

EU Youth Conference of Italian Presidency
Joint Conclusions “*Young People’s access to rights*”
13-16 October 2014, Rome

In the framework of the EU Youth conference, youth representatives, together with representatives from member states have gathered to reflect on two fundamental dimensions of youth policies: the access to rights as well the autonomy for young people.

Indeed it becomes more and more necessary in Europe, at all levels, to develop strategies and policies to match the needs of young people and support a natural progression towards adulthood. This involves not only acting on policies that favour the transition from school to work, but also on related areas such as access to employment, credit, housing, youth well-being or the ability to participate in social and civic activities, in order to provide the necessary tools to facilitate young people's attainment of autonomy and participation in social life. With this situation in mind, the participants focused and agreed on the following recommendations on access to rights in order to foster autonomy and participation.

1. Role of Member States and EU in ensuring young people’s access to rights

1. The EU and Member States should develop and implement tailored mechanisms to tackle multiple levels of discriminations such as those based on age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, political preferences, gender identity, gender expression or socio-economic background.
2. The EU and Member States should appoint an independent ombudsperson for youth rights. The role of the ombudsperson should be to increase awareness, to map and point out challenges and discriminatory practices, and to systematically work to protect the rights of young people.

2. Young People access to housing, access to credit , income support and well-being

1. The European Commission and Member States should foster the development of alternative financing schemes for young people (e.g. micro credits facilities, cooperatives etc), to prevent them from starting their lives in huge debts.

2. Member States should complement the youth guarantee with income support schemes and housing facilities, in order to ensure all young people's right to autonomy.

3. Youth access to employment, social protection and welfare systems

1. In order to reduce the mismatch between education systems and labor market, Member States should constantly update the curricula with a priority on practical and soft skills¹ development.
2. The EU and Member States should guarantee that internships and apprenticeships, as a first step to access the labor market, are properly compensated to avoid precarious conditions and ensure youth autonomy.

4. Raising awareness and Monitoring

1. Member States should implement a continuous cross-sectoral approach, as well as support inter- and national NGOs for awareness-raising activities, in order to ensure outreach to disadvantaged young people and empower them to know and fully exercise their rights, especially on local level.
2. Member States, in cooperation with NGOs, should provide services, including legal support, guidance, online² and offline³ information delivery tools, enabling young people themselves to monitor and report infringements.

5. Towards a new generation of youth policy

1. Policy makers in cooperation with stakeholders should improve the quality and visibility of youth policy outcome through continuous⁴ youth policy assessment and impact analysis.

¹ For example, among other skills: networking, communication, team-work, writing CV's and cover letters; IT and language skills; critical thinking, etc.

² Inspired by Your Passenger Rights application

³ For example: formal education and youth information centers

⁴ Ex-ante, on going, ex-post

2. Member States and European Commission should further develop cross-sectoral and cross-cutting youth policy approach in order to implement more coherent policies that guarantee young people's access to rights.

6. The support of youth organisations and youth work to the autonomy for young people

1. In order to enhance youth autonomy through quality⁵ Non-Formal Education, stakeholders involved in the youth field should cooperate in a clear and transparent way to raise awareness in society about the value of competences gained through youth work.
2. In order to support youth autonomy through quality youth work, Member States should build strategic partnerships with representative youth work bodies and other stakeholders in order to: establish legal framework, recognize the youth worker vocation/profession and set quality frameworks, as well as provide information, ensure visibility and promote youth work.

7. Enhancing the participation of young people in Social life and their active participation

1. In order to empower young people to become active citizens, Member States should provide citizenship education at all stages of formal education and support non-formal education providers so that young people are aware of and able to access their rights.
2. Local authorities, Member States and the European Commission should, in cooperation with young people, establish legal and administrative mechanisms for genuine youth participation in all stages of decision-making p

⁵ Reference to the “Expert Group on Youth Work Quality systems” of the European Commission