

There are hundreds of policy documents, strategies, articles and studies published; the following section provides some links to the most relevant ones along with a short summary of the main points. Many of these sites will have links to further documents that will assist you.

If you are new to policy or would like an overview of European policy developments, an informative paper written in 2010 by Maurice Devlin and published in Youth Studies Ireland *Young People, Youth Work and youth Policy: European Developments* is available to download at <http://eprints.nuim.ie/3575/>

The European Commission's website provides comprehensive, easy to navigate policy information:
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/index_en.htm

Remember to revisit the programme guide to ensure your project or activities are in line with the objectives of the Erasmus + Programme. http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

A useful guide to vocabulary used is Terminology of European Education and Training Policy, this multilingual guide covers 130 of the most commonly used terms and is available at the following link: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4117_en.pdf

Another useful website is the European Commission and Council of Europe Youth partnership website, where you can the latest

developments as well as topic specific information <http://pio-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership>

European documents:

- **Europe 2020 Strategy:**
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

The Europe 2020 strategy is about delivering growth that is: smart, through more effective investments in education, research and innovation; sustainable, thanks to a decisive move towards a low-carbon economy; and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction. The strategy is focused on five ambitious goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy.

This website also contains country recommendations. Ireland's 2014 recommendations can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/csr2014_ireland_en.pdf

- **Education and Training 2020 (ET2020):**
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/index_en.htm

Through the strategic framework for education and training, EU countries have identified four common objectives to address these challenges by 2020:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship;
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

EU benchmarks for 2020 that have been set for education in the areas of:

- early school leaving,
- higher education completion,
- basic skills,
- early childhood education,
- lifelong learning,
- transition to the labour market,
- mobility between countries

There is an emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation and sharing results with other sectors, keep in mind other sectors that your project/activity can contribute to with regard to ET2020 as well as your own.

- **Youth on the Move:**

http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/index_en.htm

Youth on the Move is a comprehensive package of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe. Launched in 2010, it is part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Youth on the Move aims to improve young people's education and employability, to reduce high youth unemployment and to increase the youth-employment rate – in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years) – by:

- making education and training more relevant to young people's needs;
- encouraging more of them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country;
- encouraging EU countries to take measures simplifying the transition from education to work.

- **European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)**

**An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering
A renewed open method of coordination to address youth
challenges and opportunities document:**

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>

EU Youth Strategy website:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/index_en.htm

European cooperation in the youth field during 2010-18 is stimulated by two intertwined objectives:

- the creation of more and equal opportunities in education and the labour market;
- the promotion of active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity.

To this end, specific initiatives targeting young people and mainstreaming initiatives to incorporate youth issues into other policy areas are developed and promoted. The renewed framework outlines eight fields of action in which cross-sectoral initiatives to support young people should be taken:

- education and training
- employment and entrepreneurship
- health and well-being
- participation
- voluntary activities
- social inclusion
- youth and the world
- creativity and culture.

European cooperation in the youth field must uphold a number of guiding principles, particularly:

- promote gender equality;
- combat all forms of discrimination;
- consider differences between young people, especially in terms of disadvantage;
- provide for the participation of young people in policy-making.

- **Youth Statistics:**

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/youth/introduction>

Youth statistics play an important role in evaluating the progress toward the goals set in the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018): better educational and job opportunities, as well as promoting the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of young people (i.e. those aged between 15 and 29).

- **EU Youth Report 2012:**

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012_en.pdf

The Joint Report summarises the results of the first work cycle of the renewed framework (2010-2012) and proposes priorities for the next cycle. It presents statistics on how the financial crisis has

affected the situation of young people in the EU. It also highlights that the EU should focus more on the consequences of the current crisis on young people, particularly on their social inclusion, health and well-being. Creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and the labour market, promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity are the pillars upon which our efforts should be based. All tie in well with Europe 2020, Youth on the Move and the Youth Opportunities Initiative.

- **Recognition and validation of skills and qualifications**

YouthPass <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

There are tips and advice for youth workers who want to use Youthpass with and for young people with fewer opportunities: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionpublications/inclusionforall/youthpassforall/>

Youthpass Impact Study:

<https://www.youthpass.eu/da/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

- **Council resolution on youth work 2010**
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117874.pdf

One of the first documents to give recognition to youth work at policy level by providing a broad definition of youth work providing better recognition of youth work.

- **Working with Young People: The Value of Youth Work in the European Union**
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/working-with-young-people-pbNC0414172/?CatalogCategoryID=PbYKABstTO8AAAEjtZAY4e5L>

The report highlights the diversity of youth work practice, the variety of actors involved, the observable trends in the sector, features of successful youth work and the range of outcomes associated with that success. Furthermore, it presents a comparative overview of the frameworks which support youth work at the national level across the EU. Whilst youth work practice will take place regardless of whether countries provide a policy framework of support for the sector or not, EU and national level policies and funding provisions have the potential to frame and shape the practice of youth work. These should be designed so as to further strengthen the capacity of the sector to provide meaningful activities for young people in their leisure time that lead to identifiable successful outcomes for youth in the EU

- **Learning mobility and non-formal learning in European contexts. Policies, approaches and examples**

http://pjp-eu.coe.int/web/youth-partnership/learning-mobility-and-non-formal-learning?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fpjp-eu.coe.int%2Fweb%2Fyouth-partnership%2Fknowledge-books%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_UnzJl3YhgiRI%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_count%3D1#UnzJl3YhgiRI

This book on learning mobility is a joint Council of Europe and European Commission publication, and provides texts of an academic, scientific, political and practical nature for all stakeholders in the youth field - youth leaders and youth workers, policy makers, researchers and so on. It should contribute to dialogue and co-operation between relevant players and to discussion on the further development and purpose of youth mobility schemes and their outcomes for young people.

- Intercultural learning in non-formal education: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/web/youth-partnership/intercultural-learning-in-non-formal-education?redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fpjp-eu.coe.int%2Fweb%2Fyouth-partnership%2Fknowledge-books%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_UnzJl3YhgiRI%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_count%3D1#UnzJl3YhgiRI

Intercultural learning has long held a central role in European youth work and policy, especially in international youth exchanges. The expectations placed on intercultural learning as a process, as an educational and social objective and, lastly, as a political attitude in relation to diversity remain fully relevant in Europe today.

- **Council Conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people** <https://europa.eu/youth/sites/eac-eyf/files/Council%20Conclusions%20on%20contribution%20of%20quality%20youth%20work%20-%20ST08575.EN13.pdf>

The Council Youth Working Party, in the course of several meetings, has prepared a set of conclusions with a view to their adoption at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 16-17 May 2013. Several priorities have been identified to ensure and enhance quality youth work for the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people.

- **Declaration of the 1st European Youth Convention** http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2010_Declaration_European_youth_work_convention_en.pdf

The 1st European Youth Work Convention took place under the Belgium EU Presidency in July 2010. Nine years after the European Union launched the White Paper on Youth under the previous Presidency in Belgium, the youth work and youth policy community returned to Ghent. For the first time, the focus was exclusively on youth work. The Convention sought to connect the past, present and future thinking and practice of youth work.

- **Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe**
http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/3084932/Pathways_II_towards_recognition_of_non-formal_learning_Jan_2011.pdf/6af26afb-daff-4543-9253-da26460f8908

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth have published a new working paper on the recognition of non-formal education and youth work in Europe. Pathways 2.0 comes six years after the first Pathways paper which first raised awareness towards non-formal education in youth activities in Europe. The paper in particular argued that, because of its strong contribution to the preparation of young people for a knowledge-based and healthy civil society, non-formal education in the youth field is more than a sub-category of education and training.

National Documents:

To gain some context to the policy development within Ireland at national level Youth Work Policy and Delivery in Ireland – A North South Context was published in 2012. A Working Group comprising of the Youth Council for NI, Education and Library Boards, Youthnet, Vocational Educational Committees and the National Youth Council of Ireland was established.

At their inaugural meeting they agreed to commission this paper setting out the policy and delivery structures for youth work in both jurisdictions.

The purpose of the paper is to:

- Inform the Working Group in their identification of potential areas for co-operation
- Inform the Working Group in their development of an action plan for agreement by stakeholders
- Inform the youth sector on existing and emerging policy and delivery structures in both jurisdictions

<http://www.youth.ie/nyci/Youth-Work-Policy-and-Delivery-Ireland>

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs website provides information and current developments in Youth policy
<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fyouth-affairs%2Fpolicies.htm&mn=youth&nID=4>

The National Youth Council of Ireland have a dedicated section of their website for policy as well as policy submissions <http://www.youth.ie/nyci/policy-reports-and-submissions>

Youth Work Ireland provide policy information at <http://www.youthworkireland.ie/what-we-do/policy-documents/policy-documents>

The Centre for Effective Services have a number of relevant publications and projects which are useful for identifying key policy areas: <http://www.effectiveservices.org/knowledge-exchange/ces-publications>

- **Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The national policy framework for children and young people 2014 -2020** <http://www.comhairlenanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf>

This document establishes a shared set of outcomes for children and young people to which all government departments, agencies, statutory services and the voluntary and community sectors work, to ensure a coherent response for children and young people.

These outcomes are:

- Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
- Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.

- Safe and protected from harm.
- Economic security and opportunity.
- Connected, respected and contributing to their world.

It prioritizes the key cross-cutting transformational goals which require concerted and coordinated action to ensure the realization of the respective outcomes:

- Supporting parents,
- Earlier intervention and prevention,
- Listening to and involving children and young people,
- Ensuring quality services,
- Strengthening transitions,
- Collaboration and coordination across government.

- **Quality Standard Initiatives – The National Quality Standards Framework for Youth work and The National Quality Standards for Youth Groups** <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fyouthaffairs%2Fqualityframework.htm>

Some Final tips:

- In the context of Erasmus + and the objectives of the programme, your project should automatically link to a policy priority as Erasmus + links with the EU2020 Strategy
- Don't copy blocks of text from the documents as they will lose value in the context of the application form and detract attention away from the actual project or activity
- Reference all documents you refer to by writing the year, the document name and the author/publisher in brackets
- For subject- or topic-specific information, look at publication pages on the national or international organisations' websites
- Take time to do your research and don't leave it until the last minute
- If relevant, statistics are always useful to highlight or reinforce a point you are making
- Your application form does not need to be littered with policy references, the context, need and impact are the most important aspects for linking to policy or strategy recommendations
- If you take a quote from a document check that the quote is not referenced from another document; it is advisable to read the quoted document to make sure the quote has been taken in the intended context

- Linking to policy and strategy documents will also depend on the size of your project or activity, the bigger the project the more comprehensive and detailed policy links
- Don't overcomplicate the policy link, keep it simple and to the point and in the context of your project or activity
For example, in the context of an environmental project in addition to the local need for the project: 'We have chosen the topic of environment awareness as this has been highlighted as an aim in national policy in the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures publication. The recent National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, 2014-2020 aims to ensure that learners are equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to become informed citizens acting for a more sustainable future.'