger reach of youth, representing different regions and social backgrounds.

Moreover, another trend in the EaP region is that co-management structures do not exist or in some countries like Moldova it just started to be developed. Essential feature for democratization of the society and civil society participation is common decision-making. In the region it is essential to break the stereotype coming from the Soviet times “us and them” (“us” the civil society, “them” – the state). Only sharing responsibility in the decision-making, joint discussions on youth situation and their challenges, commonly developed actions together with youth will succeed.

Countries could use the existing youth consultative bodies to implement national consultation using the method of structured dialogue. As in the region constantly new youth policy documents or other policies linked to youth are being developed. The existing youth councils could be a perfect platform to gather youth voice, feedback and as well serve as the evidence for future policy development.

Evidence-based youth policy development is a common word in the youth policy discussion in the EaP region. Constant actions should be taken to develop youth research and gather youth researchers and join academic community.

Ministries in the EaP region are implementing a lot of actions, programs and even projects. Seeking to strengthen the NGO sector and their financial independence ministries could use services of NGOs to implement various actions and programs. The time resources of ministries could be used to develop youth policy and youth policy system but not concrete actions and leisure time activities for youth.

The EaP countries should continue their social programs and actions linked at improvement of the youth situation in countries, putting specific effort on youth employment, health, housing and entrepreneurship issues. Social package is one of the essential pre-conditions for youth to participate in civil society.

The EaP countries should jointly draft vision for youth policy in the region. The open coordination method could be a good tool for common development: creating joint strategy, priorities in the youth field and trying to reach them. The cooperation in the youth policy field would lead to improvement of youth policy implementation in the whole region. The main challenge for the EaP countries will be to find common incentives.

Big challenge in the EaP countries for the youth policy development is politicized youth policy and politicized youth participation. The main obstacle to have an efficient co-management and youth consultation structures is the fear of influence of opposition, due to involvement of ideological youth organizations, which are cooperating closely with political parties. The fear of losing the status quo, fear of criticism from opposition, impedes smooth development of national and local/municipal youth policies. National agreements should be made to avoid or diminish the probability of doing politics in the youth policy field.

Aiming to reach bigger participation of youth in civil society the perception of youth participation should change. The central concept on youth participation should shift from youth participation based around youth problems or the problems of the society. The emphasis should be set on youth rights to participate, speak-up and take part in the decision-making. Broader youth involvement will be reached and youth voice will be strengthened.

In the educational curriculum, education system and non-formal education the revision of citizenship education should be done, putting more emphasis on participation in civil society and less on patriotic education.

Strategies on provision of youth work services in the EaP countries should be developed. These strategies should be based on a broader reach and inclusive approaches: aiming to reach specific inclusive groups or youth who are not participating in any other activities. Firstly, it is important to keep the existing activities. If youth is participating for some of them this provision is suitable and meets their needs. Secondly, alternative youth work methodologies should be developed and promoted. For example, an open youth work aiming at inclusion of youth groups, sub-cultures providing them a space to gather, safe environment and not pushing on participation in leisure

time activities or development of additional skills. Mobile youth work – when youth worker is not waiting for youth to come to activities, but instead is going to remote villages and working with them, where the youth lives. Existing infrastructure is being used (schools, cultural centres, community houses). Street youth works in urban areas, working with youth in the places where they are gathering (parks, shopping malls and etc). Thirdly, supporting the strategic development of youth work: with tools such as youth worker qualification, training courses and methodological support.

In the EaP countries there is a lack of information not only about the youth situation, but as well on incentives of the state for young people. The efficient tool used in Norway was an annual report on all the incentives each ministry and state institution has done for young people in the last year. In this booklet all information about the actions completed could be presented: statistical data on youth, funds and other resources spent for youth could be declared. The informational booklet is a good tool not only to gathering information, but as well start thinking youth. As a result youth issues are in the mind of civil servants, because reporting will have to be done at the end of the year. The EaP countries spent a lot of resources for youth and youth issues through different ministries and their subordinate institutions, the direct funding for youth policy might be small, but in all cases the data on all the provision for youth does not exist.

Recommendations for national youth councils

The National youth councils from the EaP region should continue to strengthen their role as reliable partner of the state in issues linked to youth and as well foster the cooperation on the NYC in the EaP region.

In terms of the relationships of the NYC with the institutions responsible for youth policy development it is essential to negotiate and reach development of co-management structures, which would strengthen the role of the NYC in the National youth policy development and provide political weight. Essential moment in the youth policy development in the region is to develop a clear youth policy implementation scheme, connecting national and local levels, assure legitimacy and develop recommendations for consultative bodies.

The cooperation of the NYC of the EaP countries and their membership in the European youth forum (YFJ) is seen as strength of youth policy implementation in the region. The cooperation has

to take a more strategic approach in the future development of youth policy in the EaP region. It is essential to participate and advocate the interests of young people contributing in shaping the European youth policy development. A common agreement has to be made by the NYC from the EaP countries to have a joint vision on youth situation, and youth participation in the region. Joint advocacy efforts will support the position of the NYC from the EaP region in the dialogue with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and even the European youth forum (YFJ). A common vision and guidelines could be defined by a policy paper on “Vision of participation of youth from the EaP region in shaping the European youth policy”. This step is essential to strengthening the involvement of the EaP youth in development of the European youth policy.

National youth councils over the years of work have gathered know-how, experience and expertise. It is essential to assure the transition of experience for the new staff members, young people. Capacity building for youth leaders, activists should be organized on regular basis, especially at the regional and as well at the national level. Knowledge on youth policy implementation, advocacy competences are vital to youth representation and equal participation with the state institutions in the discussions on development of youth policy.

The National youth councils in the EaP region seek for recognition and visibility of the youth policy. A successful tool could be organizing annual conferences on youth policy in the parliaments of the EaP countries. This would provide more political recognition to the youth policy as such, national youth councils. Finally, it would be a good opportunity to raise important youth issues, present the newest research and provide a frame for participation of young people in civil society.

cooperation are not originating from the region, it can be motivated by the EU institutions and member state side.

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