



# THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN THE AREA OF YOUTH

**Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> Partnership Consultation Meeting  
On 21st March 2006  
in Bruxelles**

## **I. Participants**

European Commission: Dietrich Rometsch, Nathalie Stockwell, Giorgio Guazzugli, Margaret Waters

Excused: Artur Payer

Council of Europe: Peter Lauritzen, Rui Gomes, Marcos Andrade

Partnership secretariat: Hanjo Schild, Florian Cescon, Alana Lentin, Marta Medlinska, Laetitia Pougary, Marzia Conte, Philipp Boetzelen

Representing the Partnership Sectorial Groups: Dua'a I Khanafsa, Udo Teichmann, Bernard Abrigani, Charles Berg, Nico Meisch, Laszlo Foeldi, Bob Payne, Giovanni Buttigieg

Joint Council on Youth: Jan Vanhee, Johan Ekman

European Youth Forum: Alix Masson, Americ Dupont, Peter Torp Madsen

## **Agenda:**

Adoption of the Agenda:

1. Exchange of Information about activities of the Partnership in 2005/6
2. Prospects for the Youth programmes of the EC & CoE
3. Priorities and further perspectives for 2007 and beyond
4. Timetable 2006 and the next meeting
5. Conclusion

## **Introduction**

Dietrich Rometsch (DR) welcomed participants and exposed the aim of the Partnership Consultation Meeting (PCM). The PCM should serve to exchange opinions, facilitate the development of synergies and gather reflections on the future development of the Partnership on Youth. The PCM is well timed as it takes place at the beginning of a new cycle allowing it to develop further perspectives and contribute to the preparation of the meetings of the next Sectorial Groups and the Management Board in autumn this year. He reminded that 2007 would be a key year for the launch of the new Youth in Action Programme of the European Union. Concerning the main activities of the Partnership, 2007 will stand mainly for continuation. The Partnership agreement could figure as a model of cooperation for the relation between CoE and CE and the resulting joint programmes.

Peter Lauritzen (PL) reported from the follow up meeting of the Council of Europe Summit of Heads of States: Constituting one of the three work priorities of the CoE the topic of intercultural dialogue is the most relevant to the Partnership. It is reflected in the main action lines of the campaign All Different – All Equal. For its implementation a campaign secretariat has been set up and a Campaign manager is being recruited. For the time being the Partnership Coordinator is performing this function. Apart from the secretariat, the 25 national campaign committees are an important element of the campaign structure because they ensure that discussion is taking place on the national level.

Concerning the relations between the CoE and the EU he referred to the Report which has been drafted by Jean-Claude Juncker ([http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/PA-Sessions/April-2006/Rapport\\_Juncker\\_E.pdf](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/PA-Sessions/April-2006/Rapport_Juncker_E.pdf)). According to this document there were two schools of thinking within the European Union regarding the future cooperation with the CoE: one which just would like punctual cooperation on specific projects and one tending to a more in depth cooperation.

For the priorities of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe he mentioned the preparation of a Framework Convention on Youth. Additionally to a White Paper on intercultural dialogue which is currently being drafted by the Directorate General on Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, the Youth Directorate has taken up the idea to prepare a White Paper on Youth. It is complementary to the White Paper on Youth of the European Commission and tackles particularly the long standing Council of Europe topics of citizenship and intercultural learning. Actions in the field of intercultural learning will be coordinated by the Director General of CoE's DG IV, Gabriela Battaini-Dragoni. Within this context the North South Centre which actually functions on the basis of a partial agreement, is expected to contribute to the priority of intercultural dialogue and will become part of DG IV (Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport).

There are two new items which should become part of the Partnership agenda: Within the extension of the cooperation with the EC on the new neighbourhood policy, seminars on youth policy with the Russian Federation and Ukraine are planned to be carried out by the Partnership. An extension of this cooperation to South East Europe should be envisaged in the long run.

Another new item on the agenda of the Partnership is the organisation of a Master of Arts course on European Youth Studies. A first preparation meeting has taken place recently.

## **1. Exchange of Information about activities of the Partnership in 2005/6**

### **Training**

Florian Cescon reported on the training activities carried out in 2005. Citizenship training is a cornerstone of Partnership activities. In the recent evaluation seminar the training courses on European Citizenship, carried out in cooperation with the national agencies and the SALTO-Resource Centres were assessed positively. The seminar prepared also the ground for the following six modules to be implemented during the grant agreement starting in April 2006.

### **EURO-MED, Intercultural dialogue and human rights education (Rui Gomes)**

The activities of Euro-Med are associated to the basic pillars *Quality in training, human rights and intercultural learning, youth policy and educational material*.

By the end of March, two training courses in human rights education will be organised, in Amman and Alexandria, in cooperation with local and regional partners. The course in Amman is addressed to trainers and multipliers from the Middle East and Gulf states and is organised in cooperation with the National Centre for Human Rights and the Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre (Jordan). The course in Alexandria is run in cooperation with the

Swedish Institute in Alexandria and brings together participants from Europe and Arabic-speaking countries. Both courses will be held in Arabic; the trainers have been trained at a course for trainers using Compass in Arabic (EYCB; December 2005). A third course should be organised in the Maghreb region in 2007, following which an evaluation should be made.

Following the youth policy Alexandria seminar in 2005 a similar activity on Youth Research is being planned in November, in cooperation with the Swedish Youth Board and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria. A T-Kit on EuroMed is also being prepared. It will be presented at a seminar taking place in June.

A major aim for EURO-MED is actually to broaden the cooperation partners, notably within the Arab countries.

Giorgio Guazzugli explained that with the beginning of the third phase of the Euro-Med Youth Programme a split of responsibilities has taken place: The Commission has decided to decentralise (and “deconcentrate” to the relevant Delegations) the MEDA part of the programme. Such decentralisation entails the transfer of the management (that is, the selection, issuing of contracts and financial management) of the projects presented by youth organisations from the Mediterranean partner countries to new Euro-Med Youth Units (EMYUs) at national level which are to be set up by the authorities of the relevant countries. The process is taking place under the supervision of DG AIDCO, which is responsible for the implementation of the Commissions’ external aid with the full support and cooperation of DG EAC. DG AIDCO has identified the SALTO Resource Centre EUROMED as the structure to give technical assistance to the establishment of the Euro-Med Youth Units in partner MEDA countries. An official decision is expected shortly after this meeting.

Directorate General EAC is continuing to manage the part of the Euro-Med Youth programme regarding projects presented by youth organisations from the EU Member states through the YOUTH Programme’s National Agencies, as well as the centralised selection of projects presented by Europe-wide youth NGOs. It is also continuing to manage the programme’s support actions (Resource Centre SALTO YOUTH Euro-Med, Euro-Med Youth Platform, and the Partnership on Euro-Mediterranean Youth Co-operation in the field of Training with the Council of Europe).

Further synergies have been achieved between the Council of Europe, the Partnership and SALTO’s which are all carrying out activities within the EURO-MED framework.

Duaa Querie reported for the Middle-East that there prevailed some uncertainty after the Hamas victory.

## **RESEARCH:**

For the research strand Alana Lentin (AL) gave a quick overview of the activities and the developments within the research strand after her coming into office as research officer in December 2005. Additionally to the post of research officer the research strand is supported by Laetitia Pougary who takes care of the technical development of the European Knowledge Centre (besides her responsibility for the Partnership Portal and the communication materials) and Philipp Boetzelen who coordinates the European Knowledge Centre besides his role as an assistant to the Partnership Coordinator.

Key activities of the last trimester 2005 were: the Research seminar on social inclusion, the Meeting of Experts on Youth Research and Information, and a Workshop on the Economic Dimension of Non-Formal Learning. At present the next research seminar on Diversity, Human Rights and Participation is being prepared. Another element of the research agenda of the partnership grant agreement 2006 is the elaboration of a Study on the Economic Dimension of Youth Work. A seminar on Europe and young people is planned in November 2006.

Laetitia Pougary gave an overview of the assessment of EKCYP-users and Philipp Boetzelen reported on the latest activities related to the EKCYP content: a quality group was held in December 2005 and the quality of the core content was assessed. Following the Quality Group recommendations, guidelines to support the EKCYP-correspondents were commissioned. 13 new countries joined the network of EKCYP-correspondents and participated at a training measure organised for them.

AL concluded that the partnership research strand should further develop the genuine research agenda of the Partnership. Another aim was to broaden the network of research beyond the institutionalised group existing at present and to involve young researchers via the discussions on the recently launched youth-debate platform. This tool, which for the moment is operated as a pilot phase, is a further development of the EKCYP-discussion forum and allows for active discussions and the uploading of papers without requiring a complex process of validation.

From the commission side, Nathalie Stockwell stressed the importance of the building of a national network of youth knowledge in as many countries as possible as part of the research agenda. This network should not be limited to researchers and comprise policy makers and practitioners, too. She stressed the relevance of such networking for the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP). She welcomed a EKCYP correspondents meeting in autumn 2006 since it was necessary to motivate correspondents in order to ensure the quality of EKCYP. She also mentioned the importance of better defining the role and objectives of the Partnership's researchers' Network.

Within the Commission, DG EAC has intensified cooperation with DG research. As a result, research on youth matters will be for the first time part of the 6<sup>th</sup> framework programme. There is also a good collaboration with DG ESTAT..

Charles Berg commented on what he described as a success story of the partnership. Starting from zero the research strand now disposes of a genuine structure, a tool for content management, and an institutionalized network of researchers.

## **INFORMATION and PUBLICATION (I&P)**

Marta Medlinska gave an overview on the recent developments concerning I&P activities: Taking the reprint of the T-Kits as an indicator, it can be said that the information materials of the Partnership are a real success story. At present a new issue on Evaluation has been accomplished and will be printed soon. The next issue will be on dialogue building between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. An editorial team will be set up and begin to work on the issue this year. With regard to translations it would be necessary to have a budget for language check. Not all language versions would have to be printed; it would be sufficient to make some of them available online.

Also a new edition of Coyote magazine has been practically completed. According to the restructuring of the Partnership the Coyote magazine should not be limited anymore to training activities but integrate all strands of the partnership. This strategic decision was confirmed by the participants of the Partnership Consultative Meeting.

Laetitia Pougary emphasized that the CD-Rom comprising all T-Kits was a cost efficient tool for the spreading of information and education materials. In the future they could be produced including additional policy documents.

She mentioned that a new leaflet on the Partnership had been printed and that the first edition of the Partnership Newsletter ([http://www.youth-partnership.net/INTEGRATION/Overall\\_Portal/aboutPart/newsletter.html](http://www.youth-partnership.net/INTEGRATION/Overall_Portal/aboutPart/newsletter.html)) had just been finished. It was conceived to inform about the imminent issues of the Partnership and should appear regularly.

Following the presentations a discussion on the Partnership's information policy took place: For the Commission, DR expressed satisfaction about the products of the Information & Publication strand. However there would be still room for further improvement, especially regarding the input of research knowledge into policy processes. The expected new exhibition panels would be a further step to make the Partnership more visible. A presentation stand should be foreseen at major European youth policy events (such as the next Presidency event in Finland in July).

Regarding the newsletter a complete distribution list would guarantee that this instrument reaches a wide public as well as researchers, trainers and policy makers. This tool could also serve to announce the partnership publications.

Hanjo Schild (HJS) confirmed that a specific distribution list is being developed. A way has to be found to include relevant policy makers beyond the stakeholders. For the trainers the National Agencies could facilitate their contacts to the Partnership.

UdoTeichmann (SALTO-Germany) offered to advertise the Partnership newsletter through the SALTO-newsletter which reaches 5000 trainers. However, both newsletters should then be complementary and avoid double work. The proposal of Peter Torp to have four issues of Coyote per year, at least available in an online version, was not shared by all participants due to the heavy workload associated.

Dua'a Querie asked for the possibility to have an Arabic version of the T-Kits. According to HJS this would be highly welcome but could only be possible if there were some interested cooperation partners. For the moment there are no resources within the Partnership to cover the translation costs into Arabic.

Udo Teichmann asked if there were any mechanism/ procedure to propose topics for the future T-Kits. He was answered by HJS that the PCM would be the relevant body for proposing such topics. EYF had proposed that the next issue should be on "Conflict Transformation". DR proposed to also use the Coyote magazine to launch new T-Kit themes as has been done by Bob Payne for the theme "youth information."

## POLICY ACTIVITIES

Under this line of action a seminar on youth policy with experts from Russia and CIS states is foreseen. The seminar will discuss issues and ways of future cooperation in youth policy and youth work. Also a seminar with Ukraine is foreseen and should be prepared in view of the next CoE's Youth ministers conference 2008 in Kiev, Ukraine.

In view of the mentioned T-Kit on cooperation between researchers, policy makers and youth workers a workshop on networking and dialogue building is foreseen. The workshop will discuss good practice of networking and should discuss the proceedings for a compilation of a T-kit on the subject.

A broadening of the Partnership activities to other regions such as South East Europe is also foreseen. PL mentioned that there were already some activities to build on such as the stability pact initiative in December 2004. The Balkan Youth Conference in Greece beginning of June 2006 would be an adequate forum to expose plans concerning future cooperation in that region.

With respect to policy development he asked the question if the Partnership was doing enough regarding policy development. He proposed that the Partnership should anticipate issues that will be on the policy agenda. It has done so successfully in the past (Research seminar on Resituating Culture, Voluntary Activities) and has anticipated topics that now do figure on the agenda of the European Union and the Council of Europe like for example Violence, Childhood, Youth and Family. However, at present mainly Citizenship can figure as a common topic for both institutions. According to PL anticipating key themes of the Youth Policy agenda would prevent the Partnership from having a merely administrative role and reacting on last minute demands.

Concerning the extension of Partnership activities to South-East Europe, Giorgio Guazzugli referred to the Salzburg communication and emphasized the interest of the Commission and particularly the Austrian Presidency in intensifying relations with SouthEast Europe.

DR added that this cooperation could become more formalized through the Partnership, giving South-East Europe a place in the Partnership's activity programme. He confirmed that a number of projects already existed. However, there was the need to go one step further and start to discuss youth policy issues in SEE.

Udo Teichmann called for a joint initiative of all stakeholders of the Partnership, namely the CoE, EC, EYF and Saltos in order to balance the limited means available.

In the context of the new neighborhood policy, Jan Vanhee mentioned the importance of establishing closer links to (Youth) NGO's in Belarus. The Belarusian civil society should not be excluded from European cooperation on Youth.

## ***2. Prospects for the Youth programmes of the EC & CoE***

PL presented the priorities of the Council of Europe regarding the youth field for the year 2007. First of all there was the organisation and administration of the campaign All Different - All Equal. Following it's implementation the follow up of the results and the evolvement of the different topics of the agenda should become object of a coherent monitoring process. It

has then to be seen to what extent the (outcomes of the) campaign will shape the educational work.

In the field of youth policy the project of the framework convention as well as the white paper on youth process have been approved by the Joint Council and will be pursued. Furthermore a monitoring system on youth policy foreseen to replace the present policy reviews should be implemented until the Youth Ministers conference in Kiev in 2008.

Human rights education will continue to be a prominent topic and therefore benefit from a long-term commitment of the Council of Europe. The same applies to the activities in the field of participation.

Quality improvement measures such as evaluation of trainings shall be continued. However resources for this item still have to be gained.

DR presented the priorities of the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme 2007: The activities are still under budgetary reserve as no decision has been taken concerning the budget, yet. The major challenge was to organise the transition from the actual Youth Programme to the Youth in Action Programme 2007. In the framework of the new Action 5 the cooperation with the CoE is explicitly mentioned in the new legal basis .

The topic of intercultural dialogue will be given major importance according to the upcoming European year of intercultural dialogue in 2008.

A resolution on recognition of Non-Formal Education will be adopted under the Austrian Presidency and should be followed by the launch of the Youth Pass which is foreseen to act as a complementary tool to the Europass.

A principal agreement with Canada on cooperation in the field of education, training and youth has been adopted. Cooperation with Japan in the field of youth has been started last year through a joint seminar organised in London. At present the user's guide of the new Youth in Action Programme is being prepared.

### ***3. Priorities and further perspectives for 2007 and beyond***

Following these presentations HJS asked the participants for an input on the work areas and management structure of the Partnership. Any comments would be considered during the next Partnership Management Board. He added that the Partnership was currently reviewing its practice of nominations to Partnership meetings. In the future this would be done in a more transparent way. A procedure for nominations to the Partnership meetings should be established by the Partnership and the stakeholders. Furthermore, the Partnership would elaborate a strategic paper on the concept of (European) Citizenship.

Peter Torp from the Youth Forum exposed a recent policy paper drafted by the European Youth Forum on the Partnership. The Youth Forum sees its original proposals confirmed by the agenda and management of the Partnership, notably the division in three different strands dealing with Research, Youth Policy and Training. The EYF encourages a regional extension to SouthEast Europe as it has been discussed during this meeting.

As a future topic that should be dealt with by the Partnership, he mentioned *intergenerational solidarity* and the handling of the *demographical challenges* which result in a shrinking number of youth during the coming years. According to the Youth Forum, the next T-Kit should be on conflict management.

Johan Ekman asked for a clarification on the role of the Partnership Management meeting and the fact that the participation of stakeholders is not foreseen.

HJS responded that the PMB was a technical meeting restricted to the CoE, the EC, and the Partnership secretariat. It would build on the joint reflections that happened in the Partnership Sectorial Groups and the Consultation Meeting, the relevant bodies for programmatic discussions.

Bernard Abrigani claimed more transparency concerning the partnership structures and a better information flow vis a vis all cooperation partners (not reduced to the stakeholders). The ownership of the Partnership was not very clear; it should therefore be better promoted as a cooperation activity of both institutions, CoE and EU.

Laszlo Foeldi pleaded for a realistic approach concerning the agenda of the Partnership: Being fairly limited by its budget, the Partnership should concentrate on a reduced number of quality activities. Taking the example of the Citizenship courses which were handed over to the National Agencies of the Youth Programme, he notified that former partnership projects should not be abandoned but followed up on a regular basis. The same would apply for the ATTE courses. Good ideas should be further developed without finding themselves put under pressure arising from unrealistically high expectations.

HJS mentioned that there could be a synergetic effect if the training courses of the Partnership on information would build upon the Campaign course for information officers.

Marcos Andrade reported on the North South Centre's focus on Africa and pointed on possible synergies in relation to existing EU cooperation programmes with Africa.

Concerning the construction of networks Nico Meisch reminded to further involve the national level of the countries participating, especially in questions of networks. Valuable experiences would exist on that level. He stated that the Partnership was lacking a coherent long term strategy for networking.

Charles Berg reminded of a general problem the Partnership is facing: It consists in its threefold legitimacy structure: Whereas the CoE is an intergovernmental organisation, the EU is supranational. Last but not least there was the Civil Society, represented within the CoE by the Advisory Council on Youth. In order to guarantee continuous support for its work, the three would have to combine the demands of these structures in a fruitful way.

DR replied directly to this, stating that the position of a Partnership coordinator performed by Hanjo Schild was created for that purpose. He also referred to recent developments within the Partnership management structure: the purpose of the Partnership Sectorial Groups and the PCM was to bring together and to balance the different demands and help the finding of consensus. An increase in transparency was expected from these modifications of the management structure. This would demand some patience since the current management structure is only in place for a short time.

Laszlo Foldi and Udo Teichmann added that a more long term vision would be wishful and should be reflected in the planning of activities. If the budget cannot be set for a long term period, at least the priorities should be set for a long term. Stakeholders and cooperation partners need time to feed back on activities they are foreseen to be involved. Therefore it should be avoided to set up ad hoc priorities.

Concerning the knowledge management within the Partnership, Charles Berg sees the *Youth Information* as belonging to all strands. The EKCYP could be used to integrate this knowledge but therefore a specialized workforce for Knowledge Management would be necessary.

#### **4. Timetable 2006 and the next meeting**

All Partnership Sectorial Groups (PSG) should meet before the next PMB which will take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. Dates have already been found for the PSG Euro-Med (11/09) and Better Knowledge (27/09). The next PCM should take place in spring 2007. The duration of the next Partnership contract has not been decided yet. It should, however, be longer than 20 month.

#### **5. Conclusions**

HJS resumed the key points of the PCM:

In a nutshell the Partnership can be seen as a success story even if there is room for improvement; in the future it should continue by:

- concentrating energies on a number of key activities
- being innovative and anticipating / raising new questions rather than taking up current issues
- further including the national and regional levels
- showing “who” is behind the partnership and how the tasks are fulfilled
- establishing synergies with the cooperation partners including National Agencies, Salto and Eurodesk
- planning and organising activities well ahead in order to inform partners in advance
- make sure that the results of the research strand are taken up in the debates on youth policy
- ensure the visibility of its work.

Philipp Boetzelen  
April 2006