

### A strategic framework for youth work development

The European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) is a new strategic framework for further developing and strengthening youth work policies and practices, and shaping youth work development across Europe.

### Context

The need for a European Youth Work Agenda was expressed in the final Declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention (EYWC) in 2015. After years of focused youth work development from local to regional, national and European level, the year 2020 offered a unique opportunity: The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth established the European Youth Work Agenda during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Agenda was kicked off with the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention when both the Presidency and the Chairmanship overlapped in December 2020.

### Elements of the European Youth Work Agenda

The EYWA is characterised by a co-ordinated approach of stakeholders at different levels and in different areas of youth work.

### Political commitment

Political documents of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) serve as a strong basis for getting the EYWA off the ground. In addition to the existing documents of the CoE (the Recommendation on youth work from 2017 and the Youth Sector Strategy 2030) and the European Union (the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027), the EU Council took note of a Resolution on the framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda in November 2020. Moreover, mutually agreeing on supporting the implementation of the Agenda by both institutions is one of the achievements.

### Engagement of the youth work community of practice

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention

The 3<sup>rd</sup> EYWC was the key moment for the youth work community of practice to transfer this political commitment into practice. It was a unique opportunity to bring representatives of the youth work community of practice together to shape the EYWA, discuss the needs from their perspective and start to plan its implementation within their different youth work contexts. The Convention aimed at providing guidance and inspiration for implementing the EYWA with a final Declaration – a groundwork document by the community, which was written during the event. The Convention, which was the first in the series to take place in the digital space, and its surrounding activities, kicked off the process of implementing concrete measures and activities – the so-called Bonn Process.

Community building and networking among the subsequent multipliers for implementing the Agenda encouraged commitment to engage in the Bonn Process and contribute to its success.

### ***Bonn Process (implementation of measures and activities)***

The Bonn Process is about making the EYWA happen. It is planned to be embedded in existing processes and instruments, notably as part of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the CoE Youth Sector Strategy 2030. The Bonn Process puts the EYWA into action by developing strategies, setting priorities and planning action for implementation in different contexts, and carrying out measures and activities. The Bonn Process is endeavoured to take place at all levels from the local, regional and national to the European level and in all the different settings of youth work in Europe. As required, support processes, instruments or services are planned to be established. The EYWA is intended to be monitored, reviewed and developed further. Future Conventions will have a key role in this strategic long-term development of youth work.

To get there, it puts the spotlight on eight priority areas and invites everyone active in youth work to engage in them:

#### **Develop and expand the youth work offer**

To strengthen the provision of youth work in Europe, European policies and local policy-making play an important role in supporting the further development of a quality local youth work offer;

#### **Quality development**

Quality development in youth work calls for better outreach and information about existing support structures and mechanisms. Clearer structures for co-operation and co-creation within and between all levels as well as strengthening and connecting existing networks at all levels are needed;

#### **A common direction for the youth work community of practice**

For youth work to move in the same direction, providing spaces to explore, exchange, and build on examples of good practice across different styles of practice is required. A co-ordinated approach to

learning, sharing, supporting, and building on youth work development and good practice at local, regional, national, and European level is needed;

#### **Beyond the youth work community of practice**

It is important to communicate the value of youth work and engage effectively with different sectors. Strategic and operational approaches to cross-sectoral and horizontal co-operation on youth (and youth work) at all levels are needed;

#### **Promotion and recognition**

More strategic and co-ordinated efforts are needed to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a distinct work arena. Developing a common language, a set of terms supporting a widely shared general definition while leaving enough space to adjust and connect to local contexts and realities, will help create a common narrative;

#### **Innovation and emerging challenges**

To be a safety net for all young people in times of uncertainty, more resilient youth work structures are required that are grounded in evidence-informed innovation principles, encompassing long-term thinking, reflexivity and strategy-based youth work. A culture of innovation in youth work practice should be fostered as well as the capacity of youth work to navigate European and worldwide transformations;

#### **Policy frameworks**

Youth work should be an integral part of youth policy, systematically incorporating the needs and measures regarding youth work into youth policies, both vertically and horizontally;

#### **A strategic framework for youth work development**

The Bonn Process offers a framework for the youth work community of practice to consider what it could be doing for youth work itself. However, the growth of youth work throughout Europe would be even better served if European institutions further aligned their visions for youth work within their respective youth strategies. This requires a joint letter of commitment or memorandum of understanding, connecting the Bonn Process to wider pan-European education and learning initiatives.

## Funding programmes in the field of youth

Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps as well as the European Youth Foundation are intended to be major implementation instruments at European level.

## The role of the youth work community of practice

Co-operation and support of the youth work community of practice in the member States and at European level is essential for an effective European Youth Work Agenda and shapes its content and future development. The whole youth work community of practice and all stakeholders in Europe within their different mandates, roles and capacities are invited and encouraged to contribute to the development of youth work within this strategic framework. This includes youth work stakeholders at local (including municipal), regional, national, and European level. It involves youth work stakeholders, such as youth workers and youth leaders, youth work managers, project carriers, accredited and independent youth work organisations, trainers, researchers, educators of youth workers, local communities and municipalities, National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps, youth representations and young people, and policy-makers for youth.

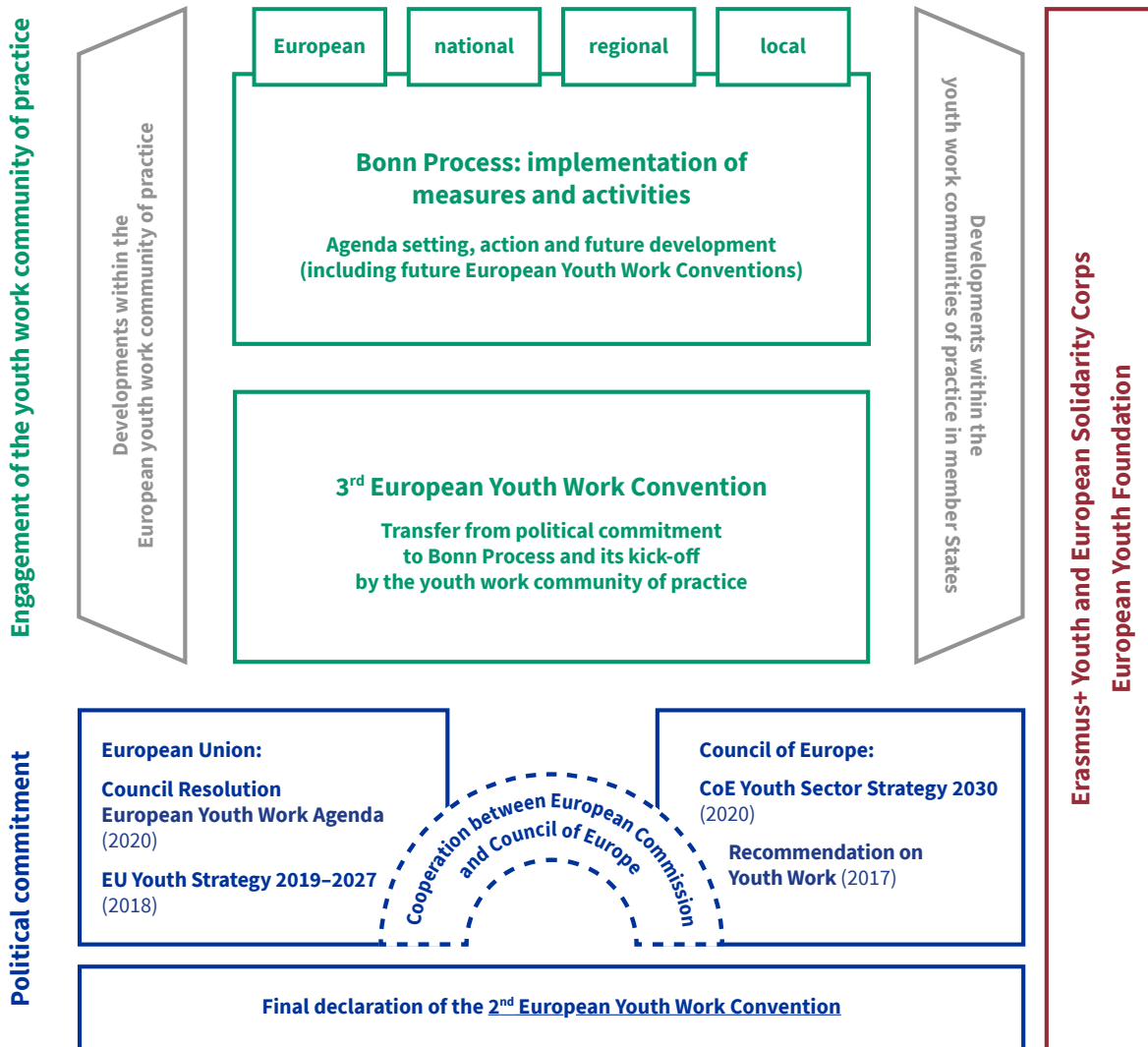
## Contact

The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has been responsible for the German Presidency and Chairmanship activities in the field of youth and their follow-up. It has been supported by JUGEND für Europa, the National Agency (Germany) for the EU programmes Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps.

For more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with JUGEND für Europa at [convention@jfemail.de](mailto:convention@jfemail.de).

Please also refer to our website at [www.eywc2020.eu](http://www.eywc2020.eu) for more information about the European Youth Work Agenda and the outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention.

## The European Youth Work Agenda



### Political commitment – engaged community – action!

By setting focused development of youth work onto the agenda, the youth work community of practice prepared the ground for the future development of the working field during the 2<sup>nd</sup> EYWC. This idea has been consolidated, and rooted in its political basis, the EYWA got off the ground by joint engagement of the youth work community of practice during the 3<sup>rd</sup> EYWC. The Convention and surrounding preparation

and follow-up activities kicked off the Bonn Process. The Bonn Process focuses on the implementation of measures and activities to boost youth work development across Europe. It aims at impacting positively on the diverse local and regional realities of youth work in 50 European countries and make youth work grow.