



# Growing Youth Work across Europe: Inspirational Paper for Making the European Youth Work Agenda Happen

An invitation from Bonn by the hosts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

JUGEND für Europa – National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps in Germany

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## 1. Introduction

### Background information about the European Youth Work Agenda

With the emergence of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA), a huge step forward can be made for youth work in Europe<sup>1</sup>. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention in 2015 in Brussels, Belgium, considerable further development has taken place in many different areas of youth work. These developments have arisen primarily through impulses from a wide variety of stakeholders of the youth work community of practice<sup>2</sup>. Professional development as well as the framework conditions of youth work are still characterised by great diversity and different traditions in the European member States. Moreover, youth work in Europe continues to face various challenges regarding conceptual framework, competence, credibility, connections as well as the current COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges need to be addressed with joint forces.

The idea of a European Youth Work Agenda as a strategic framework for strengthening and developing youth work in Europe was first introduced in the final declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention in 2015<sup>3</sup>. The Council of Europe's Recommendation on youth work and Youth Sector Strategy 2030<sup>4</sup> as well as the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027)<sup>5</sup> took up this idea and called for a European Youth Work Agenda, including potential co-operation in this area between the two pivotal European institutions that have a significant focus on youth.

Commitment to the European Youth Work Agenda has now been included in the work programmes for the German EU Council Presidency (July 2020-December 2020) and the German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (November 2020-May 2021) by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The aim of the German Federal Youth Ministry is to use this momentum of the overlapping presidencies in both institutions to

create a framework for the whole youth work community of practice in Europe. This new framework has the potential for more co-ordinated developments in youth work and to meet the above-mentioned challenges in a more structured and strategic way. The European Youth Work Agenda will be characterised by a co-ordinated approach that engages stakeholders at different levels and in different areas of youth work. The Agenda demands convergence of political commitment, attention to the mosaic that is the youth work community of practice, including through its deliberations during the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention in December 2020, and the subsequent implementation process, which is termed Bonn Process<sup>6</sup>.

### Aim of this paper

The aim of this inspirational paper is to serve as a resource for the European Youth Work Agenda. It is intended to inform the content for different elements of the Agenda: the programme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention, the final declaration of the Convention, and the future national and European processes within the Bonn Process.

#### **The content of this inspirational paper builds on different resources:**

- Ideas for the content of the European Youth Work Agenda that were described in the final declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention
- Content of the political decisions on the development of youth work during the past five years as they are described in the political documents of the EU and the Council of Europe
- Content of the three main analytical papers that were developed during the preparation process for the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention<sup>7</sup>.
- Discussions around the COVID-19 pandemic and insights of different research initiatives on its impact on young people and youth work in Europe

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- Main outcomes and inspiring ideas arisen from discussions in meetings of the European Steering Group for the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention as well as discussions around the creation of the EU Council Resolution on the European Youth Work Agenda

The document can therefore be understood as a clustered compilation of ideas that have emerged from discussions, policy documents, debates and scientific analyses around the Council Resolution on the European Youth Work Agenda.

The paper is meant to serve as open invitation to inspire shaping the European Youth Work Agenda and its future implementation process by the hosts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention: the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and JUGEND für Europa – National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps in Germany.

## Contents of this paper

### What is the Agenda about?

Based on the achievements so far and the jointly identified challenges and needs, the European Youth Work Agenda is intended to be established as a strategic framework for further developing and strengthening youth work policies and practices, and shaping youth work development across Europe. To achieve this ambition, the Agenda addresses eight specific aims: one overall Agenda aim and seven specific Agenda aims.

In correspondence with these eight Agenda aims, the paper is structured along eight thematic strands.

1. Overall aim: Implementing the European Youth Work Agenda in the Bonn Process as a strategic framework for the development of youth work in Europe
2. Establishing youth work as an essential part of youth policies
3. Ensuring and expanding the provision of youth work

4. Strengthening the common ground of youth work through co-operation within and beyond the community of practice
5. Supporting the further development of quality youth work
6. Supporting the ability of youth work to tackle emerging challenges and innovate its practices
7. Enhancing the promotion and recognition of youth work
8. Ensuring a strong role for youth work in the ‘new normal’

This paper offers descriptions of each thematic strand, followed by several suggestions for fields of action and initial ideas for measures and activities. All strands build on a wealth of achievements, experience and good practice. All proposed fields of action as well as measures and activities build on what already exists to develop further what has been achieved and, in addition, to fill identified gaps. These are to be understood as starting points of how the Agenda could take off and get real. It is anticipated that these initial and inspirational ideas will be further developed, complemented and substantiated by the youth work community of practice prior to, during, and following on from the 3rd European Youth Work Convention.

The paper makes no claim to comprehensiveness, nor does it necessarily reflect every nuance of the perspectives that contributed to the content development of this paper.

### Thank you

The hosts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> EYWC would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this inspirational paper. Special thanks go to our European Steering Group. Their feedback, discussions and contributions were very valuable, helpful and inspiring for the preparation of this document.

It is hoped that the road ahead will be characterised by as much community spirit and inspiration as it has experienced so far. Thank you very much.

## 2. Thematic strands and inspiration for action



Strand 1:

### **Implementing the European Youth Work Agenda in the Bonn Process as a strategic framework for the development of youth work in Europe**

#### **Making it happen**

With the European Youth Work Agenda a new level of strategic joint action across Europe in the field of youth work is envisaged. The Agenda now needs to bed in as the Bonn Process, agreed through collaborative and complementary engagement of the two European institutions to support all stakeholders within the youth work community of practice to put their own activities and actions into a wider context. To that end, the Bonn Process needs to be acknowledged and developed under the umbrella of both the EU Youth Strategy and the Council of Europe 2030 Youth Sector

Strategy. It is under this umbrella that national, regional and local action planning for the delivery of and support for youth work can be progressed, drawing on advice and expertise from all segments of the youth work field. Which contributions and services can support this at European level, and which organisational arrangements need to be agreed both vertically and horizontally throughout the sector to make the Agenda happen?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1. Developing a framework for co-operation at European level between European Commission and Council of Europe for the implementation of the Agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased <b>co-operation between the Youth, Education and Erasmus+ Unit of the European Commission and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe</b> in the context of implementing the European Youth Work Agenda to promote the further development of youth work in line with its objectives</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<p><b>2. Integrating the implementation of the Agenda in the governance, strategies and measures of the EU Youth Strategy and the Council of Europe 2030 Youth Sector Strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures to integrate the <b>Agenda within the EU Youth Strategy and within the Council of Europe 2030 Youth Sector Strategy</b>, including a clear description of Agenda support services within governance</li> <li>Introducing a specific and traceable <b>Agenda focus within EU instruments</b>, including work plans for Youth, Future National Activities Planners (FNAPs), monitoring, reporting, evaluation instruments, and EU Youth Dialogue</li> <li>Introducing a specific Agenda focus within the strategies and activities of <b>Council of Europe instruments</b>, including the European Youth Foundation, the European Youth Centres, and the co-management system</li> <li><b>Mobilising funding</b> through EU youth programmes as well as the European Youth Foundation for funding structures for process implementation and professional support, funding of projects by beneficiaries and NAs</li> <li><b>Communicating the Agenda</b> by both European institutions and through youth information channels and networks, via platforms, events and support services</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Action planning</b> with strategies and measures at European level, in EU and in member States within the Bonn Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing and implementing <b>action planning at European level</b> and measures at European level that are already in place</li> <li>Developing and implementing <b>national action planning</b>, incl. national priorities as well as <b>national support services</b> for the Bonn Process</li> <li>Integrating space for <b>national as well as regional and local anchoring</b> within European planning and monitoring instruments</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Ensuring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and sectors of the youth work community of practice in the Bonn Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that the <b>Agenda is shaped by an inclusive approach</b> through establishing adequate measures for providing all relevant stakeholders with sufficient information, opportunities, space and equipment for this purpose</li> <li><b>Participation of young people</b> should be considered throughout the Bonn Process</li> <li>Establishing European and national <b>advisory groups</b> for the Bonn Process</li> <li>Consolidation of existing <b>platforms</b>, notably EYWC as regular flagship platform for review and future development of the Agenda</li> <li>Enhancing opportunities for <b>mutual learning and dissemination</b>, such as expert groups on specific youth work topics, specific peer learning activities, establishing a digital platform on youth work in Europe</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Establishing a co-ordinated approach for aligning the Agenda</b> within the Bonn Process, overall youth work development in Europe, and the development of specific issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a <b>network for youth work development in Europe</b> of relevant structures, which contributes effectively to the development of youth work by promoting innovative approaches, supporting the development and co-operation with and between different stakeholders inside and outside the youth work community of practice as well as delivering support and spreading information about the diverse thematic priorities, approaches, networks and target groups</li> <li>Establishing a <b>European advisory group</b> to support the Agenda by providing advice and expertise from the youth work community of practice</li> </ul>



Strand 2:

## Establishing youth work as an essential part of youth policies

### Creating new spaces

Youth work in many parts of Europe is now more in the spotlight and less in the shadows. Its value and visibility, however, remain fragile and fragmented in many places. The Bonn Process aims to support youth work in consolidating existing spaces for its practice and creating new spaces through strengthening its place within youth policy. There is growing recognition of youth work's positive contribution to

young people's lives, both as 'stand-alone' provision of non-formal education and learning opportunities and experiences, and as a collaborative contribution across the spectrum of youth policy domains and aspirations. How can this positive contribution be supported?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<p><b>1. Putting priority on the development of youth work</b> in Europe within the strategies and measures of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stimulating the <b>use of existing instruments by both European institutions</b></li><li>Implementing <b>measures and activities with a focus on youth work development</b> by stakeholders of the whole youth work community of practice at all levels</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
2. Establishing and further strengthening <b>youth work as a constituent element of youth policies</b> and/or youth policy frameworks in member States integrating all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing and (where already existing) further strengthening <b>youth work as a constituent element of youth policies/frameworks</b> at all levels (national, regional and local)</li> <li>Putting a special focus on the legislative basis of youth work and opportunities for its implementation at <b>local level</b></li> <li>Establishing an effective, durable, and user-friendly '<b>youth work policy</b>' monitor' in co-operation with youth work stakeholders to analyse and describe strategies, developments and practices of youth policies, building on existing monitoring mechanisms</li> <li>Developing legislative development processes <b>involving relevant stakeholders of the youth work community of practice in decision-making</b></li> <li>Strengthening tailored, effective <b>participation methods to guarantee that young people's voices</b> are heard on a structural basis in youth work policy processes</li> </ul>
3. Grounding youth work policy frameworks in <b>human rights</b> frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing youth work as an essential conceptual base for <b>protecting and promoting young people's rights</b> by advocacy for young people's rights and rights-based approaches as well as by provision of spaces for practicing and educating in human rights</li> </ul>
4. Stimulating the acquisition of academic and field-based knowledge to feed into <b>evidence-based youth work policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulating the <b>acquisition of academic and field-based knowledge</b>, including research projects, peer-learning measures, practical materials and documents to feed into evidence-based youth work policies</li> <li>Supporting a <b>youth work research agenda</b> addressing blind spots in knowledge on youth work and youth work policies</li> <li>Developing <b>measures for transfer</b> of acquired knowledge, results and recommendations to feed into policymaking processes</li> </ul>
5. Promoting and mainstreaming a <b>youth and youth work-friendly approach</b> across all relevant fields of governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of the <b>adoption of a 'youth check'</b> across all European legislation, regulations and grant mechanisms to raise awareness of their impact on youth through systematic screening of policies</li> <li>Ensuring within this youth-friendly approach that the <b>place of youth work</b> within public policies is considered</li> <li>Developing common approaches and exchange to proactively deal with <b>shrinking spaces for civil society</b></li> </ul>



### Strand 3: **Ensuring and expanding the provision of youth work**

#### Growing youth work

Heightened expectations from beyond youth work of the contribution it can make, and aspirations within the youth work community to reach greater numbers of young people, cannot be realised without investment. The Bonn Process needs to establish a baseline from which to advocate such growth. A basic youth work offer

should be available – and accessible – to all young people who request or desire it. What should this offer be and how can it be made accessible? How can framing conditions and sufficient human and financial resources be secured to approach this vision? And how can a European dimension inform and support it?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1. Implementing strategies and measures for providing the opportunity of an enriching youth work experience to every young person all over Europe, especially strengthening quantitative provision of quality youth work at local level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Establishing the principle of a basic youth work offer</b>, e.g. through supporting the diversity of existing grassroots and youth-led youth work practices</li><li>• Initiating a <b>mapping of accessible youth work offers</b> at different levels to identify gaps in the youth work offer, e.g. through municipalities and established NGOs</li><li>• <b>Expanding the provision of youth work</b> in areas where youth work does not yet exist, incl. developing framing conditions, a common understanding and core values</li></ul>
<b>2. Implementing strategies and measures for providing the opportunity of an enriching youth work experience to every young person all over Europe, especially through ensuring equal access to youth work for all young people in their diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steadily ensuring <b>equal access to youth work</b> for all young people in Europe by establishing a coherent and consistent youth work offer and implementing an inclusive approach that also strengthens youth work opportunities particularly for young people with fewer opportunities</li><li>• Strengthening <b>cross-sectoral co-operation</b> between youth work organisations and other areas (such as social work, health care, youth care, education, culture, employment, and sports)</li><li>• Supporting and recognising <b>innovative initiatives</b> that respond to young people's needs, especially when initiated by or for youth with limited access to established forms of youth work</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>3. Equipping the diverse youth work institutions and structures at all levels with secure and sustainable structures, sufficient <b>financial resources and framing conditions</b> to provide youth work to all young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing sufficient, structurally anchored, and long-term <b>secured financial resources</b> at all levels</li> <li>• Providing adequate <b>capacities and framing conditions</b>, notably sufficient human resources, premises, equipment and infrastructure, scope for realisation, decent working conditions for paid and volunteer youth workers</li> <li>• Developing a European <b>developmental goal for funding of youth work</b> by installing an expert group to analyse financial provision and generate a proposal stimulating a debate and approaching the goal at different levels</li> <li>• Strengthening <b>co-operation between youth work providers and national, regional or local authorities or European institutions</b> based on mutual respect, knowledge-based and supportive approaches, and the reduction and simplification of regulations</li> <li>• Improving <b>flexibility and accessibility of funding</b> for all forms of youth work, including support for the gradual, durable development of diverse youth work initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>4. Strengthening <b>European and international youth work</b> through enlarged European programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening <b>European and international youth work</b> by increased cross-border mobility, exchanges and engagement of young people, strategic European co-operation projects, knowledge-building and exchange of practice</li> <li>• Shaping and equipping the <b>EU youth programmes</b> as active instruments for the Bonn Process, especially by shaping the funding formats accordingly, involving the National Agencies, SALTO Resource Centres and their capacities</li> <li>• <b>Enlarging national, regional and local funds</b> for European and international youth work</li> </ul>



Strand 4:

## **Strengthening the common ground of youth work through co-operation within and beyond the community of practice**

### **Strengthening the community**

The 1<sup>st</sup> European Youth Work Convention celebrated the diversity of youth work. The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention confirmed its common ground. Further dialogue and communication, through exchange and mutual learning, is still needed, especially between the European, national and local levels of the youth work sector, and between youth policy, youth research and youth work practice. Coalitions with

other sectors can help connect the dots, which are relevant to young people's life-worlds. The Bonn Process opens up opportunities to establish platforms for knowledge transfer, spaces for reflection, and networks for co-operation. How can the common ground be supported and co-operation grow?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<p>1. Strengthening continuous forms of <b>co-operation and exchange</b> within the youth work community of practice across Europe for analysing, examining and discussing common approaches and of youth work development in Europe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Strengthening connections</b> within the youth work community of practice, both vertically (between European, national, regional and local levels) and horizontally (between different stakeholders)</li><li>• More specifically, establishing (and strengthening existing) mechanisms for <b>knowledge transfer, continuous forms of co-operation, exchange and peer-learning, spaces for reflective practice and networking</b></li><li>• Strengthening a <b>European dimension</b> within youth work practice at local, regional and national level and establishing durable links to European institutions</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
2. Establishing <b>platforms</b> for an interconnected and active youth work community of practice and for the exchange and co-operation on issues of importance both in young people's lives and with strategic dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating new or maintain established <b>platforms at all levels</b> for networking and co-operation as well as for crystallising and harvesting the development of creative dynamics</li> <li>Developing an open and multilingual dedicated <b>European digital platform on youth work</b> for the community of practice to share information, knowledge and good practices, engage in co-operation and peer-learning, including its external dimension, based on the involvement of and a joint process with the youth work community of practice as well as synergies and complementarity with existing platforms</li> </ul>
3. Establishing continuous forms of <b>cross-sectoral co-operation</b> between the youth work community of practice and other sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating and stimulating structural and strategic <b>cross-sectoral co-operation between youth work and all other sectors</b> that are relevant to young people's lives and in line with the priorities of specific segments of the youth work community of practice</li> </ul>



## Strand 5: **Supporting further development of quality youth work**

### **Collaborating for high quality**

Constant quality development within youth work remains a key task in light of growing aspirations and expectations. Human resources within youth work – of which the vast majority are volunteers – need to possess the competences for effective practice. Expectations of the contribution and impact of youth work have increased (and been claimed) in recent years. This requires an accessible and meaningful framework for training, continuous professional development and quality

assurance for the Bonn Process to shape and support. Establishing a coherent route for competence development in youth work is imperative. Non-formal education and learning through youth work will have to be contextualised in many ways – the young people involved, the particularities of the youth policy environment, and the country culture and history in which it takes place. What kind of measures can help to secure the provision of quality youth work in this respect?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1.</b> Further developing the <b>common ground of youth work</b> in Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Building knowledge of and exchanging</b> on the concept of youth work by building on previous European debates and the common ground achieved in several initiatives during the last years</li><li>• Taking further initiatives to further develop a common ground and common principles in youth work</li><li>• Strengthening <b>communication</b> about and awareness-raising of the common ground of youth work</li></ul>
<b>2.</b> Developing and implementing a <b>framework for quality youth work</b> development based on existing knowledge and practices, a common understanding and shared principles of quality youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further developing and implementing <b>quality systems, indicators and frameworks</b> on general quality development as well as on specific quality aspects</li><li>• <b>Informing and improving practice</b> by enlarged research and knowledge-building, by sharing and transferring knowledge, by promoting ways for the practical adaptation of existing quality youth work</li><li>• Further developing non-formal education and learning and the <b>recognition of youth work's value for learning</b></li><li>• Strengthening of <b>professional approaches in youth work practices</b> by strengthening learning of organisations and systems, the transfer of research and by cross-sectoral co-operation</li><li>• Strengthening and increasing <b>instruments for in-depth monitoring</b> of youth work in member States and at European level</li><li>• Further developing and implementing systems for continuous <b>quality assurance of youth work, especially at local level</b></li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
3. Strengthening practice, impact and future role of European youth work in promoting the <b>democratic values, active citizenship and solidarity</b> of young people in Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the development of <b>active, critical youth citizenship and democratic awareness</b> among youth as a permanent, essential task of youth work</li> <li>Further developing the concept of <b>solidarity</b> and enabling young people and other stakeholders of the youth work community of practice to experience solidarity and contribute to solidarity of communities and societies as a whole</li> <li>Creating an atmosphere in which <b>youth volunteerism</b> is stimulated at all policy levels and supporting transnational volunteering in European programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps</li> </ul>
4. Creating and implementing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for initial and continuous <b>education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a <b>framework for education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers</b>, by advancing professional qualification, concepts and programmes in member States, based on research</li> <li>Further developing and implementing <b>European education and training strategies and measures</b>, such as the European Training Strategy and the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio</li> <li><b>Transferring concepts and practices</b> of education and training from the European to other levels and vice versa through co-operation, exchange and peer-learning</li> <li><b>Supporting research</b> on the educational/training needs of paid and volunteer youth workers in Europe to feed into knowledge-based development and validation of education and training pathways</li> <li>Increasing the <b>attractiveness</b> of paid and volunteer youth work</li> </ul>
5. Further strengthening and developing co-ordinated and recognised <b>approaches and measures for trainers</b> and the training of trainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening co-operation with, competence development of, and <b>co-ordination and advocacy</b> of trainers</li> <li><b>Validation and recognition</b> of competences of youth work trainers, and further development of competence models</li> </ul>
6. Strengthening and increasing academic and practice-based <b>research on youth work</b> in Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing an academic and practice-based <b>research agenda on the entire youth work sector</b> in Europe, covering all forms of youth work and both volunteer and paid youth work, and feeding of gained knowledge into practice and policy</li> <li>Developing a <b>youth work academia</b> and strengthening of networking, exchange and reflective practice of youth work researchers</li> </ul>



Strand 6:

## **Supporting the ability of youth work to tackle emerging challenges and innovate its practices**

### **Boosting opportunities**

Youth work has always had to adapt to the wider social, political, economic and cultural (and now technological and ecological) contexts of young people's lives. Its principles and purpose may not change, but its practice needs to adapt and evolve. The Bonn Process should support research and analysis of young people's changing circumstances and the implications of its findings for youth work. There needs to be spaces and resources at different levels to support reflection on existing policy

and practice, and proposals for the development and implementation of innovative youth work practice in response to emerging challenges. This will need to deliberate on the role of youth work in relation to local, regional, national, European and, indeed, global contexts. How can the youth work community of practice turn these challenges into opportunities?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1.</b> Developing measures <b>to analyse and monitor trends</b> , developments and challenges relevant for and existing in youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Research and analysis</b> of trends and current challenges and needs from the perspective of young people, youth work, and societies in Europe and beyond</li><li>• <b>Interdisciplinary co-operation</b> between youth research, future/transition research and research of other sectors through measures such as cross-sectoral symposia or joint research</li></ul>
<b>2.</b> Supporting youth work in <b>innovating its practices</b> and in experimenting with new practices to respond to the needs of young people as well as to emerging trends, developments and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investment in regular youth work to provide <b>sufficient resources for innovative approaches</b> within their regular work contexts</li><li>• Implementing <b>advanced training opportunities</b> for youth workers and trainers on current topics and new methods, youth-led and trainers-led approaches</li><li>• Developing strategies and measures to <b>adapt practices to the needs of young people</b>, including support for the implementation of the Youth Goals</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>3. Supporting spaces, means and approaches for the exchange and strategic development</b> regarding trends, developments and challenges in youth work and on new and innovative policies, strategies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spaces and resources at different levels to support reflection</b> and proposals for the development and implementation of innovative youth work practice</li> <li>• Enlarging <b>innovation-focused funding opportunities</b> within European and national funding programmes</li> </ul>
<b>4. Strengthening strategic development, approaches and measures for youth work to face European as well as world-wide transformations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening spaces for reflective practice, research, cross-sectoral dialogue and practical measures to support reflection on the role and scope for realisation, so that youth work is equipped and ready to face European and global <b>transformations, including digital and ecological transitions</b></li> <li>• Strengthening <b>education</b> in thematic relation to upcoming transformations within youth work, including transfer of experience between different segments of youth work, co-operation with youth activism, informal groups and movements</li> <li>• Reflecting on the role of <b>youth work in a global context</b></li> </ul>



Strand 7:

## Enhancing the promotion and recognition of youth work

### Promoting youth work

Communicating the value, process, outcomes, impact, and benefits of youth work remains a central task for youth work. There have been repeated calls and claims for self-, professional, social and political recognition of youth work, but this has often fallen on stony ground. It is contingent upon youth work to garner evidence and to tell the story. Benefits arise from both experience and delivery of youth work. For young people and those who provide youth work as unpaid volunteers, there is a

need to develop plausible instruments for the recognition, validation and advocacy of the competences acquired. Messaging about the value of youth work needs to be agreed across the sector but made more visible and comprehensible for the different audiences – public authorities, funders, sponsors, partners, and peers – in different ways. How can different stakeholders in the sector contribute to such a narrative?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1.</b> Developing and implementing strategies and measures for the <b>promotion and recognition of youth work</b> at European level and in member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing and implementing strategies and measures for <b>promoting and recognising youth work</b>, including exploring opportunities to boost recognition of youth work's value through cross-sectoral co-operation</li><li>Strengthening the <b>recognition of education and training pathways of youth workers</b> through co-operation with the educational sector</li></ul>
<b>2.</b> Further developing and implementing strategies and instruments for the <b>recognition and validation of non-formal education and learning</b> in youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing measures to support the <b>awareness, recognition and validation of the competences</b> acquired through the experience of youth work</li><li>Developing <b>measures</b>, such as knowledge building about learning in youth work, capacity building, exchange and co-operation</li><li>Developing measures to support the <b>awareness, recognition and validation of the competences</b> acquired through the provision of youth work, including recognition and accreditation of competences acquired as volunteer youth workers, prior to or beyond formal education and training</li><li>Developing measures to <b>recognise quality approaches</b> to recognition, such as a quality label</li><li>Focusing on <b>complementarity of initiatives and strategies</b> at member State level with European strategies, such as Youthpass</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>3. Promoting the relevance and importance of youth work and its positive contribution in all member States to empowering and engaging young people in developing inclusive, democratic, sustainable and peaceful societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening <b>advocacy strategies for youth work</b>, enlarging training and materials for youth workers and enhancing formats and opportunities for advocacy</li> <li>• Strengthening the role of youth work to support <b>young people to advocate</b> for their own interests and to advocate for them</li> </ul>
<b>4. Supporting the youth work sector in making its value, needs, output, outcomes, impact, and benefits more visible and comprehensible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and analysis of the <b>social and individual impact of youth work</b> with the aim of improving general understanding of the impact of youth work on different levels, actors and domains</li> <li>• Supporting the youth work sector in finding different formats and mechanisms to <b>communicate a common message</b> to different audiences, interest groups or constituencies to raise awareness of the value of youth work</li> </ul>



## Strand 8:

### Ensuring a strong role for youth work in the new normal

#### Getting crisis-savvy

The COVID-19 pandemic has both focussed attention on young people and, certainly in some settings and in relation to some segments of the youth work community of practice, put the delivery of youth work in jeopardy. Elsewhere, however, youth work has rapidly enhanced its capacity to develop and deliver digital youth work in a context, in which young people's mental health, learning opportunities, employment prospects and social life have become characterised by uncertainty and

precariousness. Whatever the so-called 'new normal' holds for young people, youth work will need to continue to respond with a relevant and meaningful offer in relation to supporting participation, ensuring young people's voices are heard, addressing vulnerabilities, advocating with and for young people, and involving young people in purposeful opportunities and experiences. How can the Bonn Process help ensure that youth work is appropriately equipped to fulfil these tasks?

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
<b>1.</b> Ensuring - in view of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic - the <b>existence and functioning</b> of the diverse youth work institutions and structures at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing and implementing a recovery plan and measures for youth work in Europe, especially for international and European youth work</li><li>Ensuring the existence and functioning of youth work through appropriate mechanisms and financial resources, including <b>access to adequate public support programmes</b> in periods of crisis</li><li>Establishing <b>sustained structural support</b> to reduce the fragility of project-based funding mechanisms</li></ul>
<b>2.</b> Further developing the youth work sector's capability of moving forward with <b>digital and technological innovations</b> through financial resources, adequate infrastructure and qualification of youth workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supporting further research, peer-learning activities and exchange about the (financial) <b>value and benefit of digital and smart youth work</b> among the youth work community of practice</li><li>Further developing strategies on digital youth work based on political decisions, achievements and experiences throughout Europe and developing national <b>strategies, measures and support services</b></li><li>Recognising that <b>quality digital youth work</b> needs adequate financial resources and adapting funding guidelines of European and other funding instruments accordingly</li><li>Supporting further research, peer learning activities and exchange about <b>meaningful ways of combining physical and digital youth work</b> by taking into consideration the experiences from the lockdown</li><li>Ensuring an <b>adequate infrastructure</b> (hardware, software, digital infrastructure) for youth work institutions, organisations and their staff as a basis for digital and smart youth work</li><li>Ensuring broad opportunities for the <b>qualification</b> of youth workers in the field of digital and smart youth work</li></ul>

Possible fields of action	First ideas for measures and activities
3. Ensuring – in view of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic – <b>equal access to youth work</b> in the new normal for all young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paying attention to the <b>digital divide and limited opportunities</b> to access digital youth work for some young people and introducing measures to overcome these inequalities</li> </ul>
4. Strengthening strategic development, approaches and measures of youth work to face the <b>impact of and societal transitions following the COVID-19 pandemic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting youth work in its advocacy role for young people towards a <b>youth-friendly and sustainable society</b></li> <li><b>Supporting a meaningful participation of young people</b> in short-term crisis measures and in long-term recovery responses at all levels to raise the awareness of the intergenerational solidarity component</li> <li><b>Strengthening the voice of young people</b> towards a youth-friendly and sustainable post-crisis societal transformation by building on the <b>Youth Goals</b> as well as on youth representation, including the European Youth Forum and national youth councils</li> </ul>
5. Strengthening the <b>role of youth work in the new normal</b> by keeping up the values of youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiating and creating opportunities for common reflections among the youth work community of practice on the <b>role of youth work in the new normal</b></li> <li>Ensuring support for <b>adapted practices of youth work provision</b> in the new normal</li> <li>Strengthening <b>social cohesion and solidarity</b> as values of youth work and thus promoting the impact of youth work on post-crisis society as a whole</li> <li>Emphasising the <b>special consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people</b> and their personal and professional development and developing an appropriate range of support</li> <li>Paying particular attention to young people in periods of transition and those who face intersectional and other <b>vulnerabilities</b> as well as to young people's <b>mental health and well-being</b></li> </ul>
6. Investing in <b>crisis-resilience</b> of youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing measures to <b>prepare and prevent for future crises</b>, including investing in and strengthening youth work's capacity and capability at all levels to respond to new emerging crises</li> </ul>

## At a glance

This graphic illustrates the indicative themes within each of the eight thematic strands. The illustration serves – as much as the whole paper – to inspire consideration and thought, and is not exhaustive.



## Endnotes

- 1 This text builds on the common understanding of youth work as described in the Council of Europe's Recommendation on youth work by all involved member States across Europe: 'Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision-making.' [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on youth work](#).
- 2 In the field of youth work, the youth work community of practice should be understood as a group of people, professional or volunteer, who share the same interests in resolving an issue, improving their skills, and learning from each other's experiences. The youth work community of practice comprises stakeholders from local to European level, 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 in Action and European Solidarity Corps, the European Youth Foundation, youth representations and young people and policy-makers for youth. All the actors in the youth work community of practice have different mandates, roles and capacities for the further development of youth work.
- 3 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-website-declaration>
- 4 [Resolution CM/Res\(2020\)2 on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030](#)
- 5 The [European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#)
- 6 [Factsheet on the European Youth Work Agenda](#)
- 7 Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll, Marit Pelzer, Stephanie Riedle, Andreas Rottach: The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020; Howard Williamson: Cornerstone Challenges for European Youth Work and Youth Work in Europe. Making the Connections and Bridging the Gaps; Nik Paddison and JUGEND für Europa: Ongoing Developments within the European Youth Work Community of Practice. All three are available at [www.eywc2020.eu/en/convention/resources](http://www.eywc2020.eu/en/convention/resources)