

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union
Union Européenne

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth

REVIEWS ON
YOUTH POLICIES AND YOUTH WORK
IN THE COUNTRIES OF
EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS
- Synthetic Report -

Last updated: 09 Oct 2011

By: Areg Tadevosyan, Anahit Minassian

**NB: This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of partner institutions
or the EU-CoE youth partnership**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Executive summary	4
3. Situation of Youth	9
3.1 Definition of youth	9
3.2. Key figures on young people	9
3.3. Living conditions and situation of young people	10
4. Youth work and youth policies	22
4.1 Institutions, actors and structures	22
4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work	24
4.2.1 Youth policy	24
4.2.2 Youth work	27
4.2.3 Youth research	28
4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work	29
4.4 Strategies, Programmes, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning	32
4.5 Strategies in cross-sectorial policies	38
4.6 European and International dimension	41
4.7 Budget/Funding	47
5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations	49
5.1 Belarus	49
5.2 Armenia	50
5.3 Georgia	54
5.4 Ukraine	58
5.5 Moldova	62
5.6 Common trends	64
6. Sources of information	67

1. Introduction

Background and Aims

The Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 1 July 2010 – 31 December 2013 between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth organizes a process of reviewing on youth policies and youth work in the countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus. In this framework National youth policy and youth work of the 7 countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Russian Federation) was launched in 2009.

The National Reports have been prepared by selected experts through desk research on several open sources of information available about the countries, young people living there as well as the available policies and programmes documentation on various aspects of National Youth Policies and youth work realities. No special research on the field was realized by the experts preparing the reports.

The ready drafts then passed a national check-up process by the main stakeholders present in the countries (governmental agencies responsible for youth affairs, main expert YNGOs, international organisation's offices in the countries etc.). The comments and corrections from the national checkup were then incorporated in the Reports in the process of preparation of the final texts.

Summary Report of the national reviews was initiated after the preparation of the National Reports. The aim of this Report was to summarize the findings of the experts preparing the national reviews as well as to try to derive common trends and similarities and major differences of these countries in terms of national youth policies and youth work.

Methodology of the Review

The main method of the research was the desk research using exclusively the data provided by the national reporters in their country reviews. No other additional information was used to provide the objective assessment.

The draft Report was presented during the at the Symposium organised by the EU-CoE Youth Partnership that took place on 14-15 July 2011, in Odessa, Ukraine; after which the Report was finalized according to the comments of the participants and experts.

Challenges of the study

There were some major challenges for the realization of the presented review process.

The first and the most important one was the fact that not all the National reports were presented on due time. Only a part of the report of the Russian Federation went under reviewing process as it was the only text available by the time the synthetic report was drafted. Unfortunately the Azerbaijanian Report is not included in the reviewing process as it was absent by the time the reviewing started. So in the result there are reviews from only six countries are summarized and conclusions regarding the situation in Russia may have some deficiencies as a result of fragmentary text used as a source.

The second major challenge was the differences in the formats of the Reports presented. Although all the experts have tried to use the guidelines provided by the contracting agency, the Reports still had some structural differences, which were making the reviewing process quite hard. Different topics were addressed in different depth, so the comparison process was not always an easy task to be realized.

And the third challenge worth mentioning is the complex nature of the summarizing. As national realities behind the reports were quite different (imagine Russian Federation with its 141,850,000 population and Moldova with 3,603,500 population), it was not an easy task to draw parallels and to come up with similarities and differences. However, the solutions were found and the report is ready to be presented to the public.

2. Executive summary

The social and political realities in the countries researched are quite different regardless of the 70 years of common Soviet period. And appropriately these differences are also reflected in the situations with youth policy and youth work. Nevertheless, it is possible also to identify commonalities and similar trends, which are affecting the lives of young people in all of the countries.

In the countries researched the youth is defined by various types of legislation and other political documents. In general it is covering range of ages from 14 to 35 years old. The statistical data on the number of young people provided in the country reports show that the biggest number of the young people lives in Russia and Ukraine (accordingly 38.048.949 and 14.304.300). The next two are Belarus and Georgia with accordingly 2.520.000 and 1.365.700. Moldova and Armenia have rather small and approximately similar amount of the youth (accordingly 925.500 and 905.200). The percentage of youth in overall population is the largest in Ukraine and Georgia (accordingly 31.0% and 30.7%), and approximately equal in the other four countries presented (Moldova 25.0%, Belarus 26.0%, Russia 26.8% and Armenia 27.9%). It is also necessary to note that in most of the countries the further analytical definitions of various sub-groups of young people are lacking (e.g. urban and rural youth, young refugees, migrants etc.).

The reviewed countries, being part of former Soviet Union, are still in the process of transformation thus social, economical and political instability in these countries naturally result in quite high general unemployment and specifically youth unemployment rates (very often twice as high as the general unemployment rate). However, it is important to note that that youth employment and creation of job opportunities for young people is one of the main priorities of National Youth Policies in most of these countries and there are some initiatives aiming to decrease youth unemployment both by governmental (mainly in form of separate programmes) and non-governmental bodies.

Basic medical care and service is guaranteed by the state in EECA region, whereas there is still no compulsory health insurance with some exceptions like Moldova. Public awareness on the importance on own well-being is a quite serious issue in this region. Young people usually visit medical institutions in case of emergency and healthy lifestyle is not among their priorities. Sexual health is one of the most important health topics mentioned almost in all national reviews. Lack of awareness on these and other health issues as well as living standards and life style in general of young people results in increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS cases. Amongst the most important health challenges most of the countries has named drug and alcohol abuse and smoking.

The research of the situation of cultural participation in the countries of EECA shows that this sphere is not in a very good shape in general. Except some small amount of policy references and working mechanisms the cultural participation of the young people in all the countries is mainly provided by the ways which were common during the Soviet times.

Youth mobility in EECA region is still quite problematic. Generally there are no special state mobility programmes for young people. Young people in EECA region are mostly interested and very much willing to travel abroad. When speaking of mobility one should also keep in mind the means of mobility available to young people with limited financial resources. Some young people are still restrained with limitations to travel by land due to problems with closed borders (e.g. youth in Armenia), whereas traveling by air remains quite expensive. However, the main mobility obstacle for young people of this region is restricted visa regime for the countries of their main interest.

Traditionally the role of education in this region has been always very important. After joining the Bologna process EECA countries have been undergoing number of national reforms in the field of education. Educational systems of these countries are nowadays greatly challenged to harmonize themselves with the existing labour market and propose young people competitive education and training opportunities. According to education related laws all EECA states guarantee each and every individual's right to education, regardless of nationality, sex, age, social status and origin, political or religious affiliation. However, even after passing through all the required stages of the education, not too many young people are positive about getting employed with the profession they acquired in an educational institution which once again speaks of the missing link between educational institutions and labour market.

Not all of the EECA countries have a separate legal framework (e.g. law on youth) for young people. Mainly the rights of young people are regulated by laws and codes of respective spheres (e.g. Law on Education, Labor Code, Family Code, and Law on Military Duty etc.). Several human rights defender organisations and groups report high level of violence in police and army of the region as well as violation of right for demonstrations, free access to information and freedom of speech. In number of countries throughout EECA region facts of arresting young activists participating in demonstrations and violent treatment towards them are revealed.

Despite of the huge variety of the forms and names of the structures involved in the youth policy and youth work in the countries investigated, there is also some regularity, which will be brought in here. There is also a tendency of changing and reforming public structures responsible for youth affairs, hopefully this report will be mostly up to date when submitted.

All the reports were mentioning the great role of the YNGO sector and student organisations. All of the countries are reporting large amounts of registered youth NGOs although it is also noted that the part of this huge amounts of registered organisations do not mean serious level of activity, as part of the organisations are only registered but do not actually function, especially in those countries where the registration procedure is easy and state control over the functioning of the organisations is low. In most of the countries there are umbrella organisations which are involving a great number of organisations. In some of the countries there are even more than one umbrella organisations with different views on youth policy and youth work (such as in Ukraine and Belarus).

Certainly all of the countries have state structures responsible for youth affairs. Mostly those are Ministries of Youth “and something else” (e.g. tourism, sport, education etc.). It is interesting that in none of the countries reviewed the youth sector is represented by a separate state agency. Another regularity observed is the presence of appropriate structures in the legislative bodies of the countries. In most of the cases it is a Parliamentary Commission with a lot of working directions, amongst which “youth affairs” or “youth policy” are also mentioned.

The earliest youth policy document that we were able to find in the presented reports was the Law "On general principles of State Youth Policy in Belarus", adopted in April 24, 1992 in Belarus. A lot of similar Concept papers and Laws have been adopted in the other countries as well, which is a process still in progress. One of the most obvious similarities observed in the aims and priorities of youth policies in all the countries is their social emphasize. Most of them mention youth employment and housing and support to young families as their priorities, which is also quite logical when observing the socio-economical and demographical situations in the reviewed countries.

The realities that we live in the last half of decade are rapidly changing due to the growing importance of information society in the daily lives of the citizens. It is important to note inspite of the fact that most of the countries announced youth information as one of their important priorities and all of them work on development of information networks and tools to gather and disseminate information on youth issues, unfortunately only in Moldova Report we were able to find some concrete references to the social networking systems, “youth as not users but generators of the content”, multimedia projects etc. So we can state that the initial steps in this direction are taken, but most of the countries’ youth policies are not yet adjusted to new emerging realities of information society.

Another coherent feature of the youth policies of the countries reviewed is the creation, dissolution and recreation of various types of consultative bodies by various key actors in the political spheres of the countries, such as Public Councils on youth affairs by the Prime-Ministers, by Parliaments, Presidents and other actors. This is one of the most important forms of youth participation in

decision making process, but still it is possible to observe that this culture of open and transparent representation in these structures and their accountable and transparent functioning is still quite low and the high rate and big (overlapping) numbers of such structures even on the level of one country is speaking about necessity of evaluation of the situations with these bodies and development of concrete mechanisms.

Although all the reporters emphasized the importance of the youth work sphere for their countries and have revealed the shortcomings, all in all we can state that the youth work sphere is absolutely not recognized in none of the countries. All of the reporters state that there is a big amount of people in their countries which have the sufficient skills and knowledge for youth work, and who actually do what is called “youth work” in other Western European countries, however, the term “youth work” and its quality standards are not mentioned/defined in any of the political documents regarding the National Youth Policy.

Although the evidence-based youth policy is gradually becoming a common word used during the political debates in all the reviewed countries, it is still necessary to state that the youth research institute is only making its first humble steps in these countries. Another important feature is that wherever available the major institutions responsible for youth research are state agencies. There are however also good bases for development, as in most of the countries the need of youth research is recognized and in some countries there are also steps taken to improve the situations.

The situation with the normative bases in the 6 countries reviewed seems to be quite different. And what is even more interesting it seems that there is no correlation between the level of elaborateness of the normative base and the actual situation with the youth policies and programmes in the country. Most of the countries reviewed have some sort of programmed youth policy. Unfortunately in most of the countries big part of this strategies and programmes has been prepared without proper consultations with youth sector. In all the countries reviewed there is a need of a real monitoring and assessment systems for youth policy, youth programmes and budgetary expenditures efficiency, working on regular/periodical bases. In almost all the countries there is a need to stop political segregation in the field of youth support between “politically correct” and “opposition-protesting youth” YNGOs and associations; to provide sort of “political immunity” of national youth policy schemes.

Although all reviewed countries highly valued the role of non-formal education and the reporters state its wide usage amongst civil society and governmental programmes, the political frameworks promoting and developing this sector are developed (or are in the process of development) only in three countries – Armenia, Moldova and Belarus.

All the countries reviewed state international and European cooperation as one of their most important priorities. Nevertheless, there are some differences regarding the interest towards European Integration; some countries such as Georgia and Moldova are clearly stating their inspirations to fulfill the requirements and to deepen their countries' European Integration process, the other countries are regarding the European cooperation frameworks as excellent development and partnership mechanisms. In all the reports there was a clear message about the great role of the two European Institutions Council of Europe and European Commission in the development of the youth policy and especially its international dimension in the countries. Regarding the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission the role of the SALTO EECA Resource center was highlighted as one of the most effective structures supporting the involvement of EECA YNGOs and youth in general into the Programmes of European Commission.

Amongst the other spheres reviewed the aspect of the Budgets and Funding of youth policy and programmes seem to have most of the problems. In all the countries reviewed the only positive input was from Armenia, where a new Online Grant System was introduced in 2010, but according to the new data from the country the system stops operating for the last two trimesters due to some political reasons and structural reorganisations of infrastructures. In most of the countries the budgetary sources for youth affairs are quite limited, moreover the situation is becoming even worse due to mismanagement, lack of transparent mechanisms of distribution of resources, political limitations on support to youth activities (and usage of youth resources for political reasons), as well as absolute absence of independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms measuring the effectiveness of expenditures.

3. Situation of Youth

3.1 Definition of youth

In the countries researched the youth is defined by various types of legislation and other political documents. In general it is covering range of ages from 14 to 35 years old. In Georgia it is not defined according to concrete age range, but according to the “National Policy of Youth of Georgia” developed at the end of 2010 the term “youth” includes the age from childhood to adulthood. Belarus and Ukraine has the same lower age limit of 14 for youth but the upper age limits are different. In Belarus (“Law on youth”) it is 31s old and in Ukraine on 1991 according to the “Declaration on General Principles of State Youth Policy in Ukraine” it was set as 28 years old, but than the further legislation extended the upper age limit to 35. Moldova and Armenia have the same age ranges for youth which is 16-30. In Moldova it was defined by the “National Youth Law” and in Armenia according to the “State Youth Policy Concept Paper” approved in 1998. However it is interesting to note that in Moldova the official state statistics define young population differently as persons aging 15-29. In Russia the age range is defined by a Decree of the Government of Russian Federation on 2006 and it is from 14 to 30 years old.

It is also necessary to note that in most of the countries the further analytical definitions of various sub-groups of young people are lacking (e.g. urban and rural youth, young refugees, migrants etc.). In some countries’ political documents we can only find definitions of “youth organisation” and “young family”. Regarding YNGOs actually there are two approaches present, where one is when the members of YNGO should be aged according to the official definition of youth, or the organisation should be aimed at this age group according its funding documentation.

3.2 Key figures on young people

The statistical data on the number of young people provided in the country reports show that the biggest number of the young people lives in Russia and Ukraine (accordingly 38.048.949 and 14.304.300). The next two are Belarus and Georgia with accordingly 2.520.000 and 1.365.700. Moldova and Armenia has a rather small and approximately similar amount of the youth (accordingly 925.500 and 905.200).

The youth mostly lives in urban areas in Belarus, Ukraine and Armenia (respectively 79%, 70% and 62.2%) and the distribution between rural and urban youth it approximately equal in the three other EECA countries researched (Georgia 52% urban 48% rural, Russia 49,4% urban 50,6% rural and Moldova 49% Male 51%). Gender distribution in the countries which has provided this sort of information shows that the amounts of young male and female population are approximately equal.

Another aspect presented in the reports was the balance between birth rate and death rate, which is negative in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus and positive in Armenia, Moldova and Georgia.

The percentage of youth in overall population is the largest in Ukraine and Georgia (accordingly 31.0% and 30.7%), and approximately equal in the other four countries presented (Moldova 25.0%, Belarus 26.0%, Russia 26.8% and Armenia 27.9%).

3.3 Living conditions and situation of young people

3.3.1 Culture

Cultural participation is one of the four main aspects of youth participation in the life of society. The investigation of the situation of cultural participation in the countries of EECA shows that this sphere is not in a very good shape in general. In some countries there are concrete policy references to the spiritual-cultural and cultural development of the young people. For example in Ukraine the cultural development of youth is one of the aims of youth policy. In Armenia the promotion of spiritual-cultural and patriotic education is one of main priorities of the RA State Youth Policy Strategy for 2008-2012.

In some countries such as Belarus there are also specific instruments providing support of cultural self-expression of youth such as the Presidential Fund awards which each year provides scholarships to the young artists and creative youth. There are also data bases created in order to register talented and gifted youth. In order to systematize the data banks of gifted and talented Youth, Presidential Decree "On some questions of formation, maintenance and use of data banks of Gifted and Talented Youth" was ordained.

But except some small amount of policy references and working mechanisms the cultural participation of the young people in all the countries is mainly provided by the ways which were common during the Soviet times. There are few examples of creation of new models, facilities and infrastructures providing and developing the cultural self-expression of young people.

The main cultural institutions named in the reports produced in the framework of this research were the public libraries, museums, cultural clubs, crafts workshops, musical and arts schools and artistic studios. But still it is necessary to mention that the number of libraries and museums is quite impressive in most of the countries and in some of them they serve also as hubs for different types of cultural events and trainings.

There is also a misbalance mentioned in the reports between the accessibility of the cultural participation in the central cities (capitals and major regional centers) and the rural areas, where the later in most of the cases are lacking facilities and resources.

3.3.2 Unemployment

The reviewed countries, being part of former Soviet Union, are still in the process of transformation thus social, economical and political instability in these countries naturally result in quite high general unemployment and specifically youth unemployment rates (very often twice as high as the general unemployment rate). Despite the fact that youth employment and creation of job opportunities for young people is one of the main priorities of National Youth Policies in most of these countries, young people, nowadays, face numerous obstacles both with employment as well as entrepreneurship endeavors.

According to national reviews Armenia has 55.9 per cent (as of 2006) of its young people not employed. Moldova officially had 32 per cent of young people employed in 2009. Among the total number of unemployed, there were 46.6 per cent of young people in 2009 (no youth unemployment rate provided) in Belarus. Ukraine's rate of youth unemployment is 18.0 per cent for the same year of 2009. There are different numbers indicated in case of Georgia; 31.9 per cent of young people employed according to National Agency of Statistics and 20 per cent of young people are employed according to Institute of Marketing and Social analysis. 13.7 per cent young people are officially unemployed in Russia.

When speaking of youth employment one should first reflect upon the choices young people are able to make when reaching the end of secondary school programme. Lack of quality professional-orientation mechanisms leave young people with no choice but to rely on the suggestions of their parents or follow fashion trends for choosing their future profession. Current education system in these countries is not corresponding to the needs of labour market (for example in Ukraine only about 20 per cent of graduates are working in the profession they were trained for); therefore having educational and/or training background does not guarantee your further employment. Generally, the unemployment is much higher in case of rural youth. First having less education and training opportunities then few working places available locally, young people often are simply obliged to engage in labour migration processes. Special attention needs to be paid also to young people, who are not enrolled in any educational institution or interrupted their educational path (especially secondary school) due to different reasons.

However, it is important to note that there are some initiatives aiming to decrease youth unemployment both by governmental (mainly in form of separate programmes) and non-governmental bodies. Most of the countries also developed several support mechanisms (e.g. unemployment benefits, various training opportunities, system of obligatory job distribution, student work camps, etc.). No qualitative evaluation of these mechanisms is available.

Considerable part of young people in this region wish to create own business (e.g. 50.2 per cent of youth in Moldova and 38 per cent in Georgia). However, young entrepreneurs in these countries are faced with numerous challenges mainly of financial nature (e. g. insufficient start-up capital, high taxation rates and not favourable credit conditions). Few initiatives are launched to support youth entrepreneurship (e.g. state grants for youth business projects in Russia, national state programme for economic empowerment of youth in Moldova, facilitation of access to financial resources required for initiating and developing start-ups provided in some cases also by private sector for in instance in Armenia).

3.3.3 Participation

Rather a large part of youth in this region is not organized and its participation is limited to leisure time activities, cultural participation and/or participation in economic life of the country. Young people in EECA region have the possibility to practice their civic participation mainly through various types of YNGOs, student self-government organisations, youth clubs and informal groups. Despite the variety and number of organisations, NGO sector, does not have a desirable level of trust (e.g. according to National Youth Report in Armenia only 7.2 per cent of the youth trusted NGOs in 2006).

Young people are mostly involved in informal activities and not very big numbers of young people participate in organized civic and political life. For example 9.2 per cent of young people are involved in civic organisations and political parties and 2.6 per cent in youth organisations in Ukraine. The role of youth participation is often encouraged also by state bodies. For example young people are encouraged to get involved in providing peer education programmes in Moldova. Peer to peer educators promoted by District Directorates for Education, Youth and Sports in Moldova try to increase youth civic participation to fight HIV/AIDS. National Network of 3000 young Peer Educators has been created in Moldova in recent years.

Traditionally young people are quite active in student councils and student scientific societies. In Armenia, for example, according to the Law on Science and Education student body has the right of 25 per cent of the votes in all decision making bodies of the Higher Educational Institutions. This right is unfortunately not always properly practiced due to low level of awareness of students' rights.

According to National Youth Report (2006) only 37.5 per cent of the youth have participated in any political election in Armenia. Political participation of young people, however, seems to grow gradually in EECA region. Young people get particularly involved in times of political changes (e.g. Orange revolution in Ukraine).

Volunteering is another very important way of youth participation, and although some of the countries as Ukraine, Armenia, Russia and Moldova have or are designing special Laws on Voluntary Service, still the level of development of this sphere is still quite low.

Promotion of volunteerism is chosen to be one of the main priorities of youth policy in the framework of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation 2020. There are more than 400 thousand young people registered as volunteers in Russian Federation (as of May 1, 2011), more than 100 thousand "Personal book of volunteer" were issued. Latter is a clear step towards also recognition of volunteering experience. Upcoming major sport events (e.g. Sochi Olympic Games in 2014, Kazan Universiade 2013) seem to bring considerable changes both in legal regulation as well as in practice of volunteerism in Russia.

Some interesting developments are also observed in Moldova where in 2010 a Law on Volunteering was adopted. The Law was elaborated in partnership with the Coalition for the promotion of Law on Volunteering and volunteering activities. This Law gives a legal platform to volunteering activities including new tools such as the "Contract for volunteering" and the "Volunteer Book". The Law creates a legal opportunity for young people to accumulate work experience for their future career, also to get transferable credits in the field the volunteering activities are held.

3.3.4 Health

Basic medical care and service is guaranteed by the state in EECA region, whereas there is still no compulsory health insurance with some exceptions like Moldova where compulsory health insurance since 2004 has been facilitating free of charge access for pregnant women and children to health services and essential drugs. Some big businesses (e.g. telephone operators) and some international organisations tend to have contracts with health insurance companies and offer health insurance to their employees. Accessing quality medical service (especially stationary one) is connected with financial means which young people in this region usually lack.

Number of various factors have been affecting the state of health of population and particularly young people in these countries (overall difficult social economic situation after collapse of Soviet Union, conflicts e.g. 1988-1995 on-going conflict and war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, disasters like Chernobyl nuclear accident Ukraine in 1986 and devastating earthquake in Armenia in 1988, etc). Some of these events have more than 2 decades of a history, however the consequences are still present both in physical as well as mental health.

Life expectancy at birth has a tendency to increase approximately one year for some countries like Armenia (73.8 years in 2009) and Moldova (69,4 years in 2009), however countries like Ukraine

report also increase of youth mortality, the rates are high for men (in comparison with 1990 in 2008 the mortality rate for men and women aged 25-39, the mortality of men aged 25-34 is 2-3 times higher than in case of women).

Public awareness on the importance on own well-being is a quite serious issue in this region. Young people usually visit medical institutions in case of emergency and healthy lifestyle is not among their priorities.

Sexual health is one of the most important health topics mentioned almost in all national reviews (in some countries like Moldova and Armenia “Healthy Lifestyle” and “Life Skills” courses covering also reproductive health were introduced by state educational bodies to be included in the programme of secondary school programme, which unfortunately are not effective due to reluctant educators as well as social attitudes towards this topic). In contrast, the role of some international organisations has been quite significant in developing programmes that include peer education and use of other youth-friendly methods to approach young people. For example 4 regional and 23 district Youth Health Centers were set up in Belarus in the framework of “Reproductive Health Information and Services for Teenagers and Youth” programme implemented by United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in cooperation with state structures and youth NGOs. Another important example mentioned was Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC) large-scale, multi-party EU/UNFPA funded initiative focusing on the health development, and empowerment of young people in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.

Lack of awareness on these and other health issues as well as living standards and life style in general of young people results in increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS cases.

The picture of numbers is quite different in different parts of the region. Ukraine has the most severe HIV/AIDS epidemic not only in region but in Europe. As of the end of 2007, Ukraine had registered 122 674 cases with HIV-infection. Unofficial statistics report about 440 thousands HIV/AIDS infected people in Ukraine, interestingly most of them are younger than 25 (street children and youth are the main target of the epidemic). Likely in Belarus the main target of HIV are young people aged 15 to 29 (66.7 per cent of 10 757 HIV infected people in Belarus belong to this age group). Though absolute number of HIV cases detected in Moldova increased from 360 in 2004 to 795 new cases in 2008, HIV prevalence among young people aged 15-24 years decreased from 16.1 per cent in 2008. Numbers are somewhat lower in Caucasus; number of registered HIV/AIDS patients in Georgia is 1 560, out of which 1 333 are of age 15-40. In 2008 prevalence of HIV of females in Armenia aged 15-24 was 0.1 and 0.2 among males of the same age group.

Tuberculosis is the next common serious health issue for this region and once again the disease targets also young population (e.g. tuberculosis is mostly developed in young people aged 25-34 and about 200,000 children get infected every year in Ukraine). The cure of this disease is free of charge in all EECA countries.

While reviewing drug and alcohol abuse in the region, it is interesting to notice that national culture and habits in these countries play rather an essential role. For example drug and alcohol abuse are not considered to be a serious threat for youth in Armenia as the society itself has its social mechanisms to self-regulate this issue, whereas the problem of drug addiction is quite severe in case of Russia and Belarus. In Russia 19 per cent (7.2 million people) of youth aged 14-30 have tried drugs at least once in their life, there are 2.3 million drug addicts at the age of 14-30 including 586 thousand hospitalized drug addicts. The average age of young people trying drugs for the first time in their life is 16.5 years (16 for boys and 17 for girls).

Despite the fact of Armenia and Georgia having festivals in the heart of their cultures, alcohol abuse does not seem to be a serious issue of youth health in these countries. The situation is different in Eastern European countries like Russia, where every second youngster aged 14-16 uses alcohol, later, at the age of 17 as high per cent as 70 per cent of young people uses alcohol.

At the meantime, smoking becomes a very big problem among young people in the region. Russia, for example, has rather a shocking number of 51 per cent (19.4 million people) of its youth aged 14-30 smoking tobacco.

Youth prostitution, even though mentioned only in the review of Russian Federation (5 per cent of young people aged 14-30 i.e. 1.9 million young people provided paid sexual services at least once in their life), should also be mentioned while speaking about health of young people.

Promotion of healthy lifestyle seems to be on the agenda of both governmental and non-governmental actors in this region; however more needs to be done in practice.

3.3.5 Mobility

Youth mobility in EECA region is still quite problematic. Generally there are no special state mobility programmes for young people. There are slight attempts to facilitate student mobility (e.g. students in Ukraine have transport discounts that are only valid during academic year, Armenian government provides free-of-charge university buses for students residing in areas out but close to the capital of the country).

Young people in EECA region are mostly interested and very much willing to travel abroad. For example 76.8 per cent of the respondents of the survey conducted for purposes of National Youth

Report of Armenia in 2006 expressed their wish to travel abroad: 32.6 per cent of the respondents mentioned vacations and tourism, while 39.1 per cent cited economic motivations. The survey also showed that 71 per cent of the respondents had been unable to travel abroad since turning 16, despite their desire to do so. According to Opinia Social Survey in Moldova 60 per cent of young people would go abroad for a temporary job, 10 per cent for studies, 10 per cent for traveling and 20 per cent for a new place of living. Only 19 per cent of youth in Georgia over 16 has been abroad, out of those 52 per cent as tourists and 15 per cent for educational reasons.

When speaking of mobility one should also keep in mind the means of mobility available to young people with limited financial resources. Some young people are still restrained with limitations to travel by land due to problems with closed borders (e.g. youth in Armenia), whereas traveling by air remains quite expensive. However, the main mobility obstacle for young people of this region is restricted visa regime for the countries of their main interest. Remaining a privilege to a still quite small part of youth, international youth cooperation is one of few ways to facilitate youth mobility. As a matter of fact young people in this region are still challenged with obtaining visa even for events organized by EC or CoE. Young people committed to go for long-term voluntary services (e.g. “European Voluntary Service” of “Youth in Action” programme of EC) are in particular hardship of this issue.

Nevertheless, quite large number of young people is willing to migrate from their countries. For instance about 30 per cent of Ukrainians want to leave their country for defined period of time (1-3 years) mainly in search of better employment opportunities. 38.3 per cent of young people in Moldova who leave their country have a difficulty in finding a job, 37 per cent lack social and medical protection, 31.7 per cent have problems with police and expulsion, 28.3 per cent suffer from bad command of host country language, 24.3 per cent feel exploited and 21.7 per cent have difficulties in adapting to a new style of life.

3.3.6 Education and Training

Traditionally the role of education in this region has been always very important. After joining the Bologna process EECA countries have been undergoing number of national reforms in the field of education. Educational systems of these countries are nowadays greatly challenged to harmonize themselves with the existing labour market and propose young people competitive education and training opportunities. There is a need of creation of modern curricula (often enhanced with use of information and communication technologies), reshaping quality standards of education as well as raising interest of young people for life long learning in general.

Literacy rates are rather high in the region, some countries like Georgia and Armenia almost reach 100 per cent literacy rate (99.8 per cent and 99.4 per cent respectively).

According to education related laws all EECA states guarantee each and every individual's right to education, regardless of nationality, sex, age, social status and origin, political or religious affiliation. At the same time, the states commit themselves to ensure equal chances of access to state institutions of education and training based on academic merit, skills or capacities.

Over the last years the education systems have undergone some structural reforms and now mainly have the following components: pre-school education, general secondary education (elementary, middle, and high schools), extracurricular education (in some cases like Ukraine) primary vocational education, secondary vocational education, higher education, post-higher education, and specialists' training and qualification improvement institutions.

In several countries of this region obligatory pre-school education is suggested. However, in some cases (e.g. Ukraine) the capacity for pre-school education covers only a part (40 per cent in case of Ukraine) of children of pre-school age due to lack of pre-school establishments.

Here as well as in the other areas concrete difference could be noticed while looking the education enrollment by areas. For instance Moldova has 102.4 per cent of gross rate of primary education enrolment in urban area opposed to 88.9 per cent in rural area.

Traditionally the topic of secondary school drop-outs is not very much discussed in this region, however the phenomenon of drop-outs is mentioned for some countries like Moldova, where hidden form of non-attendance is also present (children, who are officially not considered having abandoned school, are sometimes sent to school by their parents under the pressure of school, they, however, miss a significant part of educational programme).

Extracurricular education is available for pupils and students in all EECA countries. Institutions such as music and visual arts schools, youth sport schools, martial arts schools, military and patriotic clubs, youth camps, centers for creativity and aesthetic education, ecological clubs/centers, language clubs, centers for technology as well as different hobby groups are available and quite popular among youngsters.

Once reaching final years of general secondary education (as it is compulsory in the region), many young people are faced with a situation where they need to take a decision about their future occupation often without even understanding the nature of this or that profession, its connection to the country's current labour market, etc. Also it is important to note that the level of accessibility to next phases of their education depends on type of education and institution they choose. In general vocational training is more accessible to young people than higher education both in financial terms as well as admission conditions. In Armenia, for example, primary vocational

education and secondary vocational education (which seems to be „awaken from long sleep”) is more accessible in terms of entry conditions as well as tuition. According to National Youth Report survey in 2006, 13.9 per cent of young people considered vocational education fully accessible, while 43.5 per cent considered it rather accessible and only 7.3 per cent considered it completely inaccessible. Meanwhile higher education is not accessible to Armenian youth, 80 per cent of surveyed young people think that prior knowledge acquired in secondary school is not sufficient for succeeding entry exams of a higher educational institution and private tutoring courses are needed.

Apparently some countries like Belarus pay more attention to the system of vocational (professional) education. Having for example manufacture and production spheres existing in the country, government is faced with the fact of lack of qualified professionals, who are of great demand. Young people in Belarus tend to enter colleges and other vocational (professional) education establishments as it gives the possibility on one hand to get a profession and to be transferred to the third year of university studies on the other hand. Due to the reason mentioned above the number of young people entered vocational (professional) educational establishments in 2009 increased by 10 thousands in comparison with the year of 2008.

Young people that choose vocational education schools in Moldova are interested in professions such as cooks (15.8 per cent), motor locksmiths (10.1 per cent), plasterers (7.8 per cent), electric and gas installer (6.5 per cent), computer operator (5 per cent).

Higher educational sphere in EECA in particular is currently undergoing a number of reforms due to Bologna process the countries joined. Even though numerous attempts are being made for meeting the objectives of the process, however a longer time is required first to have full understanding of the nature of the proposed changes and second to shape the will to change such conservative sphere as education system. Several national reforms are being made to improve the access and quality of higher education. For example establishment of Unified National Examinations to enter higher educational institutions in Georgia is acknowledged as one of the important accomplishments within educational improvement initiatives in the country which helps to significantly reduce corruption rates.

In some countries like Belarus system of obligatory distribution still exists. According to this system, some students are waved from their tuition fees (they study on budgetary basis provided by state) in return they have to pass obligatory distribution (so called guaranteed working place) to the state enterprises for at least 2 years. Those graduates, who want to avoid obligatory distribution, have to reimburse the state with costs of education. 40 per cent of students studied on a budgetary (paid by the state) basis and 60 per cent of young people on a tuition fee basis in academic year of 2009-2010 in Belarus.

Many students in EECA region go for a degree in economic sciences, law, engineering field and education sciences.

However, even after passing through all the required stages of the education, not too many young people are positive about getting employed with the profession they acquired in an educational institution which once again speaks of a missing link between educational institutions and labour market.

In some countries like Armenia a tendency of young people starting to take part in short training-courses or other educational programmes implemented by methods of non-formal education is mentioned. Young people in Armenia address this type of educational activities as they seem to some extent help young people develop lacking skills (like effective communication, teamwork, time management, project management) they need for a job. According to the State review in 2009 of National Youth Policy in Armenia by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, 70-80 per cent of events organized both by state bodies and NGOs have the nature of non-formal education. However, the question of recognition of non-formal education still remains open both by state bodies as well as by the employers. Similar situation with recognition of non-formal education is present in the rest of the countries of EECA region.

3.3.7 Social Inclusion

The situation of the social inclusion tends not to depend on size of the country nor on its cultural (taking culture also in a broader sense) diversity.

Despite the small size and homogeneity of the population of a country like Armenia for example, there are several different groups of population whose level of integration to the general society is quite low.

Physically challenged people are the first in this list. A survey carried out in 2006 in Armenia has shown that only 4 per cent of respondents considered physically challenged people integrated, while 32.6 per cent had difficulty answering, and 40.1 per cent considered them not integrated. One of the main reasons for these people to be hindered also in the rest of EECA region is the inaccessible environment for them. First of all this concerns the public buildings and streets. The question of inaccessibility gets even more complicated when we come to the education of this group. Exclusion out of education system in the beginning shapes the future problem of unemployment and naturally excludes them in further phases of public life in general. Even though some information on developments of Inclusive Education was mentioned (notably in Georgia and Armenia), more needs to be done for this group of people to be viewed as a full member of society.

According to National Youth Report in Armenia (2006) in 1988 – 1994 Armenia was faced with the accommodation a total of about 419.000 refugees and forced migrants, which is a considerable number for Armenia (about 12% of the population). Starting from mid-1990s, when it became clear that the safe return of Armenian refugees to their old homes in Azerbaijan was impossible, the Republic of Armenia adopted a policy of integrating refugees to the existing society. However, according to more than 57 per cent of surveyed young people consider that refugees are different from locals in terms of their mindset and lifestyle.

Few initiatives to ensure professional development of minority groups and create employment opportunities for them (notably in Georgia) were mentioned, whereas nothing so far about integration of refugees and/or immigrants.

It is interesting to notice that the topic of social inclusion of young people was also covered through analysis of the relation of the topic with financial factors, for example 60.5 per cent of young people in Russia consider the contradiction between the rich and the poor as the main factor for social exclusion. Second popular contradiction is between urban and rural areas (28.6 per cent), whereas 23.2 per cent of Russian youth see the contradiction between Russians and non-Russians.

3.3.8 Youth and Human Rights

Not all of the EECA countries have a separate legal framework (e.g. law on youth) for young people. Mainly the rights of young people are regulated by laws and codes of respective spheres (e.g. Law on Education, Labour Code, Family Code, and Law on Military Duty etc.). However several countries do support the idea of having separate legal framework. For example the necessity of separate law on youth is supported by 67.9 per cent of youth aged 25-30 in Armenia, followed by the 16-18 and 18-25 age groups (64.8 per cent and 61.2 per cent, respectively).

The Constitutions of all countries in the region give the education right to its each and every citizen. Let us remind here, that secondary education is compulsory in EECA countries. Everybody also has the right for higher education or vocational training, which, though, has to be acquired on competitive bases (the state scholarships are mainly available to students with academic excellence).

Military service is obligatory. Military conscription age presented by the reviewers varies from country to country (e.g. 16-18 is the pre-conscription and 18-27 the military conscription age in Armenia, 18 - 25 in Ukraine). Alternative service is also available by law to young Armenians and it takes 3 years to complete, whereas military service in Ukraine can be replaced through alternative service in Red Cross or state/municipal institution only in case of religious objections and proved belonging to registered religious organisations.

Even though employment rights of young people are assured by the Constitutions and Labour Codes and other related laws, many young people are unaware of their rights and responsibilities and often do not practice them (one of the most common situations is the youth employment without any contract).

Official voting age is quite similar in the region (18 for at least Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine). Most countries have minimum smoking age and alcohol use age (mostly 18 or 21 years).

Different laws (including laws on Non-Governmental Organisations) enable young people to join and establish organisations, be involved in decision making process at school level via school councils and at administrative level via youth local councils.

There is much to be done in voicing out and protection of particular groups of young people. For example concrete mechanisms for democratization of education access for street children, migrants and refugees as well as elimination of stereotyped attitudes towards HIV/AIDS infected young people and integration of Roma children in state system of education is needed in countries like Ukraine.

Several human rights defender organisations and groups report high level of violence in police and army of the region as well as violation of right for demonstrations, free access to information and freedom of speech. In number of countries throughout EECA region facts of arresting young activists participating in demonstrations and violent treatment towards them are revealed.

4. Youth policies and youth work

4.1 Institutions, actors and structures

Despite of the huge variety of the forms and names of the structures involved in the youth policy and youth work in the countries investigated, there is also some regularity, which will be brought here. There is also a tendency of changing and reforming public structures responsible for youth affairs, hopefully this report will be mostly up to date when submitted.

All the reports were mentioning the great role of the YNGO sector and student organisations. All of the countries are reporting large amounts of registered youth NGOs although it is also noted that the part of this huge amounts of registered organisations does not mean serious level of activity, as part of the organisations are only registered but do not actually function, especially in those countries where the registration procedure is easy and state control over the functioning of the organisations is low.

In most of the countries there are umbrella organisations which are involving a great number of other smaller organisations. In some of the countries there are even more than one umbrella organisations with different views on youth policy and youth work (such as in Ukraine and Belarus). It is also important to note that although the coverage of most of the NYCs is quite big, in most of the countries a lot of strong youth organisations are reported not to be involved in the umbrellas and operating outside these schemes. Most of the umbrellas are also very active in European youth work and are members of European Youth Forum; this was highlighted by all the reporters. In majority of the countries the role of these umbrellas is defined as serving mediators between the public bodies and youth sector as well as representation of the country's youth in international youth work sector. In some of the countries existence of the umbrellas of student self government organisations is also reported, but it seems that they are not quite active.

Certainly all of the countries have state structures responsible for youth affairs. Mostly those are Ministries of Youth "and something else" (e.g. tourism, sport, education, etc.). It is interesting that in none of the countries reviewed the youth sector is represented by a separate state agency. It is possible also to observe frequent "migrations" of the youth sector from one Ministry to the other. Most of the Ministries also have strong infrastructures for realization of their youth programmes and formation of policies. These are Departments of youth policy, various types of State executive and research agencies, as well as representations of the regional level.

It is also interesting to observe that there are also schemes of public support to youth organisations, and the mechanisms for this also differ from country to country. In some countries it is open to all of the youth structures, and in the others it is limited to a certain type of the

organisations matching specific criteria, such as being nation-wide organisations etc. The Russian Report is also bringing in the list of the organisations which are entitled for state support. There are also concerns that in some countries the distribution of the public resources to YNGOs is not quite transparent and can be dependent on the political affiliations of the organisations.

Another regularity observed is the presence of appropriate structures in the legislative bodies of the countries. In most of the cases it is a Parliamentary Commission with a lot of working directions, amongst which “youth affairs” or “youth policy” are also mentioned, but based on the fact that in almost all the reports only the existence of such structures is mentioned and not their concrete functions or programmes, we can conclude that this phenomenon is mostly present on the paper or only behind some “closed doors”.

Another important aspect of the youth structures issue is their geographical coverage. Most of the reporters were mentioning the disbalance between the center of the country (namely capitals) and the regions, where the activity of youth structures is weaker. But it is also necessary to note that some of the Governments have taken steps to solve this problem creating infrastructures in regions such as Youth Centers (Armenia and Moldova) and their Networks. In Ukraine relevant committees working in sphere of youth are established in regional and local Councils, the scale of their activity is decided by local norms and regulations. In Russia the functions of formulation and realization of the youth policy is realized by state federal agencies responsible for this sphere in 83 subjects of Russian Federation.

Very few places churches and religious organisations are mentioned as actors amongst the youth work and youth policy structures, so overall there is an impression that the churches are not very active in youth sector.

Besides the general types of the youth structures in the countries reviewed there are also some specific public structures dealing with some concrete issues. For example in Ukraine there are several structures created by the Government to address concrete needs. These are the “State Social Service for Family, Children and Youth”, “State Department for Adoption and Protection of Right of Child”, “State Research Institute for Sports Education”, “State Research Institute for Family and Youth Development”. In Moldova “National Youth Resource Centre”, “The Network of Local Youth Centres”, “The Social Reintegration Centres for Youth” and “Maternal Centres” operate to address the needs of specific groups of young people. In Armenia and Georgia the Governments created foundations to serve the youth policy and youth work needs. In Armenia it is “Armenian Youth Fund”, and in Georgia “Children and Youth Development Fund”. In Georgia “Children and Youth National Center” operates with a mission to serve needs of youth and children to provide synergies between youth and child policies and organize programmes for these target groups.

4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work

4.2.1 Youth policy

Since early 90s in all the countries reported a process of formation of youth organisations sector in parallel with state actors responsible for youth has started. It was quite logical as the breakdown of Soviet well structured system of “Children of October”, “Pioneer” and “Komsomol” with appropriate infrastructures, methodological and policy schemes was eliminated in all the former Soviet Republics. The huge infrastructures belonging to these organisations, such as enormous amount of so called “pioneer houses” and Komsomol offices simply “disappeared from the scene” and was stigmatized as “evil”. Actually this would not be possible if the same structures were not weakened to the last possible extent during the last years of Soviet Union.

The existing structures were destroyed and nothing new was suggested for some half a decade at least (in some countries even a whole decade). Meanwhile many important social-economical processes of transformation were held in the countries these years and the youth was excluded from them; this was not a situation which could continue endlessly. In early 90s two parallel processes have started in all the 6 countries reviewed.

The state structures have started to form appropriate agencies in their infrastructures responsible for youth policy and parallelly youth NGO sector has also started to be established. The earliest youth policy document that we were able to find in the presented reports was the Law "On general principles of State Youth Policy in Belarus", adopted in April 24, 1992 in Belarus. A lot of similar Concept papers and Laws have been adopted in the other countries as well, which is a process still in progress. Some countries' youth policy is still functioning on the base of Concept papers and other similar documents, and other still work on the development of Laws on youth, such as Armenia where the Law on youth is in discussion since late 90s and the last draft law was called back from the Parliament by the Prime-Minister in 2010.

It is important to note here that the first youth self-organizing structures were mainly established in the educational institutions. These were so called “student councils” and other student self-government organisations (such as student trade unions and student scientific societies) which also had analogues in Soviet times but were not obviously political, so they had a chance “not to be evil”. However, there were also cases where youth movements were starting based on some social and political concerns (e.g. first independent civic organisation in Ukraine was called *Tovarystvo Leva* (Lion Society) which was created in Lviv by young people in 1987 and focused on revival of cultural heritage, traditions and ecology). But here again the next step is the creation of Ukrainian Student Association in 1989 and student-body played an important role in the continuation of political protests against Soviet Regime and other movements.

Still, when observing the processes of “democratization of youth civil society” in 90s it is visible that the leaders of these movements were mainly former Komsomol leaders, and it was quite logical as they were the ones which had enough organisational knowledge and skills. But it was a twofold benefit as they had the organisational “language” but they were also carriers of a certain mentality (based on totalitarian, centralized schemes).

Here it is also interesting to observe one of the examples brought in the Ukrainian Report about so called Ukrainian National Committee of Youth Organisations, which was legislatively approved (according to the Law on Youth and Children Organisations, adopted in 1998) single coordination body of youth till 2001, when the article on this organisation was removed from the Law due to claims on corruption and non-transparency by distribution of budget costs coming to public (the Committee was the structure, which distributed the costs directly from budget, avoiding State Committee on Youth, Sports and Tourism and these the costs were higher than all budget of the State Committee).

Another factor influencing the formation of the youth policy schemes in the countries was and is the geopolitical or socio-economical situations. For example in all the countries reported the patriotic upbringing and preservation of national heritage is one of the priorities of the youth policies, which is quite logical especially in the countries which still have some military conflicts with neighboring countries such as the cases of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, recent military conflict between Russia and Georgia. But still this thesis is present in the youth policies of other countries as well, such as Ukraine and Belarus where the reason behind might be connected with the national self-identity issues etc.

Another similarity observed in the aims and priorities of youth policies in all the countries is their social emphasize. Most of them mention youth employment and housing and support to young families as their priorities, which is also quite logical when observing the socio-economical and demographical situations in the reviewed countries.

Although there are a lot of similarities in the policies (which might be also result of simple “copy-paste which was and is practiced in post-soviet countries’ youth policy institutions) it is important to share also the observation that there are also some national specificities reflected in these policies. For example in the youth policy of Moldova the first key-principle mentioned is its non-discriminatory nature “every young person has equal rights regardless of race, color, sex, age, religion, ethnic origin, social origin, political orientation, family, place of living or any other characteristic”, which is quite natural taking into consideration the issues of national minorities. Youth policy in Belarus has a large proportion of the rural youth reported above reflected through a special emphasize on this target group as a separate working direction on them as “Support for young workers (both urban and rural), involving young specialists in agricultural production and

retention of young professionals in rural areas. Creating attractive conditions for life and work of the working and rural youth. Development and support of youth entrepreneurship in rural areas”.

Realities that we live in the last half of decade are rapidly changing due to the growing importance of information society in the daily lives of the citizens. In spite of the fact that most of the countries announced youth information as one of their important priorities and all of them work on development of information networks and tools to gather and disseminate information on youth issues, unfortunately concrete references to the social networking systems, “youth as not users but generators of the content”, multimedia projects etc. could be found only in Moldova Report. Therefore, we can state that the initial steps in this direction are taken, but most of the countries’ youth policies are still not adjusted to new emerging realities of information society.

In general it was interesting to observe that in most of the countries there are some papers adopted by the governments in the early of later 90s that still are governing documents for youth policy. As the situation in the countries changed enormously since accepting these documents it is necessary to state that most of the documents are still on paper and/or there are no mechanisms for evaluating/assessing the effectiveness of the youth policies and the relevance and accuracy of the political documents that are meant to govern and direct these processes.

Another coherent feature of the youth policies of the countries reviewed is the creation and dissolution and recreation of various types of consultative bodies by various key actors in the political spheres of the countries, such as Public Councils on youth affairs by the Prime-Ministers, by Parliaments, Presidents and other actors. This is one of the most important forms of youth participation in decision making process, but still it is possible to observe that this culture of open and transparent representation in this structures and their accountable and transparent functioning is still quite low and the high rate and big (overlapping) numbers of such structures even on the level of one country is speaking about necessity to evaluate the situations with these bodies and development of concrete mechanisms.

The process of youth policy formulation was largely supported also by the international community in most of the countries. The Council of Europe, UNICEF, UNDP and other structures have provided considerable methodological, political and material support to the aforementioned processes. In a range of the countries various types of training processes (such as 50/50 training course of civil society and civil servants etc.) were organized. Support to the development and reviewing of youth policy documents as well as processes of formulation of Youth Policy Strategies was and is provided by international community, which was highly appreciated in the reviews.

4.2.2 Youth work

Regarding this aspect of the youth policy of the reviewed countries it is possible to derive concrete repeating regularities regarding the negative aspects of the level of development, although there are also some features in not many countries that are showing also potential for progress.

Despite the reporters emphasizing the importance of this sphere for their countries and revealing the shortcomings, in general we can state that the youth work sphere is absolutely not recognized in none of the countries. All of the reporters state that there is a big amount of people in their countries having sufficient skills and knowledge for youth work who actually do what is called “youth work” in other Western European countries. The term “youth work”, however, and its quality standards are not mentioned/defined in any of the political documents regarding the National Youth Policy.

In some of the countries such as Ukraine and Armenia there is a profession of “social worker” which is present in the curricula of higher educational institutions, which is partially covering the competences of the youth worker, “youth work” is not defined in these countries either.

In some of the countries reviewed there are training programmes for youth workers. For example there is a youth worker training programme operating in Moldova, which is though “exclusively confined to traditional approaches and oriented to individual needs. The alternative, school-based youth worker training needs to be promoted. This type of training is aimed at changing the youth worker style and culture, to promote effective youth activities by having youth and youth workers jointly look for solutions and work together on elaboration of action plans, organisation of events and making curricula for youth trainings”.

In some of the countries (Moldova, Armenia) there was a position of youth specialist introduced in local Municipalities in regions, but the position in Moldova is dismissed in most of the municipalities (Only 98 of 950 municipalities have persons responsible for youth work), and in Armenia this is still mostly “on paper” and the specialists are lacking basic skills and knowledge for developing local youth policies and organizing programmes. In general in most of the countries reviewed there is also a disbalance between the center/urban areas and rural areas, and if in the central areas (even not recognized) there is a great amount of youth workers, then in rural areas there is a huge lack of specialists.

In general all the reporters stated the need of political recognition of the institute of the youth worker, the need of educational programmes to prepare such specialists as well as the need of quality standards establishment in this sphere.

Still there are also some trends of development observed. For instance in Moldova National Youth Strategy assumes the developmen of coordinated measures, which will serve the interests of youth

workers. Nevertheless, one of the most interesting developments can be noticed in Belarus, where State Institute of Advanced Studies and Retraining founded a special study course for youth workers, who will get official certificate of a youth worker. There are also training courses for governmental clerks dealing with youth issues provided in Belarus, which is actually an absolute need in all the reviewed countries unfortunately almost never met in the youth policy schemes.

4.2.3 Youth research

Although the evidence-based youth policy is gradually becoming a common word used during the political debates in all the reviewed countries, it is still necessary to state that the youth research institute is only making its first humble steps in these countries. Youth research shares the same situation thereof youth work. In most countries of the region this sector is neither politically defined and nor recognized.

The observation of the reviewed reports already makes it clear that there is no common understanding even about the term of “youth research”. For example “Dissemination of information via net with the network of Youth Resource Centers, Youth Councils, Youth National Council (yahoo group) and regular visits of stakeholders to the Ministry, or in the frame of common meetings or events; Dissemination of youth papers works through networks; Regular district youth forums, and one national youth forum per year; TV programmes and radio programmes on youth issues” are presented in the youth research section of Moldovan Report. These tools undoubtedly greatly contribute to the common youth information structure but are far from youth research.

Another important feature is that in most of the countries the major institutions responsible for youth research are state agencies. For example in Belarus it is Information-Analytical Center under Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus (IAC), In Armenia the youth research is carried out by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and in Ukraine it is the State Institute for Family and Youth Development. There are however also other cases, such as in Georgia, where the only major youth research is carried out by the National Youth Council of Georgia. In Belarus and alternative non-state structure was named which is dealing with youth research - “Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS)”, but it is established in Lithuania and its “mission is to promote formation of civil society and free market economy in Belarus through study socio-economic and political process of transition from totalitarianism to democracy and active promotion of values and principles of liberalism”.

In some of the country reviews the reporters were also mentioning some fragmentary reports developed by international organisations operating in the country (e.g. Soros Foundation and

World Bank in Georgia), which are also contributing to the better understanding of the situation of the youth in countries.

So, to summarize we can state that the sphere of youth research, which is one of the most important indicators of the national youth policy and is meant to provide foundation for the evidence-based youth policy is quite underdeveloped and not recognized in the countries reviewed. There were rare examples when the national youth policies were directly based on the research data and it is not surprising if also taking into consideration the fact that the major political documents youth policies in a number of countries reviewed are still based on, (except Moldova) are dating back to early and later 90s.

There is, however, also good basis for development, as in most of the countries the need of youth research is recognized and in some countries there are also steps taken to improve the situation. Moldovan government for instance, has adopted series of legislative acts and strategic documents aimed at improving the youth research. These include documents adopted with regard to the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, the State Policy for Innovation and Technological Transfer, and the approval of Strategic Priorities of Research-Development for 2004-2010. National Youth Report is foreseen to be updated in Armenia in 2011 and there are appropriate budgetary means provided in the Work Plan of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for this task. Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in Georgia has now taken the responsibility for a follow-up to the National Youth Report by conducting (together with other relevant structures) a periodical research on youth development.

4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work

The situation with the normative bases in the 6 countries reviewed seems to be quite different. What is even more interesting is the fact that there is no correlation between the level of elaborateness of the normative base and the actual situation with the youth policies and programmes in the country. There are countries which do not have any laws on youth and there are countries which have a package of legislative acts on various aspects on youth and children. For example in Armenia the only normative act which is accepted by the government related to the youth policy is “State Concept on Youth Policy” adopted in 1998, whereas in Ukraine the set is starting from the Declaration on main Principles of Youth Policy (1993) and continuing to the Law on Support for Social Formation and Development of Youth to the “Law on Youth and Children Public Organisations”; “Law on Social Work with Children and Youth”; “Law on Ensuring First Working Place for Young Professionals Finishing Vocational or High Schools by donation of employers”; “Law on Ensuring Equality Between Men and Women”; “Law on Prevention Violence

in Families”; “Law on Protection of Childhood” and finally the “Law on State Support for Families with Children”.

Somewhere in the middle of this two poles are situated the other four countries reviewed. In Belarus we can find the earliest Law on Youth, which defines the framework of State Youth Policy in Belarus - the “Law on general principles of State Youth Policy in Belarus”, adopted in April 24, 1992. It is setting the principles of the state youth policy as:

- combination of state and public interests with the interests and rights of young citizens;
- consistency and complexity;
- scientific validity;
- consideration of the interests and needs of young people;
- protection of rights and interests of young people;
- transparency and openness;
- participation of young people in design and implementation of Youth Policy

As it is stated in Belarus report, the Law is emphasizing that “the government is an institution that can compensate age-related deficiencies of social status of young citizens of the Republic”. Actually this is one of the major problems with all the post-Soviet governments which in majority see the young people as a problem but not as a resource. Even though in the top-level documentation it could be stated that the potential of the young people is a very important asset and it should be given a possibility to contribute to the construction of the state and other such statements, but at least on the lower executive bodies’ level youth is still perceived as a part of the society (“deficient”) which has some problems that somebody should solve.

However, Belarus is also the country where the logical consequence of the youth policy planning is followed as the Law is followed by a Decree of the President adopted in 1996 "On Priority Measures for the implementation of State Youth Policy in Belarus", defining the range of concrete measures to be taken and on the bases of this Decree National Programme "Youth of Belarus" for years 2006 – 2010 was accepted as a Work Plan.

Similar situation is present in Georgia, where National Youth Policy is governed by two legislative acts which are “The law concerning state support to children and youth unions” (June 22, 1999) and the “Law concerning the protection of under-age children from harmful influence” (September 28, 2001). Based on these two documents and the National Youth report in 2010 the Department on Youth Affairs has initiated creation of the “National Policy of Youth of Georgia”.

One of the most important examples brought in the Reports was Moldovan case, where the first Youth Law was adopted on 1999, but in 2010 the Ministry responsible for youth affairs has started to elaborate a new Law, as “time challenges, global problems have a total new face compared to

1999 and young people now face totally other problems” (as it is stated in the Moldovan report). The new Law is aimed at “making youth policy efficient and more attractive to youth for involving them in elaboration and implementation and creating a youth-friendly services and environment”. The elaboration of the Law was carried out based on participatory approach, and the draft was consulted with all youth policy stakeholders from local to national level. It is also important to state that here a special provision is made for recognition and popularization of non-formal education.

Although there are some obstacles with realization, but the Ukrainian and Moldovan Laws are requiring from local self-government bodies to provide budgetary resources for implementation of the youth programmes, which is very important measure to provide the participation of the youth from the regions of the countries in national youth policy processes.

The Ukrainian Law on Social Work with Children and Youth defines social work as activity of relevant representative institutions and organisations directed to creation of social conditions for life activity, harmonized and systematic development of children and youth, protection of their constitutional rights, freedoms and interests, realizations of cultural and spiritual needs. It is important that the Law defines such concepts as: “social service”, “social support”, “social prevention”, “social rehabilitation”, “social inspection”, “centers for social service for families, children and youth”, “professionals in social work (employed and volunteers)” “volunteers’ movement” and “social management”. In general the set of terms used but not clearly defined is one of the most important obstacles for harmonization of national youth policies and in this regard the Ukrainian example is very important.

In the framework of youth policy development and also development of transnational/national voluntary services it is interesting to observe the examples of Moldova and Ukraine. A law on voluntarism is also in the process of development in Armenia, but it is still in a process and there are no concrete results.

There was a legislative initiative to adopt a Law on Volunteering Movement in Ukraine in 2005 but it was denied by the Parliament on request of several NGOs as not suitable for developing on volunteering. However the similar project of Law was submitted and adopted in first reading by Parliament in 2010. After public discussions with NGOs Law was improved and systematized. The discussion on Law on Volunteering is still in progress as the most claims for new Law from the site of NGOs is that the volunteering is understood only as collective actions, there is attempt to recognize volunteering only in frames of organisations with special status (organisation should be registered as volunteering organisations in order to provide volunteering activities), there is only social dimension of volunteering and no provision of international dimensions of volunteering.

In Moldova National Law on Volunteering was adopted in 2010. The Law was elaborated in partnership with the Coalition for the promotion of Law on Volunteering and volunteering activities.

One of the interesting features of Armenian “State Concept on Youth Policy” is its clear emphasize on the co-management principle as well as the priority of public initiatives for funding of youth related entertainments and projects rather than the activities of State bodies and entities. These two requirements are set in the basic principle of the national youth policy, where the principle 2 is requiring provision of “direct participation of young citizens in the development and implementation of policy and separate youth related programmes and the whole society” and the principle 5 is meant to “Prioritize public initiatives for funding of youth related entertainments and projects rather than the activities of State bodies and entities”.

4.4 Strategies, Programmes, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning

4.4.1 Youth Policy Strategy and Work Plan and Participation

Most of the countries reviewed have some sort of programmed youth policy (the Georgian report do not present strategies and work plans in the appropriate block). Of course the programmes are different and the mechanisms of their development also differ from country to country.

There are two similar programmes in Ukraine and Belarus. Belarus has national programme “Youth of Belarus” for the years 2006-2010 approved by the President of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine has State Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine 2009-2015”.

Belarusian programme’s main objectives are: “to raise prestige of quality education and to create greater opportunities for receiving it, to support creative and research-engaged youth, to educate patriotic citizens, to develop the permanent employment system, to propagandize a healthy way of life, to help young families, to develop youth tourism, to take preemptive measures against the spread of crime, drunkenness, and drug addiction among young people”. The programme has a clear cross-sectoral nature (15 Ministries are named as executive agencies for this programme), and it is also involving other types of organisations including those from civil society in its implementation (National Academy of Sciences, Academy of Management under the President of the Republic of Belarus, Institute of Social and Political Studies under the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus, National Television and Radio, the local executive and administrative bodies, the National Bank, Open Joint Stock Company "Savings Bank", Belarusbank, public association “Belarusian Republican Youth Union”, public association “Belarusian Republican Pioneer Organisation”, Federation of Trade Unions, National Union of

Public Associations", Belarusian Committee of Youth Organisations, youth and children's associations). The programme is setting the following tasks:

- raising the educational level of young people, their willingness to work;
- patriotic education of young people, forming their legal and political culture, motivation to active participation in public life;
- improve conditions for active and effective participation of youth in the socio-economic life of society;
- improving positive youth initiatives, relevant ideologies and ways of socio-economic development of Belarus;
- promotion of healthy lifestyles, strengthening the health of young people;
- improving the social protection of youth and young families;
- development of youth tourism and the international youth cooperation.

Ukrainian Programme is the State Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine 2009-2015", which is the next phase of the previous "State Programme for Supporting Youth 2004-2008" which has been implemented before it. The Programme of the years 2004-2008 was setting a task of the "state to civic, national-patriotic education of children and youth, involving them to social-political and economical changes, integration of Ukraine into world community". The new edition of the programme for the years 2009-2015 is aimed at solution of the following problems "lack of spirituality, poverty, unemployment, violence, lack of sensible leisure, which make negative influence on the youth, also reduced sport activity, developing of AIDS, tuberculosis, shadow economy and increasing rate of criminality among youth, labour migration, lack of interest to literature, art, cultural heritage and influencing by low quality of domestic and foreign mass-culture" and will realize the following tasks:

- education and creative development of young people;
- patriotic education and human values;
- healthy life;
- employment and youth entrepreneurship;
- civic participation and cooperation between state and youth and children organisations;
- integration into World and European community;
- improving legislation in field of youth

Unfortunately in the Reports describing both of the programmes there is no visible reference to prior consultations with the youth sector stakeholders as well as their participation in the decision making process regarding the Programmes. If in Ukrainian case it is mentioned that there was no such process ("doesn't foresee public consultations or discussion on results achieved. It results

into lack of reports on results. The government uses a client approach to the youth by planning some actions without discussing and needs assessment”), then no information on such consultation was anyhow present in the Report of Belarus.

Armenia has two documents which are governing the youth policy for the years 2009-2012. The first one is the “Youth Policy Strategy for the years 2008-12”, which is developed by the Youth Policy Department of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and approved by the Government in 2008.

The Strategy is setting the following working directions:

- To raise the level of systematisation in the realization of the National Youth Policy and to develop the legislative and other normative base regulation the youth sector.
- To develop the cooperation with youth organisations and state assistance to their activities.
- To provide possibilities of youth cultural participation, to assist their educational and scientific activities and to support the organisation of meaningful leisure time activities.
- To research the socio-economical challenges that young people face and to develop measures and state programmes directed to their solution.
- To realize programmes supporting the patriotic upbringing of young people, to rise their social and political awareness and the level of their participation.
- To realize a youth policy in the regions of Armenia (through supporting the Network of Regional Youth Centers, creating other youth centers and organizing development programmes in rural and border areas).
- To create means for youth full self-realization and to provide state assistance to talented youth.
- To provide means and mechanisms for youth information.
- To develop international and all-Armenian cooperation.

Unfortunately this Strategy paper as well as the Ukrainian and Belarusian versions was prepared without prior consultations with youth sector. The advantage of this document is that it is based on the National Youth Report of Armenia published in 2006, so here we can speak about the evidence-based nature of the document. Another difference is that the appropriate “Work Plan for the years 2009-12” was developed by a working group composed of the representatives of the State bodies responsible for youth policy (Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, its Youth Policy Departments and the State not-for-profit Organisation “Center for organisation of Youth Activities”), representatives of the other State agencies responsible for cross-sectoral youth policy spheres (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Social Welfare) and a number of YNGOs from various spheres.

The “Work Plan 2009-12” is stating the concrete activities priority by priority, setting indicators for the assessment of the realization of this activities, naming the actors/stakeholders responsible for

the realization of the activities as well as pointing to the budgetary sources the activities will be funded from. It is also important to note that in the Work Plan for the first time it is stated that the State structures are obliged to realize annual monitoring processes of the effectiveness of the National Youth Policy together with the representatives of YNGOs. However this sort of Monitoring is still never realized.

The Moldovan Youth Policy is realized based on the “National Youth Strategy for 2009-2013”, which is aimed at the development of youth capacities to be aware and make use of their rights and responsibilities, to adopt an institutional frame responsible for enhancing youth participation in all life spheres, as well as to create a favorable environment for the development of young people.

The Strategy establishes the following priorities:

- Access of young people to information and service
- Enhance the participation of young people in public life and active citizenship
- Create opportunities for young people’s employment
- Development of human and institutional capacities in the youth field.

The operation of the aforementioned Strategy is provided by The National Annual Youth Programmes which are elaborated in cooperation with youth policy stakeholders - National Youth Council, Student Network, youth and student organisations, international organisations that deal with youth policy and local youth councils. This Programme consists of activities for/with young people arranged according to a concrete time frame, including expected results and indicators. For the year 2010 the Annual Youth Programme set the following main objectives: “improvement and adjustment of youth legislation to European standards enhance the youth participation and self-affirmation in social, economic and cultural life, consolidation of co-management system in dealing with youth policy, development of economic and social-inclusion opportunities for young people”.

4.4.2 Non-Formal Education

Although all reviewed countries highly valued the role of non-formal education and the reporters state its wide usage amongst civil society and governmental programmes, the political frameworks promoting and developing this sector are developed (or in the process of development) only in three countries – Armenia, Moldova and Belarus.

In Armenia there is a concrete state recognition of this sphere on behalf of the “State Concept on Non-Formal Education” (2006). In 2005-2006, with initiative of a couple of expert organisations from YNGO sector, the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education has developed the “State Concept on Non-Formal Education”, which was

one of the major achievements of non-formal education sphere in Armenia. “The Concept of Non-formal education in the Republic of Armenia” adopted by the RA Government decree N50 of December 14, 2006, was for the first time defining this type of education, presenting its principal characteristics as well as defining the priorities of this sphere in Armenia.

The Concept was stating the objectives of state policy in the sphere of non-formal education as follows:

- Elaboration of mechanisms assuring the quality of the non-formal education (quality of the structures offering non-formal education, the quality of the specialists of non-formal education and the quality of trainings/courses),
- Increase of awareness of the society of the non-formal education system,
- Stimulation and encouragement of the usage of the innovative approaches and methods in the non-formal education sphere,
- Assistance to the international mobility of the people participating in the non-formal education programmes,
- Assistance to the application of the non-formal education methods in the formal education institutions.

Based on this Concept, the authorized State Bodies, in cooperation with appropriate non-governmental organisations should develop an Action Plan for the years 2008-2013 aimed at the development of the non-formal education sphere and to present it for adoption to the Government of RA by the end of the fourth trimester of 2007. Unfortunately the development of the Action Plan was passed to the Ministry of Science and Education and it is delayed till now.

Moldova also has a political framework regarding the non-formal education. Here a “Non formal education strategy” is under development. This Strategy provides a normative framework and standards for developing non formal education services at national level according to the good practices and existing international experience. It contributes to the awareness rising, mobilization and orientation of governmental and non governmental organisations, donating and local community to establish partnership and sustainable cooperation in developing the system of non-formal educational institutions’ network.

In Belarus since 2006 festivals of non-formal education are organized by non-formal network of NGO’s, which works in the sphere of non-formal education and is called Organisation of Civic Education. The festival has given a possibility to attract attention of the state education system representatives to the phenomenon of non-formal education. During the 3rd festival, which took place in Minsk in 2010, Deputy Chairman of the commission on Education, Culture, Science and the scientific and technological progress of the House of Representatives proclaimed that in the

nearest future the new code on education will be adopted, which will include also paragraphs about non-formal education.

Georgia and Ukraine seem not to have special political frameworks for promotion and development of non-formal education in the countries.

4.4.3 Major Regular Youth Events and National Programmes

Since youth unemployment is a priority for all the countries reviewed, some of them also have reached to the level of development of special national programmes developing this sphere. For example in Moldova there is a Governmental “National Programme of Youth Economic Empowerment”, through which Government is proposing complex measures for promoting youth economic participation. This programme is implemented in rural areas and provides 16 commercial loans up to 300 thousands lei. It is foreseen to launch 1000 enterprises in the country.

In Ukraine, to develop youth employment and entrepreneurship, the government provides youth business incubators and supports employment centers in educational establishments. Significant role in this sphere is support of working units – temporary employment of youth for summer holidays (600 thousand employed youth planned). Youth working units are successors of Soviet students working movement, when the students were sent to big industrial projects.

There are also some major State events mentioned in the country reports, such as “The National Volunteers’ Week”, “National Volunteers Festival” and “National Youth Days” In Moldova, and “Stipend of Georgian President for specially talented youth and children” “Youth International Partnership” “Tsinandali grant for young creators”, “2005 presidential programmes “gift for children” and the camp “Patrioti” in Georgia. The project youth camp “Patrioti” was the one of the most large-scale projects in the country, and in the framework of the programme several youth camps were built up in regions of Georgia, where annually about 30000 young people have opportunity to spend a week with other youngsters from all over Georgia. There were several periodical projects named in Armenia as well, but besides the All-Armenian gathering “Baze” (“Falcon”), the others are suspended the last two years. Still there are plans to realize the “Intercultural Youth Festival” in 2011, but it is not yet finally confirmed.

4.4.4 Youth Information and Volunteering

Youth information and volunteering are other two spheres that are rather new to the realities of the reviewed countries, but they are still under development and have a much unstructured manner. Some of the countries as Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova have or are designing special Laws on Voluntary Service, but the level of development of this sphere is still quite low. It is reported that

even the international volunteers coming to the countries (e.g. to Ukraine and Armenia) through the programmes of European Commission are having some major problems because of the absence of appropriate legislative bases.

The youth information sphere is developing in some of the countries also due to the funding of Regional Youth centers such as in Georgia, Armenia and Moldova, which serve as local hubs for dissemination of information on youth policy and programmes from which the youngsters can benefit, as well as there is a higher attention to the usage of new Information Communication Technologies and Social Networking tools, which also contribute to the raising of the accessibility of information for young people.

4.5 Strategies in cross-sectorial policies

In term of cross-sectorial policies the situation is quite different in the countries reviewed. There are countries such as Belarus where there is no information provided on the cross-sectorial strategies in the country. In Georgia the cross-sectorial approach seems to be missing as reported by the authors. It is also important to note that the absence of the cross-sectorial dimension is resulting in a situation, when the programmes from different institutions are overlapping and doubling the resources spent.

The situation in Ukraine is better than in Georgia, as although there are no cross-sectorial policies, but there is a certain division of tasks between different governmental agencies for the realization of the “National Programme Youth of Ukraine 2009-2015”. The Programme provides certain activities with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports which is one of the main actors in the youth policy sphere. Education and creative development programmes, festivals, knowledge and skills competitions and various publications are organized by the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Labor. Ministries of Education of Science, Culture, Defense, Labour and Ministry of Interior are responsible for programmes related to patriotic education and human values. Employment and youth entrepreneurship programmes are coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and State Committee on private Enterprises.

Various Ministries also have concrete responsibilities according to their natures, such as; Ministry of Culture and Tourism – for youth and children libraries, theatres and art schools; Ministry of Labor – for employment, Ministry of Social Protection – for disabled youth, Ministry of Health Protection – for health issues and others

Concrete cross-sectorial policies, schemes and programmes are available in Moldova and Armenia.

In Armenia the main platform providing the cross-sectorial coordination of the youth policy is the Council on Youth Affairs by the Prime Minister of Republic of Armenia, where all the main Ministries which have youth related functions are represented on the level of Deputy-ministers and the half of the Council is formed by the representatives of YNGO sector and student organisations selected via open competition process organized by the administration of the Prime Minister.

Also the development process of the “Work Plan of the “Youth Policy Strategy for the years 2008-12” is realized through an intensive cross-sectorial dialogue between the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs with representatives of other Ministries, National Youth Council of Armenia and various expert YNGOs from youth sector. The Work Plan itself has a cross-sectorial nature as it involves not only activities to be organized by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, but it is also systematizing all the other youth related programmes from other governmental agencies as well.

Besides the Work Plan there are also some other programmes which are realized in cooperation with other Ministries. For example together with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Science and Education various programmes are planned in promoting healthy lifestyles amongst youth in general and students in particular as well as preventing and combating HIV/AIDS. In the sphere of education and training the Ministries of Science and Education and Sport and Youth Affairs will work together for the preparation and implementation of the “Action Plan on Non-formal Education”. Youth in the Army is one of the biggest target groups of the National Youth Policy. Since 1998 The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs together with the Ministry of Defense organizes visits of young people and students to the military units situated in various parts of Armenia alongside with cultural programmes for the young people serving their regular military service in there. In 2009 a State Programme “Accessible Flat to Youth Families” was launched in cooperation of multiple state agencies such as Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, Ministry of Regional Governance and the Ministry of Municipal Construction. This State Programme is providing support to young families (the summary age of the couple lower than 60) to receive long-term loans for buying flats with percents lower than those in regular market of the loans.

Moldovan youth policy has one of the largest cross-sectorial aspects amongst the countries reviewed. It was even hard to systematize the variety of the cross-sectorial programmes and initiatives because of their big number.

Here the Ministry for Economy is in charge of the National Programme of Economic Empowerment of Young People, Ministry of Health is responsible for providing national youth friendly healthcare services, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family has the responsibility to deliver programmes for youth social care and protection, as well social inclusion policy for youth. The National Agency for Employment is in charge of providing young people with information and

training for a better economic participation, for finding a job and some key knowledge and competences for this. Ministry of Construction and Regional Development is dealing with National Programme “Houses for Young People”. The Ministry for Education has the mandate to deliver educational programmes and create adequate conditions for children and youth intellectual and physical development. The Ministry of Interior provides prevention programmes for children and at-risk groups of youth, and delivers programmes for the social inclusion of delinquent youth. Ministry for Culture support creation centers where children and youth acquire artistic skills.

There are also some National Strategic Programmes which also contribute to the mobilization and coordination of youth related policies on cross-sectoral manner. These are the National Development Strategy (NDS), which is the main medium-term strategic planning document which defines the developmental objectives and will guide the social and economic change process over the period 2008-2011. One of the priorities of the Strategy is human development, mainly youth investment for its social care, health protection and creating economic opportunities. The NDS stresses the importance of equitable access to quality education for ensuring equal chances for a decent life, adequate employment opportunities, participation in social life and higher social cohesion.

The elaboration and adoption of “National Strategy Education for All” in 2001 with the support of World Bank has launched a several reforms in educational curricula, school system for implementing new principles such as quality in delivering education, friendly and sensitive education for any child, social inclusion, child health, gender equality, participation of community in development of education. It induced development of a set of other programmes such as: “Moldovan Educational System Modernization Programme” (2005); “Education for Everybody” National Strategy (2003) “SALT Programme” that foresees the endowment of schools with IT knowledge and technical support; and the “Youth Strategy” (2003). There is also a special Strategy promoting the social inclusion of people with special needs (for the years 2010-2013), that sets a normative framework for adjusting the social, economic and cultural services to special needs of people. The Government also introduced a countrywide mandatory health insurance in 2004.

There are also a number of youth related cross-sectoral Programmes, which are developed and are being implemented in Moldova. One of them is the “Programme on Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and STI”, which determines the main strategies for prevention, monitoring and treatment of HIV/AIDS and STI. A “National Programme for ensuring gender equality” is also developed ensuring gender equality, providing a platform for development of job and business opportunities especially for women and youth, enhancing the system of services for protection and assistance to the victims of domestic violence and trafficking. There is a “Programme to Develop an Integrated System of Social Services” that delivers care on an out-patient basis to people living at home, or in

small-scale community group homes, a referral system to regional and central care, and preventive and early intervention services. There are also several other programmes in other spheres as well.

4.6 European and International dimension

All the countries reviewed state the international and European cooperation as one of their most important priorities. Although there are some differences regarding the interest of towards European Integration, where some countries as Georgia and Moldova are clearly stating their inspirations to fulfill the requirements and to deepen their countries' European Integration process, the other countries are regarding the European cooperation frameworks as excellent development and partnership mechanisms.

In all the reports there was a clear message about the important role of the two European Institutions Council of Europe and European Commission in the development of the youth policy and especially its international dimension in the countries. Regarding the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission the role of the SALTO EECA Resource Center was also highlighted as one of the most effective structures supporting the involvement of YNGOs and youth in general into the Programmes of European Commission.

It is also important to note that the reviews of National Youth Policy realized in Cooperation with Council of Europe were mentioned as one of the most valuable tools for youth policy assessment and development. European Youth Foundation was also named in most of the reports with its contributions to the development of local and international youth work.

In most of the countries the role and contribution of UN structures (such as UNICEF and UNDP) were also noted as very valuable, especially in the fields of youth policy development and youth research.

Georgia is a member of Council of Europe since 1999 and nowadays it is stating its clear dedication to the building of the new state based on the European values of freedom, human rights and democracy as well as its intentions to deepen the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration. Developing political dialogue with European Union and getting more involved in the European Neighborhood Policy. Meeting the new challenges of the new Eastern Partnership initiative is one of the priorities of the Georgian foreign policy.

In the international youth programmes sphere Georgia is also one of the leading countries in terms of their activity in the framework of "Youth in Action" Programme of European Commission and European Youth Foundation of Council of Europe. For example with the support of European Youth Foundation 55 projects were financed during 2008 – 2010 with total budget of 477 900 Euro.

The National Youth Council of Georgia is also full member of European Youth Forum and actively participates in the work of this European Platform.

UNICEF is also one of the most active agencies in Georgia and the Report of Georgian youth policy is naming two major projects realized by the support of their organisation, which were the project “Accessibility to quality education pre-primary and secondary education” and “Juvenile justice and related youth inclusion”.

Since its first years international cooperation and partnership development were the highest priorities of National Youth Policy in Armenia. The first visit paid by the Director of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe in 1998 and following three Training Courses organized in Armenia by the Assistance Programme of Council of Europe have helped to shape the bases of the youth policy of Armenia, to prepare new generation of youth leaders as well as helped Armenia to firmly accept the principle of co-management in the youth policy sphere. The last visit of the newly appointed Director of the Youth Directorate in 2010 has given a chance to look back and to evaluate these more than 10 years of cooperation with Council of Europe and design new possible ways of cooperation and partnership. In 2010 Armenia also officially joined the Partial Agreement on Youth Card.

Armenia also actively participates in the agenda of Council of Europe regarding the Human Rights Education. “Compass” and “Compassito” manuals are translated to Armenian and various training courses popularizing these educational tools are organized in Armenia.

National Youth Council of Armenia is also active in international youth sector. In November 2004 it became a full member of the European Youth Forum and takes part in the activities of this organisation.

Another important actor in promoting international dialogue of Armenian YNGOs and young people in general is the European Commission. Armenia is involved in European Neighborhood Policy Initiative and in 2007 the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in cooperation with YNGOs has developed some youth programmes to be involved in the Armenia-EU Action Plan. But actually it is necessary to mention that since that time there is nothing realized from the planned measures. Armenian youth is mostly benefiting from the “Youth in Action” Programme of European Commission and year by year the list of active organisations in European cooperation is enlarged with new local and national YNGOs. The YNGO sector expects that the Eastern Partnership initiative of the EC will open up even more possibilities for young people in Armenia to develop cooperation with their colleagues from EU countries.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs has also number of bilateral cooperation agreements with the Governments of other countries, through which also some bilateral and multilateral cooperation

programmes are realized. A structured cooperation is also realized in the framework of the CIS Club of Youth Ministries, which has an action plan and supports cooperation of state and non-governmental actors in youth sphere.

OSCE, UNICEF and UNDP are also supporting the development of youth policy in Armenia and contributing both to the Strategy developments, development of youth research projects and also institutional development of the infrastructures involved in local and national youth policy realization.

Belarus is also considering development of international cooperation as one of the most important priorities of its youth policy. The fourth platform “Human contacts” as part of “Eastern Partnership” initiative has become the starting point for the development of relations with Europe. The first meeting of the platform was held in Brussels in June 2009 with the assistance of the European Commission, where the main directions of youth policy in Belarus were presented. During the meeting Belarus proposed to pay special attention on youth affairs within “Eastern Partnership”. Belarus sent 12 pilot projects proposals to be included to the existing EU programme.

In 2010, Head of Directorate of Youth and Sports of Council of Europe and Chairman of the Steering Committee on Youth Affairs of the Council of Europe visited Minsk to discuss the perspectives of future cooperation of Council of Europe and Republic of Belarus in the field of youth policy, based on the “Agenda 2020”.

“Youth in Action” Programme is also amongst one of the most important tools mentioned in the Report of Belarus. Although the country is not one of the most active participants in this Programme in EECA region, but still a lot of efforts are made to increase the involvement of Belarus of Youth in this activities. In this regard with the support of the SALTO EECA Resource Center the Belarusian network of multipliers has organized “Youth work reality in Belarus” study visit in 2009. The study visit was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and by the Delegation of European Commission. The aim of the study visit was to show the possibilities of international cooperation both on the level of the State and on the level of NGO’s. Participants of the study visit had a chance to meet representatives of different Belarusian NGO’s and managed to plan common activities for the future, and also this project has contributed to the development of future cooperation between the Delegation of European Commission and Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus.

International cooperation, European Integration and international donor support coordination are very important spheres of Moldovan youth policy reforms. Moldova is a member of the Council of Europe since 1995. The Ministry of Youth and Sports through its representatives is member of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and they have an appointed correspondent in the

European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP). Moldovan governmental authorities are doing their best to meet the European criteria in many spheres, including its youth policy. The Partial Agreement on the Youth Card of the Council of Europe and the membership in ERYICA are also in the agendas of the Ministry of Education and Youth of Moldova.

Moldova is also member state of United Nations (UN), Central European Initiative (CEI), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (OECD).

The international expertise provided by international organisations has largely contributed to the setting up of normative framework in youth field. Development and approval of “Youth National Strategy” and “National Action Plan” was carried out with the technical support of both UNICEF and World Bank. These organisations together with Council of Europe and European Commission also substantially contribute to capacity building of human resources and institutional development through their youth programmes. And this is not only about the YNGO sector, but specialists from municipalities in charge with educational activity and youth work also obtained a lot of skills and qualifications due to different training programmes, seminars and workshops.

Cooperation with UNDP cooperation is mainly focused on strengthening good governance, accelerating human development, development of civil society and private sector, promotion of gender equality and enhance of the access to information. Also UNICEF and other UN agencies provide support to specialized programmes addressing young people in Moldova, at the same time promoting complex approach of development of policies, capacity development and quality services in the spheres of youth policy and youth work. The lobby activity carried out by UNICEF has been one of the most important factors contributions to the provision of national legislation according to the international standards and to the adoption of “Youth Law”. UNICEF made a tremendous commitment to the creation and development of youth resource centers and youth local councils, as well implemented a lot of projects based on health care of young people. WB in partnership with UNICEF supported a big project “Social and Economic Empowerment of Young people” for increasing the capacity of young people to launch and develop own businesses and improve the participation of young people in public life.

Other international donors also greatly contribute to the development of youth policy and youth programmes in Moldova. The “National Youth Strategy for 2009 – 2015” was developed with technical assistance of World Bank „Capacity development for the implementation of youth policy in the Republic of Moldova” and UNAIDS has an active role in developing projects for reducing the HIV/AIDS and ITS. East European Foundation implements projects for developing local youth initiatives for supporting youth living in rural areas. International Organisation for Migration

organizes different activities and develops projects for reducing youth illegal migration. All the aforementioned projects are implemented with a strong cooperation between governmental and non-governmental partners which had a strong impact on the quality of youth policy development in Moldova.

Moldovan YNGOs also actively participate in the “Youth in Action” Programme of European Commission. The Programme is supported and promoted by Ministry of Education and Youth, and the National Youth Council. Network of Multipliers of Youth in Action Programme in Moldova also greatly support to the dissemination of information on the Programme all over the country.

One of the most important international partners of Ukraine in the youth policy and youth related spheres is the European Union. Ukrainian YNGOs and youth from the countries brought above are also greatly benefiting from the “Youth in Action” Programme of European Commission. Ukraine also has a very active Network of Multipliers of “Youth in Action” Programme created with the support of SALTO EECA Resource Center. Through the Delegation of European Commission to Ukraine the European Union also provides national tenders on raising European awareness about European Union amongst youth through the Network of European Clubs and knowledge competitions on European Integration. The Delegation provides information on the programmes Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and “Youth in Action”. There is also a National Tempus Office in Ukraine which provides support for educational and scientist programmes.

Cooperation with Council of Europe is also in the special focus in Ukraine, especially in the framework of human rights and justice related issues. Human rights education programmes for young people and training for youth leaders and civil servants responsible for youth are mentioned in the Youth Action Plan for 2008-2011. European Youth Foundation is also funding number of youth projects in the country. There were plans also to translate COMPASS and COMPASITO into Ukrainian in 2008, but as it is mentioned in the youth policy report by the end of 2010 the work was not yet done.

UNDP and UNICEF are also one of the most active actors in Ukraine in the sphere of youth policy, and in cooperation with the governmental institutions and NGOs they realize several programmes in this sphere. UNDP contributes to the development of youth policy and youth social participation. In cooperation with the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports and with support of UN Volunteers, Intel and other public and international donors in 2008 they launched the programme “Youth Social Inclusion for Civic Engagement in Ukraine”, which is aimed at supporting youth social inclusion and civic engagement by developing their key social competencies, which are needed for pro-active youth involvement in society and decision-making processes.

52 Youth Centers were established in rural communities in 9 Regions and Crimea with support of the “Local Development Programme”, providing safe and creative places for youth to meet, socialize and engage in healthy activities. 2005-2007 UNDP supported “Human Security for Ukrainian Youth” project and elaboration of “National Doctrine on Youth Policy” which unfortunately is not yet adopted and implemented.

UNICEF in Ukraine is mostly concentrating its activities on ensuring that all children and young people (especially those vulnerable and marginalized), would have a possibility to grow up in a caring family or family-like environment, and that their fundamental rights are met. In 2006-2010 UNICEF have four main programmes in Ukraine: “The Advocacy, Information and Social Policy Programme”, “HIV/AIDS Children and Youth Programme”, “Child Protection Programme” and “Child Health and Development Programme”.

Two other Foundations are also noted in Ukrainian Report, which are greatly contributing to the youth and child related programmes, which are “EveryChild Foundation” and “International Renaissance Foundation” (Open Society Institute, Soros Network Foundation). EveryChild in Ukraine is actively involved in the development of long-term national and regional programmes targeted at improving childcare services and reducing the number of children placed in state care.

The “International Renaissance Foundation” supports pro-European initiatives of Ukrainian NGOs in European awareness and education. The Foundation also supports a Network of European Information Centers which is promoting European awareness. “International Renaissance Foundation” has also a programme for supporting Roma communities in cultural and educational spheres and has initiated creation of “Roma Youth Forum”.

Multilateral international cooperation is one of the major priorities of the Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of Russian Federation. Although the spectrum of the international cooperation activities is quite wide, the main direction by now is the cooperation with European Union. In particular the Ministry takes part in the preparation of the normative and programme documentation for formation of “Mechanism of Common Space” in the framework of bilateral cooperation of Russian Federation with European Union.

Another key partner of Russia in international sphere is Council of Europe. In the framework of cooperation with this structure the Ministry has signed a “Framework agreement on cooperation in the sphere of youth policy” with the youth Directorate of Council of Europe as well as Action Plan for the year 2011. The other strategic directions of cooperation are the activities in the framework of Barents See/ Euro-Arctic region countries, cooperation with UN, UNESCO, as well as in the framework of Shanghai Organisation for Cooperation.

4.7 Budget/Funding

Amongst the other spheres reviewed the aspect of the Budgets and Funding of youth policy and programmes seem to have most of the problems. In all the countries reviewed the only positive input was from Armenia, where a new Online Grant System was introduced in 2010, but according to the new data from the country the system stops operating for the last two trimesters due to some political reasons and structural reorganisations of infrastructures.

In most of the countries the budgetary sources for youth affairs are quite limited, moreover the situation is coming even worse due to mismanagement, lack of transparent mechanisms of distribution of resources, political limitations on support to youth activities (and usage of youth resources for political reasons), as well as absolute absence of independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms measuring the effectiveness of expenditures.

The reporters mostly mention that the resources available are scarce, but still they are not very limited and in case of effective management they could bring real changes to the situation of young people living in the countries. For example in a couple of countries such as Armenia and Georgia there is a tendency to spend huge part of the resources on organisation of some mega-projects (mostly youth gatherings and camps, such as “Falcon” in Armenia and “Patrioti” in Georgia) instead of funding some projects with a real transformative and development nature.

The situation is especially difficult in Belarus where not only the state budgetary resources are provided only to a small circle of non-governmental organisations, but also by a set of Decrees of the President step-by-step the possibilities of international donor support, local private sector support and as well as self-financing of the YNGOs is nullified. Not only systems of control are set to monitor all kind of support to NGO sector, but with some normative acts the range of activities which are allowed to be realized (the possible spheres of project realization) is limited to some concrete types of activities.

In Ukraine there is also serious resources dedicated to youth sphere, but still the same problems mentioned above are minimizing the positive output of the expenditures. The Ukrainian report is presenting the following main problems with this sphere, which are: a. Lack of clearly defined priorities and lack of budget division according to such priorities,; b. evaluation committee of the grants is organized without consultation of the NGOs and sometimes the projects are evaluated by the applicants themselves and c. difficulties with evaluation of result, closed information about outputs of previous projects.

There was a very interesting initiative in Armenia, which could reform the whole concept of the state financing of youth activities, but as mentioned above, now the process is suspended and it is not clear if the system will be re-launched or not. However it would be interesting here to briefly

present this initiative. An Online Grant System was launched to provide more transparent and accessible dissemination of state funds to YNGOs. All the activities regarding the distribution of the grants were done online and on transparent manner. Independent experts from NGO sector and civil servants were registering in the system and they were the ones which were anonymously evaluating the grant applications. The Ministry was simply approving the financing based exclusively on these expert evaluations. All the reports of the projects were meant to be openly put online open to public (including even the copies of the financial report documentation and required photo materials). All the projects applied and approved were also publicly announced on the web page of the System. This system was giving an opportunity to minimize the corruption risks and subjectivity factors and it was also much more accessible for the YNGOs from the distant regions and rural areas which before had serious problems with presenting documentation and managing project with the infrastructures located in the capital.

However if this system is re-launched and passes the needed testing and fine-tuning phase, then it can be transferred to other countries as well, which might greatly contribute to the solution of the problems brought by Reporters from the other countries reviewed.

To summarize we can state that the major problems with funding in the reviewed countries are:

- Lack of prioritizing for expenditures from youth budget
- Lack of transparency in the mechanisms of distribution and usage of this resources
- Presence of some sort of “elites” which are funded and “outsiders” which do not have chances to benefit from this public resources
- Lack of transparent co-managements schemes providing the YNGOs’ participation in decision making process in this sphere
- Lack of monitoring and assessment mechanisms for effectiveness of the resources provided
- “Politization” of the expenditures from state budgets on youth affairs and taking them from the sphere of “youth policy” to the sphere of “youth politics”
- Lack of coordination of international donor support and their direction according to the evidence-based strategic spheres.

5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations

This section of the reports will be presented summarized at the end but we have taken a decision also to present here the original texts of the reporters, as they are presenting a wide range of very important perspectives and valuable recommendations, which would be important to be presented in whole:

5.1 Belarus

Trends by Yaroslav Oleinik

Positive results of youth situation improvement reached by the interactive work of all youth policy stakeholders. However, there are still a lot of problems to be solved, which negatively influence the situation of youth:

- No substantial independent professional research on the situation of youth in the country;
- Decrease of the population of the country including people at the age from 14 till 31 y.o.;
- Increase of morbidity rate among young people with mental and behavior disorders under the supervision of psychiatrists;
- Increase of crimes among young people;
- Young people are not involved in the decision making process and are not interested in the State Youth Policy;
- State Youth Policy doesn't really meet the needs of young people.

It should be also mentioned that the effectiveness of the realization of the State Youth Policy influenced by the following factors:

- Absence of a separate state body on Youth Affairs;
- Reduction of financial support for realization of events included to the programme "Youth of Belarus"

In order to improve the situation of youth in the Republic of Belarus and to develop positive tendencies in the field of Youth Policy, the following issues are to be solved:

- To involve young people to the decision making process;
- To provide freedom of effective participation of young people in political, social, economical and cultural development of the society;
- To provide equal opportunities for young people in employment;
- To improve the system of social protection of young people;
- To provide free access to the information for young people;

- To support youth initiatives and NGO's;
- To develop the system of training and retraining for youth workers, leaders of youth NGO's;
- To develop international cooperation in the field of Youth Policy by supporting international dialogue between Belarusian and International youth NGO's.

Support in the field of education, training, exchange programmes and cross-border cooperation for youth are among the European Union's stated priorities. Across Europe, an increasing number of young people are participating in exchanges and different kinds of programmes. Unfortunately, this is not the case for the youth of Belarus, at present one of Europe's most isolated countries. Although young people make up the most pro-European segment of Belarusian society, their access to EU programmes remains limited.

Of the three major EU initiatives in the field of higher education, Belarusians are only eligible to participate in the TEMPUS programme. In fact, many of the EU's programmes designed to help CIS countries, such as the TACIS programme, have experienced great difficulties in Belarus. Most of the pro-European youth groups and initiatives in Belarus are not recognized by the government, and therefore have little chance to benefit from EU programmes. Access to these programmes for groups which truly deserve support would be enhanced if the EU was able to work directly with individual youth organisations, what is quite difficult due to the Belarusian legislation.

On a positive note, Belarusian youth groups are able to take part in the EU's Youth Programme via the third country status. This programme offers broad opportunities for intercultural learning and cooperation among young people in Europe. Unfortunately, the Youth programme is not well known in Belarus, and only a few NGO's are currently taking part in it. A key reason for such low participation is a lack of information. The EU's Information Center for CIS countries is based in Warsaw, which makes it difficult for Belarusian groups to obtain information about programmes or to seek assistance in applying. For organisations and groups which have heard about the programme, there is the additional problem of finding partners in member states with which to carry out their projects.

5.2 Armenia

Trends by Areg Tadevosyan, Zaruhi Lavchyan and Anahit Minassian

It is not always easy to summarize a phenomenon which is so multi-faceted and dynamically evolving in a quite rapid rate. And this are the two key words that can best describe the National Youth Policy and youth situation in Armenia – “dynamically evolving” and “diverse”. But for sure some concrete trends are easily detectible and some clear conclusions can be made based on

them. We strongly hope that this will be another contribution to the development of a more effective strategic approach in the sphere of National Youth policy.

So first trend that is possible to extract from the observations of the current policies of the State, strategies and programmes is the clear emphasize on the education system its reforms, its synchronization and harmonization with European standards as well as providing better links with the labour market. There are a number of State programs motivated also by Armenia's participation in Lisbon Strategy and Bologna Process, but all in all it is necessary to state that the current situation is a clear "transition" period with all its minuses, when there is a lack of specialists understanding what are all those "bolognas" about, how it is possible to adapt something new to Armenian realities without totally destroying what was available before the reforms as well as how to combine policy and mechanism changes with appropriate changes in the minds of the stakeholders, beneficiaries and the general public.

Another issue to mention is the emergence of the non-formal education system in Armenia, as the labour market is now more and more actively seeking for some competences which are not provided by formal educational system, and they are widely practiced and trained in YNGO sector and in numerous trainings the numbers of which are increasing day by day. The "State Concept of Non-Formal Education in Armenia" in 2006 was a major milestone in developing non-formal education institution in the country, but still the development of appropriate Action Plan is constantly delayed since 2007. The topics of recognition of non-formal education, the quality and standards issue as well as the lack of general awareness on it are still challenges to be addressed in this sphere. However the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs have started and process of training youth workers in this sphere and according to the Work Plan of the Youth Policy (2009-12) each year till 2012 (and maybe further) 50 youth workers will pass the "Training for Trainers" LTTC and appropriate methodological training materials and manuals are developed.

One of the four major priorities of the "Youth Policy Strategy for the years of 2008-2012" is the promotion of youth employment and entrepreneurship. This is a quite hard task in a country with such high rates of poverty and low level of economical development, but we should state that there are a wide range of measures planned in this sphere, and what is even more important, through the involvement of the Network of Regional Youth Centers this programmes are going also to the regions, which suffer from youth unemployment much more than the capital.

The vocational training, which seemed to be forgotten after being a quite important part of education system in Soviet times, shows some signs of awakening. This is quite important especially for young people for whom higher education is not accessible (either because of intellectual capacity, lack of financial means or simply because of choice). Reforms in vocational training are very important for decreasing present youth unemployment rate which is rather high.

One of the biggest state programmes of the last decade is the “Accessible housing for young families” programme launched in 2009. It is one of the main programmes aimed at another one of the priorities of the “Youth Policy Strategy for the years of 2008-2012”, namely “Improvement of the social-economical situation of young people”. This programme is still in its testing phase and a number of methods of solving the housing problem of young families are being developed and implemented, based also on the international experience in this sphere.

Another tendency of the last two years in the National Youth Policy sphere is the set of measures aimed at raising the level of participation of youth leaders in decision making processes as well as providing a higher transparency in budgetary expenditures in the sphere of funding the initiatives of YNGOs from the State Budget. In this framework the Council of Youth Affairs by the Prime minister was reorganized in 2010, and a more transparent way of the nomination of YNGO sector representatives was introduced. The renewed Council also developed a new funding scheme for grants to YNGOs from the state budget means, and in the second part of the 2010 an Online Grant System was introduced to YNGO sector which is providing a much higher transparency and publicity level than the previous grants system. Actually this system has no precedents in any of the countries in the region and the other European countries as much as we are informed, and if it will succeed the efficiency of the public expenditures for youth projects will be considerably raised. The major challenge in this sphere is the inertia and resistance of the supporters of the previous system, which do not accept the innovative nature of the system and sometimes are afraid to lose some dividends that the previous system was possibly providing them.

Another positive tendency in the National Youth Policy is the programmed/strategic nature that it is starting to gain after the completion of the National Youth Report and the adoption of the “Youth Policy Strategy for the years of 2008-2012”. The last document and the corresponding Work Plan 2009-12 are clearly activity and indicator based and foresee a yearly monitoring process to be realized by YNGOs and state structures. There was no public monitoring realized in 2010, but at least having this point in the Work Plan is creating the possibility and will in case of successful realization highly affect the effectiveness of the National Youth Policy.

Development of the National Youth Report has opened a new phase in the National Youth Policy. On one hand it has created bases for development of evidence based youth policy, and on the other hand has raised the importance of the youth research institution in general. Although the youth research institution is still quite weak in Armenia, in the year 2011 an update of the National Youth Report is planned which will stimulate the development of this sphere.

One of the negative tendencies is the increasing “politisation” of the youth policy sphere. The youth policy structures were traditionally a politics-free zone and the YNGO sector was promoting this situation through its lobbying efforts. This was giving a possibility to secure the National Youth

Policy from the effects of numerous political changes that were happening in the Republic. But last couple of years due to increasing political confrontations between different political parties, there is a tendency to give a political color to youth policy as well. More and more issues relating to the National Youth Policy are discussed in political couloirs before reaching the youth sector, which is negatively affecting the trust of YNGOs (especially the vast majority of non-political YNGOs) towards the National Youth Policy.

The situation is also coming more complicated as the youth sector is traditionally “attached” to another Ministry to which it has no any special relations. At first it was in the Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs and then it was transferred to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Each transfer or each change of the Minister is paralyzing the Youth Policy system for a couple of months at least, so this situation is endangering the normal functioning of the youth policy sector. A solution of this issue can be transfer of the youth sector of the State Policy to a separate division and providing its political immunity as a sector which is uniting and serving the whole body of the youth in the country.

Another characteristic of the youth policy of the recent years is the higher attention to the issue of youth information. The state structures are constantly trying several types of media to provide this aspect of the National Youth Policy. The last scheme is the initiative of an online portal of youth information. The two components of it are already launched “Online Grant System” (www.cragrer.am) and the bilingual “Online News Portal” (www.youth.am). Another two components are in the process of development which will be a social networking platform with e-learning opportunities and a section on the resources and information on National Youth Policy and programmes for young people. Besides this Ministry is organizing a TV programme “Comma” which is broadcasted on National Television. The Network of Regional Youth Centers with its libraries and computer halls is another tool for the youth information dissemination. But here it is necessary to note that the youth information system is not yet reachable for majority of the youth, as the internet coverage in Armenia is not very wide.

There are a big number of YNGOs and NGOs working with young people registered in the State Registry Agency. But the number of normally operating and sustainable NGOs amongst them is quite low. The main reason for this is the lack of youth workers and youth leaders with appropriate skills and knowledge on community work, organisational management, project development and management, organisation of training events etc. Accordingly creation of systematized mechanisms/schemes of youth worker training, empowerment of newly established NGOs and youth initiative groups is a must for the youth sector of Armenia.

The “Youth Policy Strategy for the years of 2008-2012” is prioritizing the sphere of promotion of healthy lifestyles popularization of sports and providing awareness raising programmes about

reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. This is very important tendency and the youth in Armenia is almost not at all interested in sports and the knowledge on health, healthy lifestyles and healthcare system are very low. Sports facilities and in general leisure time facilities systems are extremely underdeveloped especially in the regions and rural areas, which is another cause of young people's internal migration to urban areas and especially the capital.

Support of international and especially European cooperation is an important sphere of work of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. The level of awareness of young people on European issues is extremely low in Armenia, although the interest towards them is very high. European integration and cooperation is one of the priorities on Armenian Government in general and National Youth Policy sector has a long story of cooperation with Council of Europe. The European Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership initiative are opening up new possibilities of developing intercultural dialogue possibilities for Armenian young people and both the "Youth Policy Strategy for the years of 2008-2012" with its Work Plan and also the Work Plan of the Council of Youth Affairs by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia are emphasizing the development of international and European cooperation. Youth in Action Programme of European Commission (and YOUTH Programme in the years 2002-2006) have contributed a lot to the European awareness raising and international mobility in Armenia. Now the new Online Grants System has special categories for "Travel Grants" and "Co-Funding Grants", which are facilitating Armenian youth's participation in these programmes.

5.3 Georgia

Trends by Vakhtang Asanidze

If we look throughout the Youth policy history in Georgia we will see several attempts to structure Youth Policy in the Country, First was the decree 92 of 12th March 2001 of the president of Georgia on "State concept for supporting Georgian youth", but unfortunately it was never implemented because of budgetary problems. The second is draft "National policy of youth of Georgia" developed by Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia. Between of these attempts there was a gap of having no Policy at all, but State youth programmes should be mentioned as steps from government for Georgian youth. Among them the biggest is annual "Patriotic" Camps, which is organized every summer since 2004 and lets up to 30000 thousand young people participate and spend time. Despite of the successful realization of the programme, most experts, NGO representatives or just youth workers evaluate it as not effective in terms of needs and challenges young people face in their everyday life. Unfortunately ineffective waste of state money and free time of young people leads to negative impact on youth and unhealthy way of life. Most of

youth in Georgia has no or low level of access to educational recourses, information about different formal or non-formal educational means is not disseminated; situation is most alarming for youth living in the regions, and this serve the reason for high level of migration of youth in big cities, etc.

Since July 2010 situation has been changed as the Ministry of Sport and Youth affairs of Georgia was established. But it should be also mentioned that current ministry is former State department of Sport and youth affairs of Georgia and practically State department reorganized as a Ministry with almost same staff and same leadership. New Ministry clearly declared that by the end of 2010 they were going to prepare “National policy of youth of Georgia” which was going to be adopted by the government. Ministry fulfilled its promise and draft of the “policy document was published but it did not reached to the government yet.

The quality and the level of policy document initiated discussions and debates among Youth NGO representatives, experts and Youth workers. Main concern about the draft of the policy document was that it was not enough discussed among them and the ministry was organizing only presentations for university based students self government. Unfortunately absence of inclusion and youth participation during development of the policy document resulted to the lack of quality and credibility of the draft of “National policy of youth of Georgia”

From the observation it is obvious that policy document does not include clear definitions of things such as Youth Work, Youth Policy, Non-formal Education, Youth Participation and Decision making process. What is more important policy document does not include any action plan about how the ministry is going do deliver the Policy which they have developed.

The main trend to this direction is that the policy document should be much more structured and as inclusive as possible, main aspects and priorities of the policy document according to the needs and challenges of Georgian youth should be following:

Youth Participation, Employment, social protection, Non-formal education, Voluntarism, Youth Organisations, Youth Research, Healthcare

Having in to consideration all above mentioned and the study which was conducted in frames of EU-CoE partnership project “Reviews on youth policies in the countries of South East Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus” following conclusions can be made up:

The youth sector in Georgia is in an unenviable situation due to the lack of political stability, funding, political will from the part of the government, lack of resources and capacity on the side of youth organisations and because of the armed conflicts that has slowed down the activities

The Georgian government does not put youth high on the priority list of its work; it concentrates on visibility events like the “patriot camps” that spend very high amounts of funds without a real impact on the youth policy

The Georgian youth NGOs are disabled by the situation in the country and have managed to make much progress despite the difficult situation – still a more concrete plan, priority assessment and roadmap is needed

The international institutions and organisations are not coordinated in their efforts in the youth field – many of them have similar project and provide funding for similar activities this makes the youth field more weak to make a point of their work

There is no law on youth – even worse, there is no proper governmental research to picture the real needs of young people and to properly assess the main priority of the future legislative development.

Territorial Conflicts in Georgia has even more slowed down the work with youth but it is not to be considered a justification for a decline, but a motivation for investing even more into developing youth policy and a youth sector that will contribute to society development.

Young people and youth in Georgia, need to create it own stable policy on the situation in the country, concentrate deeply on identifying the real reasons for the situation they are in and propose solutions that would influence even the way in which the state treats youth in the country.

To Learn and train others on methods and opportunities for fund raising and how it can be connected to the sustainability of youth NGOs and how it can modify and influence the youth policy development in the country.

Lobby the government for elevation of youth high on the priority list, conduct regular meetings and propose concrete solutions to the government – offer work and assistance , not just express needs.

Lobby the ministry for inclusion of youth NGOs in the legislative process on youth as well as inclusion into a proper survey/research on youth in Georgia.

Youth NGOs need to increase the level of assertiveness and ability to reach out to the decision makers; they also need clear goals and an almost obsessed dedication in achieving them.

Lobby the international partners for more coherence in supporting projects and activities, lobby for diversified funds and against the particularization of the young society that brings to its weakness.

Georgia is a democratic semi-presidential republic, with the President as the head of state, and Prime Minister as the head of government. The executive branch of power is made up of the

President and the Cabinet of Georgia. The Cabinet is composed of ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, and appointed by the President. Legislative authority is vested in the Parliament of Georgia, with 150 members elected for 4 four-year term. Despite considerable progress made since the Rose revolution, Georgia is still not a full-fledged democracy. The political system remains in the process of transition, with frequent adjustments to the balance of power between the President and Parliament.

Georgia maintains good relations with its direct neighbours Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey and participates actively in regional organisations, such as the Black Sea Economic Council and the GUAM. It is also very important to mention the Eastern Partnership (EaP), which represents a specific Eastern dimension within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It has been launched on 7 May 2009 during the EaP summit in Prague. All 27 EU Member States and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participate in the EaP.

Eastern partners and Georgia among them seeks to intensify its relations with the EU. The Eastern Partnership is the reply of the EU to the challenges and aspirations of the partner countries.

The EU is proposing to its partners: new association agreements including deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with those countries willing and able to enter into a deeper engagement, gradual integration in the EU economy and easier travel to the EU through gradual visa liberalisation, accompanied by measures to tackle illegal immigration.

The Partnership would also promote democracy and good governance; strengthen energy security; promote sector reform and environment protection; encourage people to people contacts; support economic and social development; offer additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase stability.

It is very important to mention Georgia's Reforms in different fields and as a result according to a new report by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). Georgia was the top reformer in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and led the global top 10 reformer rankings on the ease of doing business in 2005–2006. The Doing Business survey tracks indicators of the time and cost to meet government requirements in business start-up, operation, trade, taxation, and closure.

If we look Georgia Youth Policy development in a broader context internal unresolved conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia has to be mentioned, Georgia has a large number of IDPs and refugees. Important part of that population is youth. Armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in august 2008 should be point out as it had a negative effect on the youth sector in Georgia; most international projects have either been cancelled or postponed, while EVS and other volunteers have left the country. The conflict had a major effect on the work of youth NGOs, disrupting not

only the everyday functioning of the organisations but jeopardizing the resources and support that was available, besides building more dividing lines between young people from two countries involved in the dispute. At this moment peace building and post-conflict development work is a transversal element in all state policies in the country, and youth policy is no exception to that.

After almost three year after conflict many things changed Georgia could recover from resulted from the war and continuous its reforms in different spheres and among them is youth. New ministry of Sport and Youth affairs is actively working on National Youth Policy document which had to be adopted at the end of 2010 but from the observation it is clear that the document needs lots of improvement and adjustment to the real needs and challenges that Georgian youth is facing.

5.4 Ukraine

Trends by Yaryna Borenko

In October 2010 youth and students NGOs succeed to resist to the Decision of Ministry of Education on providing paid service in high school education. Students have managed to organize all-Ukrainian protests and demanded the Ministry to resign from the decision. In despite of existing Student Council, which should cooperate with the in Ministry of Education and Science in student issues and represent students, the only way to articulate the interests was direct action. This case is an example which symbolizes the ability of young people to mobilize and defend their interests. Indeed it also illustrates the situation that decisions in youth matters are making without transparent consultations and negotiations, and the young people aren't aware about other policy and decision making process as direct actions. Even the consulting bodies often remain a decoration and aren't aware about real situation and positions of the youth.

Having reviewed national legislation, statistical data, structures and actors working in youth issues following conclusions can be drawn:

Youth policy in Ukraine is fragmented, meaning the lack of integral approach and addressing the needs and interests of young people. Youth policy tends rather to deal with consequences of the problems without removing the root causes. There is no integral youth research, so the programmes and structures are building as reaction to the situations, without any relations to the needs and interests of young people.

There is no general approach to youth issues, but set of approaches to different "categories" of young people (gifted, disabled, students, successful, problematic, orphans, addicted, poor, HIV/AIDS infected etc.). Young people representing minority groups (national/ethnic, sexual,

migrants) are not taken into consideration as specific groups. There are no mechanism to address needs and interests of an average young person and relevant “inter-categorical” tools.

Youth policy in Ukraine is rather focused on social care and protection, but not developing a young person prepared for social change and challenges. Young person is rather viewed as a problem, but not as a resource. Notwithstanding Ukraine declares transition from paternalistic to participative approach in youth policy, young people are rather “decoration” than the real force for decision making.

Ukraine would rather deal with the issues persuade by international community, than with those identified locally. It's necessary to take into consideration that international community draws attention of Ukraine to urgent matters. Ukraine is ready to formal changes without indebt transformations, willing to keep the image on the international arena, but not developing comprehensive policies to address the issues.

The only way to participation in policy process for youth are “direct actions” (steer demo, flash mobs, strikes and pickets, street performances, public appeals) preferred by active youth NGOs since the dialogue is complicated or not possible. Young people interested in participation in policy development would rather join youth wings of political parties than “non-political” NGOs. It means, there is more access for young people to deal as young people in political matters not specifically related to youth.

The age limit for young people as up to 35 years is also decorative, having background in paternalistic approach and social care in order to give formal opportunities for benefits by solving social problems. It would be sensible to change the upper age for young people at 30 years and not to mix social problems and youth policy.

Any benefits to young people are limited and therefore target by corruption. In fact any of state programmes hasn't been ensured by resources to be accessible for all the people defined as target groups. There are no external monitoring and evaluation procedures and public process by developing youth oriented programmes.

Ukraine has no recognition for non-formal education, youth work, long-term learning and volunteering. The European standards of youth policy are only partly introduced in legislation and the programmes and are rather declarative. Ukraine is in process of negotiation of Association agreement with European Union, so the EU-related themes are present. Indeed the discussions are rather general or descriptive – the trend is to learn more about European standards, but there is a will to implement them.

Ukraine still tends to adopt European standards to soviet traditions, namely to bring in use the terms of participation, tolerance or volunteering site by site with patriotism, military education and forced mass (collective) actions.

Being aware of a lack of information and data allowing projecting future developments in the field of youth, we can only guess, that situation of young people will be changing according to the general trends in society. Due to improvement of quality of life and satisfaction of basic needs, which was important in the first stages of transformation, one can trace increased opportunities for young people. However most of these opportunities are commercialised and accessible only for limited number of young people. That's way there is vivid interest to non-commercial international cooperation, activities of non-governmental organisations and opportunities for formal and non-formal education. In that case youth policy should be focused on enhancing those opportunities, not to leave this sphere solely to international and foreign donors.

Despite of increasing interest to information youth in Ukraine is still isolated and need to make big efforts to find access to not-commercial opportunities for studying, learning and participating in social or cultural life. In such situation political parties, movements or churches can successfully fill this gap by having good developed structured on regional and local levels. Anyway it is obviously, that rural youth or those living in periphery don't have many alternatives and join the structures, which are available, so cooperation with different stakeholders already working with youth and education/training focused on critical thinking, participation, youth initiatives can help the young people create alternatives and reflect their needs.

In this context the establishing of youth centres and youth information centres, developing e-learning programmes for youth, as well as training of qualified youth workers can solve the problem. Indeed there is the need to revise the legislation and "social-care-approach", to refuse from "categorising" of young people and establish the system accessible for everyone who feels the need to use this. As so far the trend is that the state defines the needs of young people and sets up special structures for special categories of young people.

The mobility of youth also remains limited. Young people belonging to none of "categories" have no benefits by travelling within the country, the hostel system, hitchhiking traditions, active leisure is developed very slowly and used mostly by foreigners in big tourists' cities. Development of youth and rural tourism is almost the work of businesses and non-governmental structures. There are no mobility opportunities within the educational system.

There are not so much possibilities to study abroad; the last changes in educational system and resigning from implementing 12-grade secondary school make Ukrainian certificates not relevant for recognition abroad. Moreover if the young people make efforts and manage to find possibility to

go abroad with educational purposes, they are damaged by restrictive visa system of many European countries. Young people are considered as potential migrants. From the other side, if young people have managed to go abroad for long-term period, they try to find other possibilities for staying there for job or for continued education. The limitation by visa matters make the migration potential of young people even higher, since going abroad needs to overcome a lot of barriers and still is a “dream”, not a real possibility.

There are strong regional differences in approaches to deal with youth issues in political attractive spheres as language, religion, patriotic education, leisure, and volunteering or working brigades. The political and social polarisation of Ukraine has a strong regional dimension, so it is also popular to cultivate regional patriotism, which is contradicted with national and raise a lot of interregional conflicts, non-acceptances and mistrust among youth of different regions. The situation of lack of interregional tolerance will remain until the educational and exchange programmes will be provided not as pilot ones, as it is the practice for today, but as general matter. This issue also relates to the lack of recognition of youth work and training system of youth workers.

Indeed there is no clear possibility to break down the segregation of inclusion groups in particular LGBTQs, HIV/AIDS infected, disabled, social/financial, disadvantaged and refugees. The approach to treat these groups as problem and lack of inclusion strategy still remains. Young people belonging to ethnic minorities, in particularly Roma and Crimean Tatars, are not in focus of youth policy and there is no integration strategy and the consequences of it are not taking into consideration.

Naturally with the development of market economy the gap between rich and poor is growing, particularly in Ukraine due to the lack of efficient social policy and support for “middle class”. So far the differences between urban and rural, administrative centres and peripheral areas are observable. Young people rely only on themselves in terms of economical independence and social status. They generally concern about short-term achievements, rather than on personal developments. Politicians may be satisfied with striving of young people to enter adulthood as soon as possible, so the state doesn't need to take care of them as of young people anymore. Young adults are not aware about youth policy anymore, because they don't identify themselves as young people.

So long as there is no stability and tools for implementing and evaluating efficiency of youth policy, the situation of youth will depend on political situation in the country, namely on result of elections and personality of politicians responsible for youth matters. Organised youth is already got used to take part of political parties or be incorporated into the party systems. Therefore it is necessary to take it in consideration in the future that youth leaders are politically biased. There is also a

tradition to build situations of “conflicts of interests” especially in financial matters, when civil servants, politicians and NGO leaders represent the same structures in processes of public consultation or division of resources. To break corruption and closeness of policy making process would be the main challenge for establishing efficient youth policy in the country.

Ukraine will probably strive to introduce European standards into legislation with fragmental harmonisation. The implementation of European standards will need relevant tools and mechanisms. For this Ukraine will need comprehensive youth research, competent expertise and practitioners in the field of youth.

5.5 Moldova

Trends by Mariana Buruina

Looking to the future I see young people from Moldova enjoying the liberty, democracy, protected human rights, full access to information and social services, confident and friendly youth servicers, free mobility, diversity of opportunities in spending free time and opportunities to get a well paid job.

But today’s challenges as economic crisis, globalisation process, lack of work possibilities, health problems derived from drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, all these need to be faced through a lot of actions and policies.

The country has to improve the social and economic conditions for youth in the context of general improvement in the economic situation in Moldova. Only through this the country will be able to meet the current global challenges: complete the economic and social modernization, establish a knowledge-based economy, and create a basis for its future economic growth.

According to Moldova’s political agenda, the Republic is oriented to develop closer ties with European Union. This aim has to be achieved by development of human resources- youth resources, educate the youth for the national and European market demand, provide young people with life management skills via non-formal education, create new jobs at home.

Young people hope that heir community in the future will provide them with more opportunities, friendly services and areas for self development.

There is a need for more oriented actions on building up information systems for young people, a serious appraisal of the role of non-formal education in the learning pathways of young people and focus on creation opportunities for development of youth business. To establish a Centre for training and teaching youth working staff (a system of training), youth curricula are imperious needed, also to continue the process of development of youth resource centres The need to

streamline the youth work at regional level, mainly by consolidation networks of youth NGOs, youth councils, youth centres, youth information services and to encourage local communities to support local youth councils by developing systems of communication.

Young people will be offered the opportunity to express freely their opinion on the problems they face and to be listened by administrative institutions, directly or with the help of a representative body, as well as to participate in formulating youth policies. The Government should implement this by: (i) consolidating the social partnership with civil society, especially youth associations; (ii) encouraging dialogue and the inter-ministerial cooperation on youth problems; (iii) consolidating European and international cooperation in youth problems and related areas; (iv) creating an adequate legal framework on the basis of European practices.

To ensure the access to information and services, the following measures must be accomplished: (i) undertaking studies regarding the youth situation and, based on such studies, revising youth policy; (ii) ensuring the access of the young to information regarding the rights and opportunities in all spheres of activity (education, healthcare, social protection, leisure time etc.) by creating a national network of youth service Centers; (iii) the development of a promotion programme through the mass- media (TV, radio, written and electronic press) of social messages pertaining to healthy life style and youth development; (iv) ensuring quality services for the youth within the framework of healthcare, educational and social assistance institutions; (v) the development of policies for supporting young families, searching for possibilities to ensure them with dwelling premises, child care facilities, consultations for young mothers, etc.; (vi) the promotion of special programmes for groups of disadvantaged youth and youth at risk, in order to prevent and fight against their social exclusion.

In order to reduce unemployment amongst young people, there will be a series of measures, including: (i) vocational training of unemployed youth, review and modernization of the youth vocational training system, youth support in rural areas through the development of private.

One of the basic principles of state policy will be the active participation of the youth in the life of the community. To achieve this, the Government should promote young people as equal and dynamic partners in the political, economic and social life of the country, will create a mechanism for permanent inter- sector consultations (education, healthcare, social protection, police, army, local public authorities) with the participation of civil society and foreign donors for the accomplishment of the strategy and action plans in the field of youth. The Government should create conditions for cooperation of youth and youth associations with governmental bodies and local public authorities, will promote voluntary services as a form of youth participation and social integration, will support development of youth networks and associations throughout the country.

There is a need to build up favourable conditions for organisations and persons working with and for the youth will be created. The education of youth specialists must be facilitated and providing voluntary youth leaders with training. The Ministry of Youth and Sports should integrate the national, regional and local youth administrations and programmes and create a link between them and the activities of non- governmental organisations. The youth situation will be permanently monitored and evaluated on the basis of a National Youth Research Center.

In order to utilize the leisure time of the young, local authorities and civil society organisations (mayoralities, schools, the church) should be encouraged to use existing resources to meet the interests and needs of the young, should stimulate the private sector to offer support and consolidate the technical-material basis for organizing leisure time activities at the local level, should ensure proper conditions for the development of international contacts between young people and should support talented young people in various areas of human activities.

The State in partnership with civil society should strength the capacity of local public and private (NGOs/CBOs) youth-serving providers and decision makers to reach out to the most vulnerable young women/girls and men/boys and to address their needs and interests in a participatory and integrated manner;

Also through a public - private partnership should be increased the number of viable micro-enterprises own by youth (18-30) who initially faced both a lack of business development skills and exclusion from credit due to lack of material assets for collateral. For instance, youth employment could be created through "green projects," such as planting tree belts, working on erosion control, and participating in natural disaster management projects. The skills training could be provided to help youth receive information about the labour market, on risks facing migrants, and in even in areas such as sexually transmitted diseases, alcoholism and drug abuse, and conflict resolution.

To absorb youth, the Government could support programmes that invests in youth education and skills training and mobilizes them for sports and for suitable public works.

5.6 Common Trends, needs and recommendations

In all countries there is a need to strengthen and in some cases also to create efficient co-management structures and mechanisms on national and local levels for youth policy development, implementation and monitoring. It should be not a falsified version with any transparency and clear representation of youth sectors with all different approaches and viewpoints. In some countries as Moldova and Armenia there are some interesting developments, in some countries the mechanisms are not developed yet, and the worst option is when they exist but only nominally.

In all the countries reviewed there is a need of a real monitoring and assessment systems for youth policy, youth programmes and budgetary expenditures efficiency, working on regular/periodical bases.

In almost all the countries there is a need to stop political segregation in the field of youth support between “politically correct” and “opposition-protesting youth” YNGOs and associations; to provide sort of “political immunity” of national youth policy schemes.

In all the countries reviewed there is a strong need of developing/strengthening youth research schemes and institutions, maximally independent from state control, and only based on this evidence to go on with formulation of youth policy strategies and work plans (with clear indicators and timeframes).

Real programmes and strategies to support youth entrepreneurship and employment are needed in all the countries, including vocational education schemes, training, loans, mobilization of private sector, benefits for the initiatives aimed at the solution of these issues etc.

In the information society that we live in (knowledge based economies, social networking etc.) it is extremely important to develop serious strategy towards youth information schemes with special attention to the new ICT and Web2 etc.

In all the countries reviewed there is a serious need to pay attention to the institution of “youth work” and “youth worker”. It is needed to develop political and normative bases, training schemes and education possibilities for youth workers.

All the reporters gave a quite big importance to non-formal education in the process of implementation of youth policy and programmes, and also there is certain recognition on state levels as well. But still there is a strong need of recognition and development of non-formal education institute and the quality standards issues, such as development of political normative bases for NFE, awareness raising measures, programmes for preparation of specialists (ToTs etc.), development of educational materials in national languages etc.

A clear position and strong coordination is needed in the sphere of work with international organisations and donor agencies, where the states should present the youth policy direction as a priority sphere.

Concrete measures are needed for elimination of local divides in youth policies in terms of their coverage, namely differences between capitals and regions, rural and urban etc.

Mechanisms of training of civil servants on youth policy principles and organisation of the measures of good practice sharing are extremely important as in some countries there is a strange

situation when the NGO sector possesses more expertise in youth policy than the state institutions responsible for its implementation and development.

A support is needed for development and strengthening of pluralistic and qualified national umbrella organisations.

There is a need of support to YNGO - Community Based Organisation – local self-government dialogue and cooperation, alongside with development of local youth policies integrated with national youth policy schemes (based on common principles but specific to local realities).

It is needed to identify (through youth research) the Real national priorities and focused programmes for their solution in cooperation with YNGO sector and international organisations.

And finally there is a need of efficient mechanisms of good practice systematisation, analysis and mutual presentations, as there is a lot of interesting innovative approaches in all the countries which may be transferable to the other national realities as well. A few examples of such mechanisms are:

- Youth Housing programmes in Moldova and Armenia
- Civil servants trainings in Belarus
- Social services and social security schemes in Ukraine
- Online Grant system in Armenia
- Youth Information policy in Moldova
- Networks of youth centers in Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine
- and a number of others.

6. Sources of information

UKRAINE

Statistics

Young persons in Ukraine by age groups, 2010	
14-18	2 688 806
19-23	3 566 920
24-28	3 771 584
29-35	4 732 711
TOTAL	14 760 021
TOTAL population 45 782 592	

Mortality rate in Ukraine – youth by age groups, men/women, urban/rural areas, 2010				
	Urban		rural	
	Men	women	men	women
2009				
10-14	32	21,6	37,2	23,4
15-19	76,6	32,4	115,8	42,8
20-24	165,8	54,6	233	72,1
25-29	284,6	96,6	408,7	122,1
30-34	500	167	577,6	184,1
All population	1 527,50	1 257,50	1 944,30	1 829,70

Natality rate by age groups (per 1000 women) – urban / rural areas, 2009		
	urban	Rural
15-19	23,8	46,5
20-24	81,6	128,4
25-29	84,2	102,7
30-34	54,1	54,2
35-39	21,8	20,8
40-44	3,8	3,9
45-49	0,2	0,2
15-49	40	51

MOLDOVA

Country Profile in 2010

Full name of the country	Republic of Moldova
Government type	Republican
Capital city	Chisinau
Region	Eastern Europe
Currency	Leu (MDL)
Surface area	33846 (square kilometers)
Population (01.01.2010)	3563,7 thou.
Population density	107.4 (per square kilometer)
Urban population	1476,7 thou. (41,4%)
Rural population	2091,4 thou. (58,6%)-
Gender Ratio	51,9% (1850,2 thou) – women and 48,1% (1713,5thou.) – men
Youth population (01.01.2009)	1.45 million.
Number of marriages	26781
New born (2009)	40803
Number of divorces(2009)	11884
Life expectancy	67,95 years
Employment rate (% , Ratio between employment to the total population aged 15 years and over)	42.3
Informal employment (% of employment population)	33.9
Unemployment rate (% of labour force)	7.1
Compulsory education (up to...)	16
Legally employed	16
Marriage without parental consent	16
Minimum voting age	18
Driving license	18
Exchange rates (Oct/10)	1 EUR - 16.3308 MDL 1 http://www.statistica.md/SDDS/NSDP/USD - 11,76 MDL

BELARUS

Table 2

Year			
	2007	2008	2009
Among overall population:			
Younger working age	1574,5	1547,0	1529,1
Working age*	6066,0	6053,3	6038,4
Older working age	2073,9	2089,5	2104,4

Table 3

Dynamics of the population aged 14 to 31 years in the Republic of Belarus					
№	Name of the region	Years			
		2006	2007	2008	2009
1.	Brest region	367739	364305	359885	356700
2.	Vitebsk region	328366	324409	318782	313903
3.	Gomel region	384637	381046	376344	371986
4.	Grodno region	280820	278234	274315	272304
5.	Mogilev region	302985	298991	293009	287207
6.	Minsk region	377469	376657	374059	367812
7.	Minsk	563989	567248	566154	558663
	Total:	2606005	2590890	2562548	2528575

* males – 16-59 y.o., females – 16-54 y.o.

Table 4

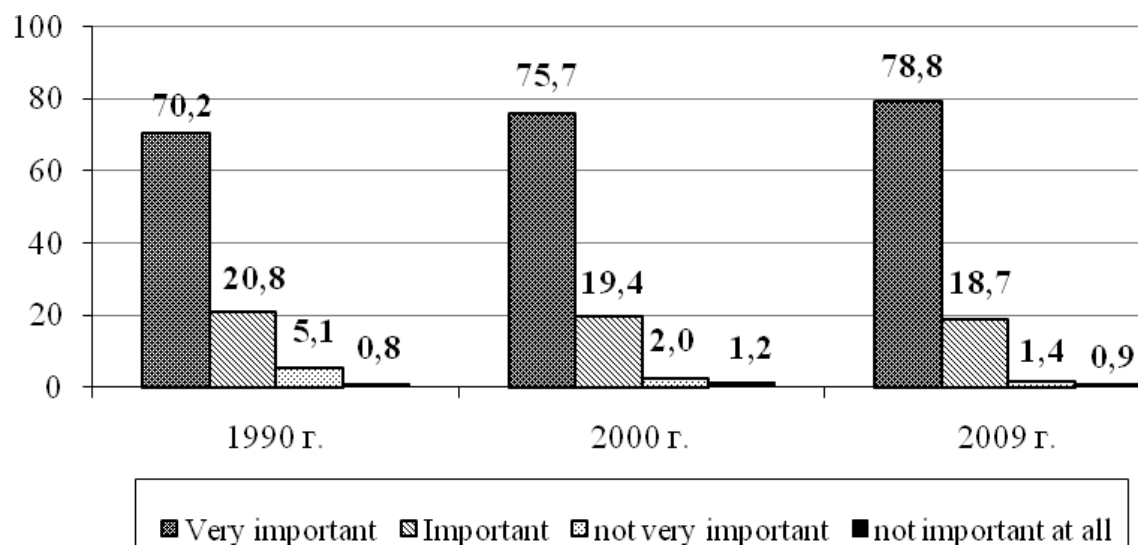


Table 5

Number of marriages and divorces

	2008		2009	
	total	for 1000 citizens	total	for 1000 citizens
Marriages	77201	8,0	78800	8,3
Divorces	36679	3,8	35056	3,7

Table 6

Years	Number of babies born for 1000 women at the age			
	15-19 y.o.	20-24 y.o.	25-29 y.o.	30-34 y.o.
2006	21,0	86,3	77,1	41,5
2007	21,9	88,9	83,0	46,3
2008	21,7	90,3	90,4	52,1
2009	22,1	91,9	93,2	56,0

Table 7

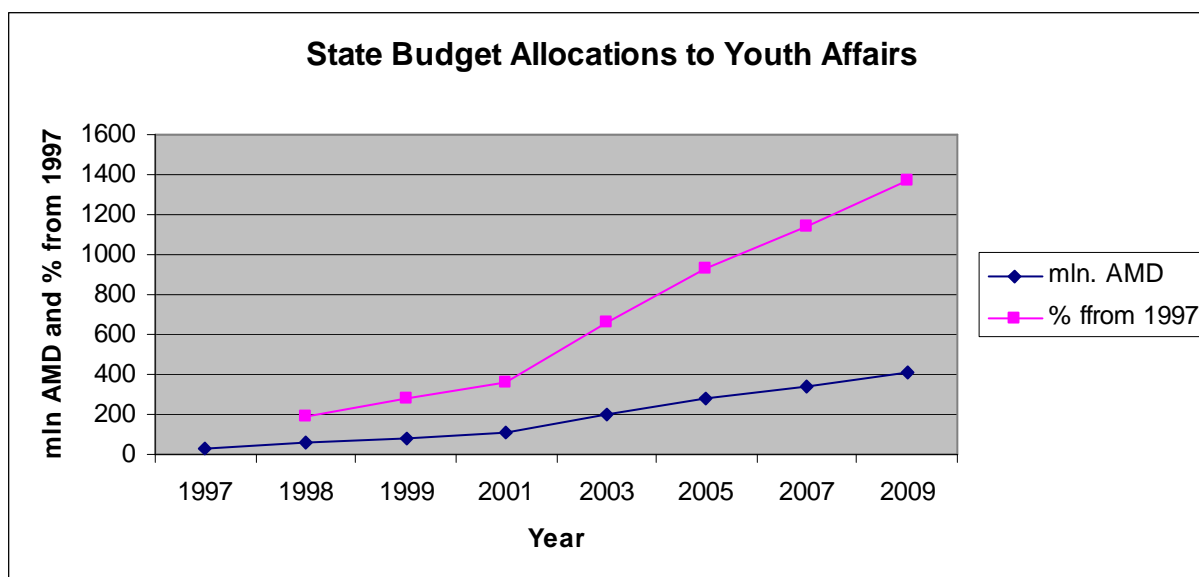
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION						
Department of Youth Affairs						
Department of Youth Affairs of Brest region executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Vitebsk region executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Gomel region executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Grodno region executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Minsk executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Minsk region executive committee	Department of Youth Affairs of Mogilev region executive committee
District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs	District Departments on youth affairs
Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work	Specialists on youth work

ARMENIA

Country Profile in 2010

General Information	
Full name of the country	Republic of Armenia
Government type	Presidential Republic
Capital city	Yerevan
Region	Caucasus
Official language	Armenian
Ethnic Composition	97.9 per cent Armenian, 1.3 per cent Yazidi, 0.5 per cent Russian, 0.3 per cent others
Religion	Armenian Apostolic Church
Currency	Armenian Drams (AMD)
Exchange rates (Jan 2011)	1 EUR - ??AMD
Surface area	29,743 (square kilometers)
Population (2009)	3,238,000
Population density	108.4 (per square kilometer)
Urban population	2073.4 thousand
Rural population	1164.6 thousand
GDP per capita	1,127.4 (thousand AMD)
Statistical Data	
Gender Ratio	F: 1669.7 thousand (50,9%) M: 1568.3 thousand (49,1%)
Youth population (2009)	905.2 thousand
Number of marriages	?
Number of birth (2008)	41.2 thousand
Number of death (2008)	27.4 thousand
Natural increase rate	4.2 per 1000 population
Number of divorces (2008)	3031
Life expectancy	73.8
Education	
Literacy rate	99.4 per cent
Enrollment in all types of education primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (per cent of 6-22 years old population) (2008)	65.7 per cent
Employment	

Officially registered unemployment rate	6.3 per cent
Youth unemployment rate (2006)	55.9 per cent
Economically active population	1192.5 thousand
Age Related Regulations and Rights	
Compulsory education (up to...)	Yes, up to 16
Compulsory military service	Yes, responsibility starts from 18
Legal employment	16
Marriage without parental consent	F: 17 M: 18
Minimum voting age	18
Purchase of tobacco and smoking	18
Purchase of alcohol and drinking	18 ?
Driving license	18 ?



GEORGIA

Statistics

	Georgian youth by age groups		
		Male	Female
15-19	341 400	174 100	167 300
20-24	363 700	184 000	179 700
25-29	342 600	172 200	170 400
30-34	318 000	156 700	161 300
TOTAL 15-34	1365700	687 000	678 700
Total population of Georgia	4 436 400	2 108 900	2 237 500

The figures of ethnical minorities among youth:

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	TOTAL
Abkhazians	231	227	238	284	980
Armenian	22288	19079	15587	14399	71353
Azerbaijani	30443	25033	20484	20221	96181
Greek	867	783	604	674	2928
Kists	636	611	535	512	2294
Kurds	2043	1738	1426	1248	6455
Ossetians	2169	2108	1974	2350	8601
Russian	3337	3749	3634	3235	13955
Ukrainian	284	305	299	283	1171