**GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTATION**

**Trio Presidency: The Netherlands, Slovakia, Malta**

**Consultation on “*Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe, Ready for life, ready for society*!”**

**DEADLINE: Thursday September 1st 2016**

At the EU Youth Conference in Amsterdam, participants identified the main challenges that young people face in order to live in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe; These challenges set the ground for the cycle and based on those, the guiding questions were drafted.

**Below you can find the guiding framework followed by the guiding questions** that your National Working Group or your INGYO is invited to use in order to carry out the consultation.

You are welcomed to eventually adapt them to your national context when translating them.

**The consultation period is open from April 8th until September 1st 2016.**

Please, make sure to organise both **online and offline activities** aiming at collecting the opinion and views of a wide range of young people in your country/organisations.

In order to inspire you, the NYC of Slovakia took the lead in preparing **a toolbox of ideas** based on the contribution of the NWGs. You can find there ideas of activities to put in place in order to reach out to diverse groups of young people, notably non-organised youth.

Finally, the NYC of Slovakia, under the supervision of the ESC, has developed a **short video** that you could use in order to encourage young people to contribute to the consultation and give their opinion:

To submit your contribution, please fill in the [online link](mailto:https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7YNNQ7G) before September 1st 2012, 23:59.

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Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with [Lucille.rieux@youthforum.org](mailto:Lucille.rieux@youthform.org)

*The new architecture of the Structured Dialogue was endorsed by Council Resolution “Overview of the Structured Dialogue process including the social inclusion of young people”, of 20 May 2014, which introduced a one and a half year cycle that focuses on only one thematic priority. The Resolution enables the EU Youth Conference in the Netherlands to set the guiding framework, namely outlining the description of the existing challenges that young people are facing on the chosen priority. The guiding framework serves as a basis to launch the consultation that will be carried out among young people across Europe.*

*The council Resolution “Encouraging the political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe” of 23November 2015, sets down the overall thematic priority for the V cycle of the Structured Dialogue as “enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe - Ready for life, ready for society”.*

**Guiding framework on “Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe, Ready for life, ready for society”**

The cultural, ethnic and geographic differences that have long defined the world and Europe are changing and are being replaced by new realities, new opportunities and new challenges for young people. These challenges that young people face can be characterized by a number of related and overlapping issues as follows:

**Challenges for an inclusive Europe**

Young people tend to be perceived and portrayed in a negative way rather than promoting their constructive contribution to society. Moreover, young people are seen as a challenge instead of as an opportunity and a resource by older people. Media coverage is not balanced, and does not adequately reflect both negative and positive impact young people have on society.

The pressure put by a competitive societyonyoung people(to have a paid job, not to fail, to look good/ be healthy, to live up to expectations etc.) can prevent them from realising their full potential and can, in turn, can lead to psychological, health and employment issues. Moreover, formal education is too theorical and does not encourage young people to be innovative and creative. Young people are lacking secure and free space, and positive role models to develop their talents. This makes it difficult for them to find a purpose in their lives. The challenge for young people is to have the space and opportunity to develop the personal, social and civic competences they need to cope with today’s societal changes and have them recognised by institutions, family, peers or the young people themselves.

Marginalized young people are facing a lack of access to equal economic, legal and social opportunities and rights. This may be brought about by the existing norms, which have been constructed by the society and reinforced by the way information is communicated. As a consequence, young people who are being excluded potentially start excluding themselves from society and therefore may experience deprivation and a negative outlook on life. Furthermore access to employment is particularly difficult for young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities, from minority cultural and ethnic groups and for young people with special needs. This is caused by discrimination, lack of quality education, forced migration, and the structure of the labor market.

**Challenges for a diverse Europe**

There is a lack of understanding and interaction among young people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This might be caused by the fear of the unknown, of losing personal and cultural identity, and is confounded by misinformation and the lack of critical thinking.This may lead to divided societies, the rise of extremism, prejudice and stigmatization, as well as feelings of insecurity.

**Challenges for a connected Europe**

Young people loose their sense of belonging when they do not feel understood, valued and respected by others. They also do not always identify themselves with existing cultural values and economic and social structures and as a result they become more vulnerable to manipulation and at risk of not being part of the community as well as of society.

Moreover young people are finding it difficult to effectively process, use and critically evaluate information.  They may lack the competences to navigate the overload of information which is not always reliable, accurate and does not meet the needs of the individual. Without access to proper information and competences, young people can be misled and negatively influenced in their life options, opinion formulation, access to rights and the ability to exercise their active citizenship.

The challenges for a Europe that is diverse, inclusive and connected are complex, inter-related and not easily tackled. Consulting and debating with young people across Europe however, gives them the opportunity to consider and respond to questions  as to how their challenges can be confronted and overcome. While these challenges can be adequately addressed by a determined effort on the part of the Member States, young people themselves, in presenting ideas and proposals and supporting peers, have a vital and invaluable role to play in meeting such challenges.

**Guiding questions for the consultation**

1) What changes in society are you concerned about and what do you need to be able to adapt to such changes? What would make you feel more secure?

Changes in society, young people are concerned about:

* Young people are concerned about recent events, especially:
  + terrorist attacks
  + refugee wave
  + fear of possible war or new “cold war”
  + radicalization and rise of xenophobia
  + climate changes
  + high smoking and drug abuse rates by youth
  + During summer time emerged concerns also about the political development in Turkey.
* Especially according to refugee wave, young people are concerned about the security and also about the impertinent reactions coming from the political representation.
* Though young people do not share united opinion regarding refugees, they are rather united in condemning racist tendencies and hatred they evoke.
* Young people do not understand nor support prejudices and are concerned by one sided targeting of certain groups based on their appearance or cultural background by the armed and security forces.
* Young people are part of the changing world but they refuse to join the opinion prepared by the media and participate on a hateful, not evidence based reaction.
* Young people are concerned about the education situation. Students lose their interest in education and teachers approach to education leading to demotivation

What young people propose as a solution to changes of their concerns:

* Providing more information regarding the topic or situation might prove beneficial. However the information must be impartial and true as much as can be ensured at that moment. Transparent media watchdog organisation/office should be created which would ensure the validity and balance of the information, providing fact sheets and more balanced analyses.
* In order to increase media transparency, competent bodies, entrusted with media control should be de-politicized
* Both formal and informal media, citizenship and political education should be supported and modernized for the present needs of societies
* Possibility to seek guidance from some authority who or which is capable of providing either reasonable advice or explanation of the current situation and its consequences.
* Current society is making judgements based on a certain group membership while the individual deeds go rather unnoticed. Every individual should be judged based on his or her actions regardless of the group membership and this approach should be applied also by the media.
* Fear of the unknown, which is the cause of the most hate base reactions and hysteria, can be mitigated by the better engagement in community activities and contact with other cultures and customs.
* Political figures should strengthen their democratic leadership skills to provide council and solution to the citizen.

2) What would help you connect more and build trust with people from a different cultural, social, economic, religious background than yours?

* Most significant barrier in connection with people from other cultural background is the insufficient knowledge of common language. Language education provided by schools should be improved and intensified.
* In order to get to know people from other cultures, young people are required to travel. Means of overcoming long distances are steadily improving, however even more accessible mean to travel would foster the goal.
* Many young people state, they are too shy to initiate the first contact with foreign people. This problem could be mitigated by the experienced mediator (organisation or person) who can facilitate the meeting among different culture groups and ensure all sides would benefit.
* Better knowledge of the foreign culture customs would also prove beneficial in establishing new connections among different culture groups. Knowledge about different cultural backgrounds should be strengthened.
* Insufficient of resources
* Generally, young people realise current world is providing much less obstacles for discovering new cultures than ever before thanks to internet and means of transport.
* Recent terrorist attacks events are considered as a currently very serious obstacle for connecting with other people from different cultures. This fear should be addressed and countered in order to avoid the effect terrorist attacks intents.
* Intercultural sensitivity and motivation for intercultural dialogue and activities should be empowered within formal and non-formal educational settings.
* Engaging schools especially in rural areas in more social and global activities and education.
* Working youth consultative body (of various youth groups and subculture representatives) by the ministries on all issues about young people.
* Focus on the “inner barriers” and their overcoming in communication and relationships with others.

3) What can be done to avoid the stigmatization of vulnerable young people and provide them with equal opportunities in society?

* Media are considered as a greatest source for stigmatization and in order to minimize the problem, control should start there by emphasising on the veracity of the information.
* Second most common source of the stigmatization are schools. Teachers are thus in the best position to prevent stigmatization among young people if not towards them.
* Since many respondents determined the stigmatization as common part of life, it would be beneficial to incorporate appropriate educational means into curriculum.
* Opinion of the young people can sometimes be dismissed only based on their age. This type of behaviour is lowering their self-esteem and ability of critical thinking and thus should not be supported, not even on the internet.
* In order to avoid stigmatization, young people should be brought closer to each other, especially the young children who are prejudice free.
* Knowledge is an effective counter measure for stigmatisation, especially in the form, where stigmatised group is introduced to other and is able to disprove the common belief.
* Every person should be judged based on his or her action and not based on the group membership. This approach should be emphasised in both media and school, so the stigmatisation could be avoided.
* Inter-generation dialogue should become regular part of the education in order to strengthen the ties among generation and ensure smooth communication and information exchange leading to better understanding.
* Wider public discussion on the topic – in media, schools, out of school education, political debate…
* People do often self-stigmatization e.g. there is a difference between being active and being consumer of activism. This could be as an example of self-identification patterns which can often lead toward misleading stigmatization beginning inside and going towards outside stigmatization and consideration of poseurism (posturing).
* To overcome self and outer stigmatization could be done through perpetual asking on reasons, goals, aims in order to support young person build own real identity and coherent behaviour. There could be also other interactive methods as living libraries, campaigning, … Personal tolerance should be promoted as well.

4) What do you think makes you feel that you belong to a local community, to society, to Europe?

* Young people feel their connection to certain community or nation based on many aspects, especially:
  + Place of birth, territory, residence
  + Common language, history, traditions and customs, culture, anthem, cuisine
  + Family, relationships, friends, similar behaviour within the community
  + Sport cheering (ice hockey), flag usage during national holidays and important sport matches
  + Security and feeling of safety
  + The way person can contribute to the society, clear role within the society
  + Humanity, atheism, democracy and common values
  + Meeting with other people thanks to different activities
* Young people feel connected to Europe especially by the open borders and common values
* Certain amount of young people do not feel affiliated with community, society or nation and they only feel connected to the people around them and do not feel different from people in Asia or America.
* European identification is often connected with the awareness of common challenges and problems.
* European Union helps to identify with Europe.
* Does not Europeanism mean hidden form of determination which could be misused?

5) What competences would help you when you are facing difficult situations?

* In order to deal with the difficult situation, sufficient amount of reliable information is needed. Since the media and the internet are the greatest source of information, they should be protected and regulated.
* More interactive methods should become regular part of the education programme in order to prepare young people to real life situations and how to handle them. E.g. role plays, model situation education etc.
* Education should provide not only theoretical knowledge but also manual dexterity, better language skills etc.
* Difficult situations can be overcome more easily thanks to personal skills:
  + Better self-confidence
  + More stress resilience
  + Ability to think positively, creatively and calmly despite the amount of stress
  + Courage to overcome shyness and step out of the comfort zone
  + Better communication skills, more assertiveness
  + Better knowledge, higher education obtained
  + Overcoming obstacles and do not lose determination
  + Strengthening self-discipline, will power, desire
  + Small step of changes - microtransformations
* Traveling and more acquaintance with people are considered an important source of experience required to overcoming difficult situations.
* Sport activities are important to overcome stress and contentment with the appearance are also important factors for overcoming difficult situations.

6) What would you need to fully realize your potential and help others to realize theirs?

* The older the people are the more they tend to think they do realise their full potential.
* In order to discover personal potential, that person must step out of his or her comfort zone experience new things or activities.
* Person will step out of the comfort zone more easily if he or she has healthy self-esteem and is confident about him/herself. Exercises supporting healthy self-confidence could be part of the common education.
* Potential is being discovered in phases and it would be reasonable to plan potential discovery in stages. Certain exercise can hone senses, memory etc. Such training could be part of the curriculum.
* Personality tests and diagnoses can be used in order to help determine the possible ways of improvement and discovering personal potential.
* More information regarding future carrier, possibility of education could help young people deciding their future and choosing the area of their potential they want to develop.
* Inspiration is sometimes needed to discover personal potential. Contact with people who proved inspiring in certain areas might prove beneficial for young people in order to overcome their fear of unknown and help them step out of the comfort zone.
* Potential should not only be focused on one goal, like employment, otherwise it would lead to unbalanced, one sided personal development.
* Youth work should be supported with sufficient amount of resources so it can develop according to youth needs.
* System should contain mechanisms aimed on motivating to strengthen self-efficacy by young people.
* Working on social and personal skills as ability to have one´s way, to be listened, hold liability, modesty, fair play, be patient, kind, keep the rules, jealousy, communication skills, honesty, be able to educate ownself, concentration, …
* Physical form
* Become a mentor or couch of others (helps to both persons in own development and personal growth).