

Recognition of youth work and of non-formal and informal learning within youth work

Current European developments

April 2016

Contents:

Policy developments	4
A.1. EU Skills Agenda	4
A.2. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the role of youth work.....	4
A.3. EU Youth Report.....	4
A.4. Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people.....	5
A.5. Policy Paper on Youth Work of the European Youth Forum	5
A.6. The Erasmus+ programme	5
A.7. Recommendation of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly ‘Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge’	6
A.8. Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people	7
A.9. Recommendation of the Council on the validation of non-formal and informal learning	7
A.10. Rethinking education.....	8
A.11. Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe.....	8
A.12. The EU Youth Strategy– Investing and Empowering	9
A.13. EU Agenda 2020, Youth on the Move.....	9
A.14. Resolution of the Council on Youth Work.....	10
Tools for recognition of non-formal and informal learning	11
B.1. The ETS Competence Models for trainers and youth workers working at international level	11
B.2. The revised European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers.....	11
B.3. Youthpass.....	12
B.4. Learning Badges.....	12
B.5. The Mapping of recognition tools – Visible Value.....	12
B.6. The Compendium of testimonies on the impact of youth work	12
B.7. Europass portfolio.....	13
Recent studies.....	13
C.1. Eurobarometer survey on European youth	13
C.2. The updated European Inventory on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2014); the European Guidelines for Validation (2015)	13
C.3. Study on the value of youth work	14
C.4. Mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for employability of young people	14
C.5. Youthpass Impact Study.....	14

Overview of recognition developments, April 2016

C.6. Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action (RAY).....	15
C.7. Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth exchanges	15
C.8. Research Study on the Impact of Non-Formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability.....	15
Stakeholder events	16
D.1. The 2 nd European Convention on Youth Work	16
D.2. 'Mind the Gap'.....	16
D.3. European symposium for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning.....	17
Other developments	17
E.1. Quality assurance of non-formal learning in youth organisations.....	17
E.2. European and National Qualifications Frameworks.....	18
E.3. European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO).....	18
E.4. Key competences for lifelong learning	18

Policy developments

A.1. EU Skills Agenda (upcoming)

The European Commission is preparing to launch an EU Skills Agenda, to invite all Member States and stakeholders to join efforts and focus action on three main priorities: ensuring higher and more relevant skills for all, promoting better visibility and use of available skills (including also the recognition and validation of competences gained in informal and non-formal contexts), and reaching a better understanding of the skills needs and trends in the labour market.

A.2. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the role of youth work (the title is still to be found; upcoming)

A Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Member States is being prepared, which would reflect on and highlight the importance and role of youth work in implementing youth policy. In December 2015, a consultative meeting took place that gathered a number of stakeholders to discuss the focus of the planned recommendation. The recommendation is expected to be strongly based on the suggestions outlined in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. It is expected to be presented to the Committee of Ministers at the beginning of 2017.

A.3. EU Youth Report (2015)

The [EU Youth Report](#), published in September 2015, presents a picture of the situation of young people in Europe and how policymakers in EU and in the Member States have addressed it in the period 2013-2015. It refers to the generally high education levels of young people today, but describes also the growing division between those who study and engage themselves in social, civic and cultural life, and the young people who are at risk of increasing exclusion and marginalisation. The priorities for the next cycle (2016-2018) of the EU youth cooperation include:

- increased social inclusion of all young people, especially those at risk such as NEETs and young people with migrant background;
- stronger participation of all young people, in particular those at risk of marginalisation;
- easier integration into the labour market for all young people, with a special focus on the long-term unemployed and those in transition from education to work.

A.4. Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people (2015)

These [Council conclusions](#) identify the following priorities with a view to enhancing cross-sectorial youth policy: 1) Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic approach towards cross-sectorial youth policy; 2) Use tailor made cross-sectorial approaches to projects, initiatives and programmes addressing socio-economic challenges faced by young people; and 3) Strengthen the visibility of the value of youth work and the other tools of youth policy, and their complementary role in effectively addressing the challenges of young people. The last point also invites the Commission and the Member States to further advance the recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning, inviting them to promote recognition tools like Youthpass, to mainstream Youthpass in youth work contexts outside the Erasmus+ programme, and to promote and recognise the (learning) value of youth work and of volunteering.

A.5. Policy Paper on Youth Work of the European Youth Forum (2014)

Through the [Policy Paper on Youth Work](#), the European Youth Forum (YFJ) aims to outline more clearly its understanding of youth work. It also looks at what is the role of the Youth Forum and what actions they should take in this area. Furthermore, it aims to foster political action by other stakeholders in the field, especially institutional actors, towards creating an environment where youth work is nurtured and promoted.

Youth work has a strong link with non-formal education (NFE), since most of the members use NFE when conducting youth work activities. There are many stakeholders involved in the provision of youth work, and various forms of being involved in youth work. The paper also highlights that youth work has a positive impact on our society and on the individual, and its purpose is to build empowered young individuals that actively contribute to our society. Through this paper the Forum wants to spark a debate about the necessity of the youth sector as a whole to become stronger at advocating for its own agenda, the agenda of the young people they work with, visions for society, and the importance of youth work in any healthy democracy.

A.6. The Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020)

The [Erasmus+](#) programme (2014-2020) brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training and Youth; it also provides support for Sport. Erasmus+ aims at boosting skills and employability, and modernising education, training and youth work. The seven year programme has a budget of €14.7 billion and provides opportunities to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad. In addition to providing grants

for individuals, Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among education, training and youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps in Europe. Erasmus+ also supports national efforts to modernise education, training and youth systems.

The European Training Strategy (2015)

The [European Training Strategy](#) (ETS) of Youth in Action built a frame for the more effective realisation of training activities in the Youth in Action. In April 2015, the Programme Committee welcomed the continuation of the ETS under the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme. Among the concrete tools elaborated as part of the strategy, competence profiles for youth workers and trainers have been developed. The [ETS competence model of trainers](#) was finalised in 2014; the [competence model for youth workers](#) will be published in 2016 (more about the models in section B.1). Also, a compilation of experiences made with the cooperation of formal and non-formal education sector, [Reinforcing Links](#) was published in November 2013.

Youthpass

Also Youthpass is to be seen as a strategy of recognition of non-formal learning within Erasmus+ Youth in Action, with an aim to raise awareness and support a professional public debate concerning the individual, social, formal, and political dimensions of recognition. In 2013, the [Youthpass Impact Study](#) was completed that described the experiences and the impact of Youthpass made in the first years. More information about Youthpass can be read in section B6.

The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (2014)

The Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the field of Youth describes support features in Erasmus+ for inclusion and diversity, and the action that different stakeholders are expected to take in order to create a strategic approach, to reach out to the necessary target groups, to offer systematic and tailor-made support, and to document and share the inclusion and diversity projects of the Erasmus+ programme.

A.7. Recommendation of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly 'Young Europeans: an urgent educational challenge' (2013)

The [recommendation](#) adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly was based on a [report](#) of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media on the urgent need to rethink education taking into account the current needs and challenges. The report asks Member States to adopt a comprehensive approach to education and take action to set the right policy frameworks, create new learning opportunities and enhance the existing ones, ensuring inclusion and getting more young people engaged in their own learning and

development. The report calls for specific measures to be taken at European level, in particular to improve access to education for young people from disadvantaged groups, as well as to encourage non-formal education and ensure greater recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning, building on the proposals put forward by the *Strasbourg Process*.

A.8. Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (2013)

In this set of [conclusions](#) the following priorities have been identified: a) Promote the complementary position of youth work in the continuum of education and lifelong learning; b) closer collaboration and knowledge exchange between the policy, research, practice and youth communities; c) Promote mechanisms to ensure that youth work is quality-based, outcomes-focused and evidence-informed; d) Develop supportive quality frameworks, including assessment tools, for use in youth work; e) ensure that youth work initiatives (provision and practice) are informed by the voice and aspirations of young people. And last but not least, f) determine and recognise the personal, social and professional skills and competences deriving from the young people's participation in youth work to make visible the impact of youth work to related policy areas and practice disciplines. The Council invites the Commission and the Member States, among other actions, to promote, through quality youth work opportunities and programmes, experiential learning and skills development, including transferable skills for young people, and the recognition and validation of such skills and competences.

As a follow-up of the Conclusions, a thematic expert group was established to examine youth work quality systems in EU Member States. The report of the expert group, [Quality Youth Work. A common framework for the further development of youth work](#) (published in 2015) discusses the concept of quality in youth work; it explores indicators, what they are and how they could function as a basis for quality development; and describes quality tools and systems as means to gather and manage knowledge on how reality relates to indicators.

A.9. Recommendation of the Council on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012)

On November 26, 2012, the Council of the EU adopted a [Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#), based on the European Commission's [proposal](#). The adopted Recommendation invites Member States to establish a national system of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes by 2018. The system would provide the opportunity for citizens to have their skills, knowledge and competences

validated, and to obtain a full or a partial qualification on the basis of these validated learning outcomes.

The system should be connected to the [National Qualifications Frameworks](#) and create synergies between the existing European frameworks for recognition of non-formal and informal learning. One of the guiding principles outlined in the recommendation proposes that *the use of Union transparency tools, such as Europass and Youthpass, should be promoted.*

A.10. Rethinking education (2012)

The European Commission launched a strategy called [Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes](#), to encourage Member States to take immediate action to ensure that young people develop the skills and competences needed by the labour market and to achieve their targets for growth and jobs. The emphasis of the strategy is on the knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired by students (learning outcomes) through the learning process, rather than on completing a specific stage or on time spent in school.

A.11. Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe (2010)

The document [Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe](#) is a working paper of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, produced in collaboration with SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and the European Youth Forum.

The previous paper, which had been released in 2004, served as a basis for important developments concerning the recognition of learning experiences within the youth sector in the past years (Youthpass, Portfolio, Bridges for Recognition, etc.). The second Pathways paper encourages the consolidation of the existing developments and proposes, in this context, ten recommendations for action:

- Develop a common understanding and a joint strategy in the youth field and improve co-operation and communication
- Visibility of the particular role of youth organisations
- Assure quality and training in non-formal education/learning
- Increasing knowledge about non-formal education/learning in youth work
- Develop existing tools further and make them accessible and transferable
- Reinforcement of political processes on the European level
- Link youth to the lifelong learning strategy and vice versa
- Involve stakeholders of the employment sector

- Associating the social sector
- Cooperate with other policy fields and with stakeholders of civil society

The Pathways 2.0 paper has inspired a European process, the so-called Strasbourg Process, steered by the Expert Group on Recognition, to enhance further developments around recognition (e.g. the [symposium on recognition](#)).

A.12. The EU Youth Strategy– Investing and Empowering (2010-2018)

The [EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering \(2010-2018\)](#) has two main objectives:

- To provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market
- To encourage young people to actively participate in society.

With the strategy, the EU Member States set for themselves and for the European Commission, among others, the following objectives connected to recognition issues:

- Complementary to formal education, non-formal education for young people should be supported to contribute to Lifelong Learning in Europe, by developing its quality, recognising its outcomes, and integrating it better with formal education;
- Support youth volunteering, by developing more voluntary opportunities for young people, making it easier to volunteer by removing obstacles, raising awareness on the value of volunteering, recognising volunteering as an important form of non-formal education and reinforcing cross-border mobility of young volunteers;
- Youth work should be supported, recognised for its economic and social contribution, and professionalised.

A.13. EU Agenda 2020, Youth on the Move (2010 and beyond)

Within the [Communication from the Commission, COM \(2010\) 477](#) and here in particular within the [Youth on the Move](#) flagship initiative of the [EU Agenda 2020](#), the European Commission aims "... to expand career and life-enhancing learning opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities and/or at risk of social exclusion. In particular, these young people should benefit from the expansion of opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and from strengthened provisions for the recognition and validation of such learning within national qualifications frameworks". The key actions are:

- Propose a draft Council Recommendation on the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- Develop a Youth on the Move card to facilitate mobility for all young people (i.e. students, pupils, apprentices, trainees, researchers and volunteers).

- Propose a European Skills Passport, based on existing elements of Europass, to record in a transparent and comparable way the competences acquired by people throughout their lives in a variety of learning settings.

The Council Recommendation from June 28, 2011: "[Youth on the move – promoting the learning mobility of young people](#)" encourages the Member States to use the full potential of the existing EU and Bologna instruments to facilitate mobility, including Europass and Youthpass. The proposal recommends that Member States:

- Promote the implementation and use of EU instruments which facilitate the transfer and validation of the learning outcomes of mobility experiences between Member States. These instruments should also be better publicised, especially among employers.
- Improve procedures and guidelines for the validation and recognition of both informal and non-formal learning in order to facilitate more mobility, for example in voluntary activities and youth work.
- Address the issue of validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences (such as foreign language skills) acquired during mobility periods abroad.
- Establish visible contact points where individuals can have their qualifications recognised and certified after their return from abroad.

A.14. Resolution of the Council on Youth Work (2010)

[The resolution](#) sets forward a broad definition of youth work, and among other suggestions, declares that competences developed through youth work need to be sufficiently valued and effectively recognised. It invites the Commission to enhance the quality of youth work, the capacity and competence development of youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work. It also invites to develop and support the development of user-friendly European tools for independent assessment and self-assessment, as well as instruments for the documentation of competences of youth workers and youth leaders, which would help to recognise and evaluate the quality of youth work in Europe.

Tools for recognition of non-formal and informal learning

B.1. The ETS Competence Models for trainers and youth workers working at international level

The [Competence Model for Trainers](#) was developed under the European Training Strategy of Youth in Action (2007-2013), with the aim to support trainers in the development of their competences, organisers of training courses for trainers in the design of their training offers, and organisers of training activities in general in the development of the competences of their trainers or even trainer pools. The ETS Competence Model defines 6 competence areas for trainers working at international level: 1) Understand and facilitate individual and group learning processes; 2) Learning to learn; 3) Design educational programmes; 4) Cooperate successfully in teams; 5) Communicate meaningfully with others; and 6) Intercultural competence.

The ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally focuses on the demands to integrate European issues into daily work life of youth workers, specifically to work in international teams and to support young people in international learning mobility projects. The competence model should therefore inspire and provide organisers of training of/for youth workers with a reference on what areas of competences to focus on when designing the curricula for such trainings – with a specific focus on the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. This competence model supports also youth workers in assessing their own competences to identify needs for further development. A draft model will be introduced on the international Expert Meeting in Vienna on April 18-21; it is expected to be published in the middle of 2016.

B.2. The revised European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers

The revised [Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio](#) has been launched during the 2nd Youth Work Convention, in April 2015. It is a tool that aims at helping youth workers, youth leaders and youth organisations across Europe to understand their youth work competence and to develop it more effectively. They can use this tool in their practice to identify, assess and record their competences, and to set further learning and development goals. The tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and youth policy experts, and generally by all those interested in the topic of quality development and the recognition of youth work. The online portfolio includes a self-assessment tool and a learning plan for individual youth workers or youth leaders, teams and organisations doing youth work.

B.3. Youthpass

[Youthpass](#) is the Europe-wide instrument to document the learning experience and outcomes of the projects of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. It aims at fostering the recognition of the non-formal learning outcomes gained in the projects. An essential part of the concept is the reflection upon the personal learning process. In December 2015, the threshold of 500,000 Youthpass certificates has been reached. The multilingual certificates are issued to the participants of various projects supported by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (and previously by the Youth in Action Programme), on the website which is available in 25 languages. The first steps of mainstreaming Youthpass as a national recognition tool have been undertaken in Estonia and Latvia.

B.4. Learning Badges

The Learning Badges are built on the [Mozilla Open Badges](#) Infrastructure - the online standard to recognise and verify learning that happens anywhere and can be shared further in the places that matter. In the recent years, Learning Badges have been developed for and increasingly experimented in the context of youth projects and training activities. Learning Badges help to support young people in their learning process, to encourage reflection in a playful way and make the process of self-assessment easy and exciting.

B.5. The Mapping of recognition tools – Visible Value

This [Mapping](#) was carried out in 2014 by two experts of the EU-CoE youth partnership. It consists of a collection of the existing recognition tools and practices, gathered through an open call for contributions and selected for presentation in the current version of the Mapping available online. The main aim of the Mapping is to contribute to the promotion of youth work, as well to share, transfer and multiply well-tested approaches and inspire further initiatives towards recognition at local, national and European level. It is to be seen as an informative and inspiring collection of current and/or recently developed tools and practices. It is the hope and intention of the EU-CoE youth partnership that the Mapping will be regularly updated and become a growing collection of tools, kept up-to-date together with the field of practice.

B.6. The Compendium of testimonies on the impact of youth work

The [Compendium 'how youth work changed my life?'](#) is a compilation of individual stories about the impact of youth work on young people's lives, whether these are from a local community youth centre, a national event/activity or on a European/international level. The initiative was carried out in 2014 by two experts of the EU-CoE youth partnership. The

Compendium currently includes 26 stories but it is the hope and intention of the EU-CoE youth partnership that the Compendium will keep on growing and be regularly updated.

B.7. Europass portfolio

The newest instrument in the Europass portfolio, [European Skills Passport](#), designed by the European Commission in partnership with CEDEFOP and launched in December 2012, is an electronic portfolio which allows giving a comprehensive picture of the skills and qualifications that can complete a Europass CV. A change in the legal basis for Europass is foreseen, to allow more flexible developments in the framework.

Recent studies

C.1. Eurobarometer survey on European youth (2015)

The Eurobarometer survey on young people reveals decreasing involvement in out-of-school activities. Commissioned by the European Commission, the survey [Eurobarometer survey on European youth](#) included questions on democratic participation, participation in activities of various organisations, in volunteering, in culture and on employment perspectives for young people who are still pupils or students.

C.2. The updated European Inventory on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2014); the European Guidelines for Validation (2015)

Since 2004, the [European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning](#) offers, in regular intervals, an overview of the instruments and methods for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning within the European Member States and beyond. Until recently, the policies focused predominantly on the areas of general and vocational training. Since 2007, the third sector is being increasingly taken into account. The youth sector has received particular attention through the [case study of Youthpass](#) that has been included in the inventory in 2010.

The [2014 inventory update](#) closely reflects the European Guidelines on validation. It includes 36 reports from 33 countries, eight in-depth thematic reports, two case studies and a synthesis report of main findings. The reports present information up to January 2014. A light update of the European Inventory is currently in preparation, it will include 5 thematic reports. It should be completed by the end of 2016.

The [European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning](#) are written for individuals and institutions responsible for the initiation, development, implementation and operation of validation arrangements. The ambition of the guidelines is to clarify the conditions for implementation, highlighting the critical choices to be made by stakeholders at different stages of the process. The updated guidelines, referring to the Recommendation on Validation from 2012, were published at the end of 2015.

C.3. Study on the value of youth work (2014)

The European Commission's study [Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union](#) considers among other issues non-formal learning in youth work. It aims to improve our understanding of the socio-economic relevance and the visibility of the youth work sector in the EU. The study identifies how youth work contributes to achieving EU objectives in the fields of economic or social development (e.g. Social Agenda, Europe 2020 Strategy) and provides evidence and selected case studies of national, regional and local realities of youth work in the 27 EU Member States.

C.4. Mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for employability of young people (2014)

This [Mapping Study](#) has been developed for Serbia with the aim to serve as a basis towards the development of a tool for recognition of competences gained through non-formal education/learning in the youth field, currently under development in cooperation with other relevant actors, e.g. employers, government representatives and educators. One of the objectives of the study is to inform and inspire the national recognition process in Serbia. The Mapping was carried out by NAPOR in partnership with the Serbian Ministry of youth and sport, USAID-SLDP Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit and is based on the analysis of a series of national and European tools supporting the recognition of non-formal learning/education and/in youth work. It is complemented by a Research study "Impact of non-formal education in youth work on acquiring young people's competencies for employability" (the research is in Serbian only).

C.5. Youthpass Impact Study (2013)

The European Commission has implemented a study to investigate and highlight the impact made with Youthpass as a tool, process and strategy. The study particularly examined the impact on participants' learning process, on the description and documentation of competences gained, on the link to employability and on the role of youth work and non-formal learning. The [study](#), released in summer 2013, explores the impact on different levels through both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

C.6. Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action (RAY)

Research-based analysis and monitoring of Youth in Action Programme (YiA) aims at producing reliable and valid documentation and understanding of processes and outcomes of the programme and of the activities supported through the programme.

Main objectives of RAY are:

- To contribute to quality assurance and development in the implementation of the programme;
- To contribute to evidence-based and research-informed youth policy development;
- To develop a better understanding about processes and outcomes of non-formal education activities, in particular in the youth field.

In 2014, the policy brief Main Research Findings of RAY was published that provides an overview of "Research-based analysis and monitoring of Youth in Action" (RAY), in particular of the RAY Network and its aims and objectives, the research approach and the main findings of research activities between 2009 and 2013.

C.7. Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth exchanges (2012)

The Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges (full report and executive summary) focuses on learning mobility in mobility schemes outside the European programmes (LLP and Youth in Action), both outbound and inbound mobility, mainly with the countries participating in the above mentioned programmes. The study also describes recognition practices in these mobility programmes, as well as in what regards it is understood as a pedagogical tool.

C.8. Research Study on the Impact of Non-Formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability (2012)

Through desk research, consultation with youth organisations, a survey with young people, and focus groups with employers from across Europe, this research ordered by the European Youth Forum assesses whether the competences and skills obtained through non-formal education in youth organisations contribute to the employability of young people. It concludes that long-lasting and frequent engagement and participation in youth organisations contributes to the noteworthy development of the so-called soft skills. Amongst the six skills mostly demanded by employers, five are also among those developed through involvement in youth organisations: such as communication, team work, decision-making, organisational skills, and self-confidence. For young people who participated in non-formal education activities abroad, this includes also higher development of language, intercultural and leadership skills.

Stakeholder events

D.1. The 2nd European Convention on Youth Work (2015)

The [European Youth Work Convention 2015](#) was one of the flagship initiatives of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. It looked at developments in youth work policy and practice since the 1st Convention, which took place in Ghent in 2010 in the framework of the Belgian EU Presidency. The 2nd European Youth Work Convention aimed at finding 'common ground' within the diversity of youth work practice by tackling seven different themes. The themes that served as basis for the convention were elaborated by Howard Williamson in the background paper '[Finding common ground: Mapping and scanning the horizons for European youth work in the 21st century - Towards the 2nd European Youth Work Convention](#)'.

The convention brought together about 500 policymakers, researchers and practitioners to debate challenges facing youth work at local, national and European level. The convention culminated with a [Declaration 'Making a world of difference'](#) that aimed at providing guidance for a new European agenda on youth and feed into an expected political Recommendation by the Council of Europe. The final declaration was also supported by an [animated movie](#).

D.2. 'Mind the Gap' (2014)

The [Conference "Mind the gap!" – Connecting youth work and the employment-related sector by valuing and developing mutual understanding of skills and competences](#) brought together youth workers and people from the employment-related sector (e.g. HR and business people, guidance and public employment services) in order to enhance the mutual understanding about the competences gained in youth work and sought in the labour market; to discuss the different competence assessment/recognition tools; and to develop ways of cooperating together.

The conference was organised by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre in cooperation with the Turkish National Agency for Erasmus+ and a few others, and gathered about 120 participants from both fields, coming from more than 16 countries all over Europe and beyond. As a follow-up of the conference a publication on the cooperation between the youth and business sectors is currently being prepared.

D.3. European symposium for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning (2011)

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe within the youth field, in cooperation with SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and the German National Agency for Youth in Action, carried out a symposium for recognition of youth work and non-formal learning. The symposium took place Nov 14-16, 2011, in Strasbourg. It brought together key actors on the European level and fostered a discussion on the recommendations for action of the *Pathways Paper 2.0*.

As a result of the symposium, a [Statement and a draft Plan of Action](#) were agreed upon and published on behalf of the participants. The Statement describes 7 main challenges for recognition in Europe: 1) the challenge of making the concept of 'youth work and non-formal learning/education' better understood; 2) of keeping all dimensions of recognition in balance; 3) risking formalisation of non-formal learning/education; 4) assuring quality in youth work and in non-formal learning/education; 5) maintaining and cultivating diversity; 6) building knowledge; 7) being dependent from different other sectors; and 8) the challenge of creating partnerships. It also provides recommendations for developments on different levels to deal with the challenges.

The document includes an even more concrete Plan of Action as an annex to the statement. Since the Symposium, the Plan of Action has been revised and updated by the *Expert group on recognition of youth work and non-formal learning*, which meets twice a year and is in charge to follow up recognition related developments and monitor the implementation of the various actions and initiatives proposed in the Plan of Action. The publication with the revised Plan of Action is called [Getting There](#).

Other developments

E.1. Quality assurance of non-formal learning in youth organisations

The European Youth Forum has developed a framework for quality assurance of non-formal education. To review performance and results within youth work, 11 quality indicators have been set up that should be reflected on within each organisation during a first internal step, followed by an external (peer review) step. In 2011, the [Network on Quality Assurance in Non-Formal Education](#) was officially launched during a European Youth Forum's conference on the subject. The network aims to increase the quality of Non-Formal Education in Europe and increase the recognition of this quality by supporting the members in assuring the

quality of their educational work, while increasing the understanding of it by other actors in society. The network works on three strands: expertise, capacity building and policy.

E.2. European and National Qualifications Frameworks

The core of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) concerns eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – the learning outcomes, including those acquired from the non-formal and informal contexts. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8). This linking will enable learners and employers to compare the levels of qualifications awarded at home and in other countries.

On the [EQF website](#), relevant documents including national reports can be downloaded, as well as NQF levels of different countries compared. The CEDEFOP overview [National qualifications framework developments in Europe](#) (2015) describes the national developments and qualifications.

E.3. European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy (ESCO)

The European Commission is developing a [European Skills, Competences and Occupations taxonomy](#) (ESCO), which will describe the most relevant competences and qualifications needed for several thousand occupations. The ESCO classification identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. ESCO has been developed in an open IT format, is available for use free of charge by everyone and can be accessed via the ESCO portal. The first version of ESCO was published on 23 October 2013. This release marks the beginning of the pilot and testing phase, including the ESCO mapping pilot. Until end of 2016 the classification will be completely revised.

E.4. Key competences for lifelong learning

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on [key competences for lifelong learning](#) highlight the role of the key competences in the *shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context* and states that they are *fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation. Because they should be acquired by everyone, this recommendation proposes a reference tool for European Union (EU) countries to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, particularly in the context of lifelong learning.* The [key competences](#) include 'traditional' skills such as communication in one's mother tongue, foreign languages, digital

skills, literacy, and basic skills in maths and science, as well as horizontal skills such as learning to learn, social and civic responsibility, initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness, and creativity. The key competences framework is being further developed in regards to its implementation.

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Disclaimer: This document was developed and will from time to time be updated by [SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre](#). The current version has been updated in cooperation with Gisele Evrard Markovic. It includes references to developments that from our subjective point of view are relevant for the recognition of youth work and for the recognition of learning within youth work. Thereby we have limited the overview to the bigger, European-level milestones and processes. In case you would like to receive ongoing updates about initiatives related to recognition, please register for the [Youthpass and Recognition newsletter](#).

SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre hopes that the information in this document gives you a useful overview of European developments around recognition of non-formal learning and of youth work. Please send any updates on the initiatives listed already in the document, or information about other relevant European initiatives to [SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre](#).