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EU Youth Policies

The transition from the independent “Youth in Action” to the integrated “Erasmus for All” program and its future impact on
Youth Organizations and their work

Master Thesis

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“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

Albert Einstein

“Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand”

Chinese Proverb

EU Education & Youth Programs Pyramid

(1987-2020)

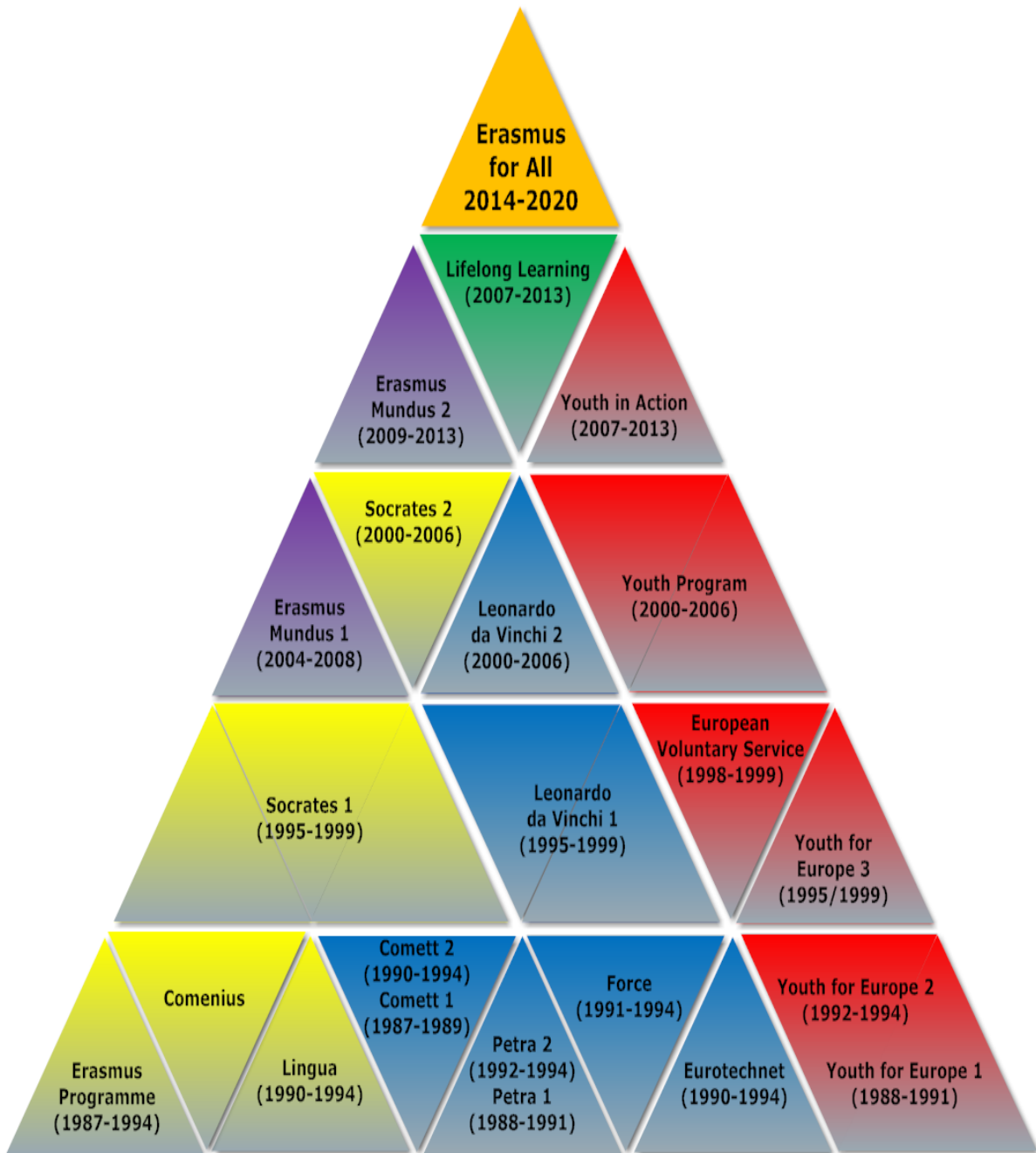


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Introduction:

Today at the end of 2011, the EU Youth Policy is finding itself on a very important cross-road, the Union's tendency of more than 20 years to have independent European Program tailored exclusively to respond to the needs of young people is close to an end due to the proposal of the EU Commission in which the European Youth Program is integrated into one Education, Training, Youth and Sport Program "Erasmus for All" for the time-period from 2014 till 2020. Having in mind that this thesis will be completed only 20 days after the Commission has published its detailed proposal for the integrated Program on the 23rd of November 2011, the thesis will narrow its focus only on publications, events, reactions and activities that happened till the end of November 2011. The thesis has an aim to contribute in the process of further negotiation for the new education, training, youth and sport "Erasmus for All" that is going to take place in 2012 and 2013 till the final decision is made by the European Parliament and the Council that will officially establish the new Program (2014-2020).

Before proposing the new program the Commission went through wide-ranging consultation process on the Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus and the Youth in Action program. Within the frame of the consultation about the new European Youth Program, which was named YiA2.0 at that time, the Commission organized public online consultation with around 6.800 respondents and the majority of the respondents stated that they are for a independent European Youth Program called with the same name as the current Youth in Action. Furthermore, the majority's opinion was that a *"European youth program could and should provide more and better non-formal learning opportunities and should contribute in the process of developing, recognizing and supporting youth work and should continue to improve the capacities, quality and sustainability of the activities of youth organizations."* The large disproportion of the published result from the online consultation and the proposal for the integrated Program have lead young people and youth organization's to react on different ways to the Commission's proposal. This thesis will systematically gather and analyze Feedbacks of young people and youth organizations to the detailed proposal from the Commission and can serve as a basis for further researches and discussions.

In 1988, the EU has started the first program exclusively focused on young people across Europe named Youth for Europe, since the first program, the Union has further strengthened and deepened its dedication to the field of youth with the Youth for Europe 2 and 3, with the

European Voluntary Service, the Youth Program and the current Youth in Action. Beside the pioneer Youth for Europe 1 and its successors, the Union has started showing greater common European interest in the field of Youth Policy at the end of the 90's and at the beginning of the new millennium. In 2001, the White paper – “New Impetus for European Youth” was adopted which has set for the first time clear priorities in the field of youth and it has given a European dimension to Youth Policy.

In line with the White Paper, the EU has strengthened the focus on the field of youth by adopting the Framework for European Cooperation in the Field of Youth in 2002, the European Youth Pact in 2005, the Structured Dialogue in 2006, the EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering in 2009 as well as the renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Field of Youth in the same year and the “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative in 2010. The first chapter of the Thesis will reflect on the previously stated existing EU Youth Policy documents and will establish their legal basis, the link between them and their impact in the field of youth. This chapter will also serve as kind of introduction to the EU Youth Policy field and as basis for further comparative analysis done in the next chapters.

The second chapter will shortly present the European Youth Programs starting from the year of 2000, the Youth Program (2000-2006), the current Youth in Action (2007-2013) and the detailed proposal for the integrated “Erasmus for All” (2014-2020). Short reflection will be made on their predecessors as well as on their legal framework and a link will be made between the Youth Policies from the first chapter and the Youth Programs and the new integrated Program. Beside making the link between EU Youth Policies and Programs, the aim of the second chapter is also to make the connection between the Programs themselves and to briefly analyze the impact and results from the Youth Program and the Youth in Action for the period 2000 till 2010.

The third chapter is an empirical research one analyzing the transition from the independent European Youth Program to the integrated “Erasmus for All” with focus on how the integrated Program will potentially influence the support and further development of youth organizations, youth work, non-formal education and the future of EU youth policy in general. This chapter will tend to grasp and comprehend the positions from young people and organizations active in the field of youth about the detailed proposal from the Commission on

the integrated “Erasmus for All” Program. This will be done through two online questionnaires with 88 respondent from whom 47 individuals and 41 representatives from youth organizations, national youth councils and other non-profit organizations active in the field of youth and education, expert interview with the President of the European Youth Forum, a Feedback from the Head of the Youth in Action Unit at the DG EAC and analysis of reactions form several youth policy stakeholders

Conclusively, the thesis will reflect on the outcomes from the empirical research, i.e. setting the main challenges that need to be tackled in the negotiation process till the adoption of the final version of the 2014-2020 Program. Furthermore, on the base of the empirical research, the thesis will set some main challenges and ideas on how the proposal can be further developed in order to both satisfy the demands of young people and youth organizations and at the same time to follow the vision of the Commission for the new Program.

Chapter One

Development of EU Youth Policies

1.1 Legal framework of EU Youth Policies:

The legal framework of the EU policies in the field of youth, as in the field of education and training is grass-rooted in the Treaties of the European Union. The treaty of Rome (1957) that led to the foundation of the European Economic Community didn't regulated or made any extensive references concerning education, training and youth, only through the Article 3 it called *for the Member States to make a contribution to quality education and training*. The attention was not firmly set on education, training and youth till the Maastricht treaty in 1993, where the articles 126 (149 Nice consolidated version) and 127 where education become a field of codecision and the focus was set on the need of *“Community common action in the field of education and training and that the EU should encourage the development of youth exchanges and facilitate the access to vocational training.”* With the Amsterdam treaty (1997), the codecision was also extended to vocational training, and with the Lisbon treaty, the Union reaffirms its dedication to the promotion and further development of common EU policies in the fields of education, training, vocational training, youth and sport.

Maastricht treaty

In the 3rd chapter in article 126 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (1993) it is stated that *“the Community action shall be aimed at: developing the European dimension in education; encouraging mobility of students and teachers; promoting cooperation between educational establishments; encouraging the development of youth exchanges”* and that *“the Community and the Member States shall foster co-operation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the field of education”*.

Article 127 added that *“the Community shall implement a vocational training policy”* and that the EC action shall aim to: *„facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people; stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms; develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States”*.

Amsterdam treaty

The pledges taken in the Maastricht treaty were confirmed and reinforced with the Amsterdam treaty (1997) which stated that *“the Community is also to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for its peoples through a wide access to education and through a continuous updating of knowledge.”*

Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon treaty reaffirms the Union focus to foster, promote and further develop the European area of education, training and youth with its 165 and 166 articles. In the first paragraph of the article 165 it is stated that *“the Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States,... the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues”*. In paragraph two is stated that *“Union action shall be aimed at: developing the European dimension in education; encouraging mobility of students and teachers, by encouraging inter alia the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study; promoting cooperation between educational establishments; encouraging the development of youth exchanges and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe.”* Furthermore the third paragraph focus its attention to the cooperation with third countries *“The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the field of education and sport, in particular the Council of Europe.”*

The article 166 refers to the implementation of the vocational training policy, thus *“the Union action shall improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labor market; facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people; stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms; develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.”*

The treaties of the European Union are representing the legal basis, legal background on which further on were carried out many Communications, White Papers, Strategies and Initiatives in the youth field as well as in education and training. In this first chapter the thesis will focus on the most relevant documents, policies and initiatives in the field of youth

starting with the White Paper on Youth, through the Open Method of Coordination in Youth Field with the Frameworks for Cooperation, the European Youth Pact and the Structured Dialogue, the “EU Youth Strategy – investing and empowering” and the Youth on the Move flagship initiative.

1.2. White Paper on Youth - “A New Impetus for European Youth” (2001):

In November 2001, the European Commission has adopted the so-called White Paper ‘A New Impetus for European Youth’ with a clear objective to propose a new framework for cooperation among the various actors in the youth field in order to have greater involvement of young people in the decision-making process. During the process of identifying the youth policy related priorities the Commission has made a wide-ranging consultation at all levels: with national officials in the Youth field, researchers, with representatives from youth organizations and associations and with young people themselves. The focus was set on five major themes: participation; education; employment (as well as vocational training and social integration); welfare (along with personal autonomy and culture); and European values (including mobility and relations with the rest of the world). Furthermore, the overall aim of the White Paper was both to apply the open method of coordination in the youth field and to take more account of young people in other policy areas. With these new elements, the White Paper on Youth represented a new comprehensive European approach of the Commission when it comes to youth related issues and the development of EU Youth Policies.

1.2.1. Background of the White Paper on Youth

At the time when the White Paper on Youth was developing in the beginning of 2000, EU was at a crucial turning point of its enlargement process where the Union had 15 Member states and 10 more were to join soon. As a result of this process, the existing economical, social and cultural challenges facing EU were going to be even greater and more diverse on the one side. On other side, the number of young people with the enlargement was estimated and eventually increased to 75 million creating additional quantitative and qualitative changes between the generations in the EU societies.

The legal frame of the White Paper can be found in the Lisbon Strategy (2000), according to this strategy the Union strategic goal of the decade was “*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world ...*” by 2010. In the process of pursuing this Union's goal, the future generations and their involvement and mutual cooperation are playing crucial role and there was a great need of finding mechanisms on how to include youth as active partners in the creation of the modern multicultural European society. This White Paper is a result of the efforts of the EC to further fully open up EU's decision-making process to young people for policies that affect them. It furthermore aimed at give a European

dimension, European approach in youth policies-making on local, national, regional and European level. The foundation for this inclusive approach can be found in the White Paper on European Governance from July 2001. Additionally this new European dimension in the field of youth policy will create the basis for development of many other youth related policy papers, initiatives, strategies, programs and different tools that will help to create a common European vision about youth-related issues. The exchange of best practice will be stimulated, the functioning of the youth stakeholders will be more effective and constructive and a platform will be created for establishing common priorities and objectives in the youth field.

1.2.2. Main outcome from the White Paper:

The main aim of the White Paper is to introduce a new framework for European cooperation by applying the open method of coordination in the specific field of youth on one side and on the other side taking better account of the “youth” dimension in other policy areas. This new framework for cooperation in the field of youth should fulfill young people’s aspirations and should be ambitious in setting priorities among the great many issues which are of concern to young Europeans. From the variety of aspects which are youth related and in the same time suited for the use of the open method of coordination, the Commission proposes the following: participation; information; voluntary service among young people; greater understanding of youth; taking more account of youth in other policies.

- Participation

Although Participation is mainly under the responsibility of the Member States, with the implementation of the Open Method of Coordination it becomes one of the EU priorities. With this new European added value of Participation, there is an open space for sharing best-practice experiences between different stakeholders in the member states and for higher inclusion of young people in the decision-making processes at EU level.

Beside identifying local communities, schools, youth clubs, youth NGO's as basic backbone of Participation, the OMC could lead to the introduction of new flexible, more inclusive and innovative participatory mechanisms and in the same time the OMC could lead to strengthening of the position of young people in EU decision-making processes.

The Commission set out the following work-plan under the field of participation: to organize

direct dialogue with young people in the form of regular meetings on specific topics; to involve young people in the initiative on the future of Europe (Nice European Council); to propose pilot projects in support of local, regional and national efforts to foster participation.

- Information:

In order satisfactory Participation to be reached on National and EU level very well developed system of information dissemination is needed. Taking this fact in consideration it can be concluded that the OMC must be used in the youth field in order the EU young citizens to be better informed about the variety of issues that are of their interest. To reach more effectively young people, the Commission was planning a coordinated approach by involving young people in the process of creation of communication tools to exercise mass information. In addition to this the EU Commission introduced the electronic portal to give as many young people as possible access to information on Europe, and set up an electronic forum.

- Voluntary service among young people:

The fullest importance of voluntarism can be grasped by highlighting its educative, integrative and participative aspect as well as the rising employability competences of the volunteers which are gained in the voluntary process. The involvement of youth in voluntary service is promoting proactive and altruistic citizenship and in the same time it offers a space for young volunteers to meet new people, to broaden their horizon, to strengthen their European citizenship, to develop their skills and even get a possibility for employment.

By applying the OMC, the positive experiences of the European Voluntary Service from different Member States can be used in order one stronger and more comprehensive voluntary service to be developed on local, regional, national and European level. Additionally much more can be done in terms of recognizing the educational aspect of the voluntary experience as a non-formal learning on EU level. As well much can be done for legal and social protection of volunteers, making standard practice of type of supervision, methods of funding, inclusion of worldwide partners.

- Greater understanding of youth:

In order to develop comprehensive Youth Policies and Programs, EU firstly needs deeply to understand what are the real concerns and needs of young people. To achieve this the

European Commission proposes to use the open method of coordination: to focus discussion on the right approach at European level; to draw up a study and research program based primarily on work carried out at national level; to examine and connect the existing studies, structures and research on youth within the European Union.

- *Taking more account of youth in other policies:*

The aim of this White Paper was not only to promote European dimension and inclusion of young people in the creation of youth policies but as well to include and implement the voice of young Europeans in the creation of policy in other fields which are of their concern. The European Commission believes that young people should be highly included in the creation and governance of EU policies in the following areas: Education, lifelong learning and mobility; Employment; Social integration; Young people against racism and xenophobia; Autonomy for young people. The inclusion of young people in other policy areas is justified with the fact that young people are taking part in different segments of society and they are the future of Europe, consequently their voice needs to be heard in both the creation and governance of different EU policies.

1.2.3. Involvement of young people and their representatives in the creation of the White Paper:

Due to the fact that the White Paper was the first more comprehensive and strong sign of interest on EU level in youth field, the Commission organized broad discussion involving young people from youth organizations, policy-makers and public administrations in the period from May 2000 to March 2001. In this time-period under the guidance of the Commission many meetings, gatherings, hearings, conferences were organized on national and EU level and the following were some of the most important activities: *the Member States organized 17 national conferences with several thousand young people and the result was in 440 suggestions; more than 60 organizations took part in hearings with the Economic and Social Committee; meetings were held in all European capitals with the policy-makers and administrators and with the National Youth Councils, and two meetings with the Directors-General responsible; a meeting was held in Umeå, where young people, youth organizations, researchers and public authorities set out their priorities for political action; around 300 mostly young people have taken part in the day of debates in the European Parliament; conference in Ghent on which the Commission presented the White Paper and opened the*

*debate on its proposals.*¹ As a result of this in-depth consultation process the following four key messages emerged: active citizenship for young people; expanding and recognizing areas of experimentation; developing autonomy among young people; for a European Union as the champion of values.

Taking in consideration the number of young people and experts involved, the variety of events organized and the outputs from this consultation process, it can be concluded that this was a wide-ranging and inclusive process which gave a real chance for young people to express their opinion and to be included in the creation of their own future. If their voice was really heard and implemented into the White Paper? that is a different question that can be partially analyzed through the reactions of some of the youth representatives about the White Paper which are following in continuation.

1.2.4. Reactions from Youth Representatives on the White Paper:

The *European Youth Forum* (YFJ) a platform representing 98 European National Youth Councils and International Organization's congratulated the Commission for proposing an open-method of coordination in youth policy as well as main-streaming youth in a number of other policy areas. It called on the Council to address the issue of the resources to be allocated to youth policy and to define a role for young people and youth organizations to participate in the OMC. Mr Henrik Söderman, President of the YFJ, said that they are *"looking forward to contributing to the concrete steps which are vital to make a European youth policy a reality"*.

AEGEE, the European Students' Forum, has welcomed the White Paper. *"We see that from now on youth policy is no longer a matter of the Member States only, but it has also a European dimension, vital for creating a European identity within the youth of Europe,"* said Pedro Panizo, President of AEGEE-Europe.

In its reaction *ETUC Youth* is welcoming and recognizing that the White Paper is merely a first step, *"however, we are bitterly disappointed with regard to its content. While acknowledged that young people are the future of Europe, we see it as a missed opportunity to put young people firmly at the centre of the Union. It begs the question why such a large scale consultation process was undertaken, when the results do not appear to reflect the discussions*

¹EC White Paper.. (2001). *'A New Impetus for European Youth'*. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/archive/whitepaper/download/whitepaper_en.pdf

and debates. We feel let down that the results of the various consultations do not appear to have been taken on board to any real extent.”

From these and many others reactions from youth representatives to the White Paper it can be concluded that youth stakeholders are more than pleased that the Commission has recognized the importance of having a European dimension in Youth Policy. They are also satisfied with the recognition of the need for inclusion of young European's voice into the process of creation of other EU Policies. However some youth organization more than others were stressing the fact that much more could have been done in a sense of more concrete and comprehensive measures which will ensure firstly precise identification of the challenges that are facing youth and secondly adequately to respond to those challenges. The further development of the EU youth policies will show the importance of the White Paper on Youth “A New Impetus for European Youth” and will also show the need for more concrete, adjustable and inclusive policy approaches.

1.2.5. Summary of the White Paper:

The White Paper on Youth - “A New Impetus for European Youth” is representing the foundation of a European cohesive approach towards the youth field, including the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field, taking greater account of European young people in other policies and identifying clearer EU priorities in the youth field. The added value of this pioneer White Paper is that it served as basis for development of other future youth related Communications, Strategies and Initiatives that followed. In the preparation of the White Paper were also included many young people, youth representatives and youth policy-makers and the consultation process represented the largest consultation in the youth field at that time by far, later on this consultation process served as orientation point for other consultation processes that followed in the youth field. On the other hand it can be noted that the White Paper was not specific enough in terms of actions and that it was suggesting more in terms of words than actions. On the end it can be concluded that although maybe not concrete enough the White Paper - “A New Impetus for European Youth” represented a fairly positive and really needed *European step* from the Commission in the youth field, that was welcomed by all of the stakeholders.

1.3. Open Method of Coordination in the youth field (2002-2018):

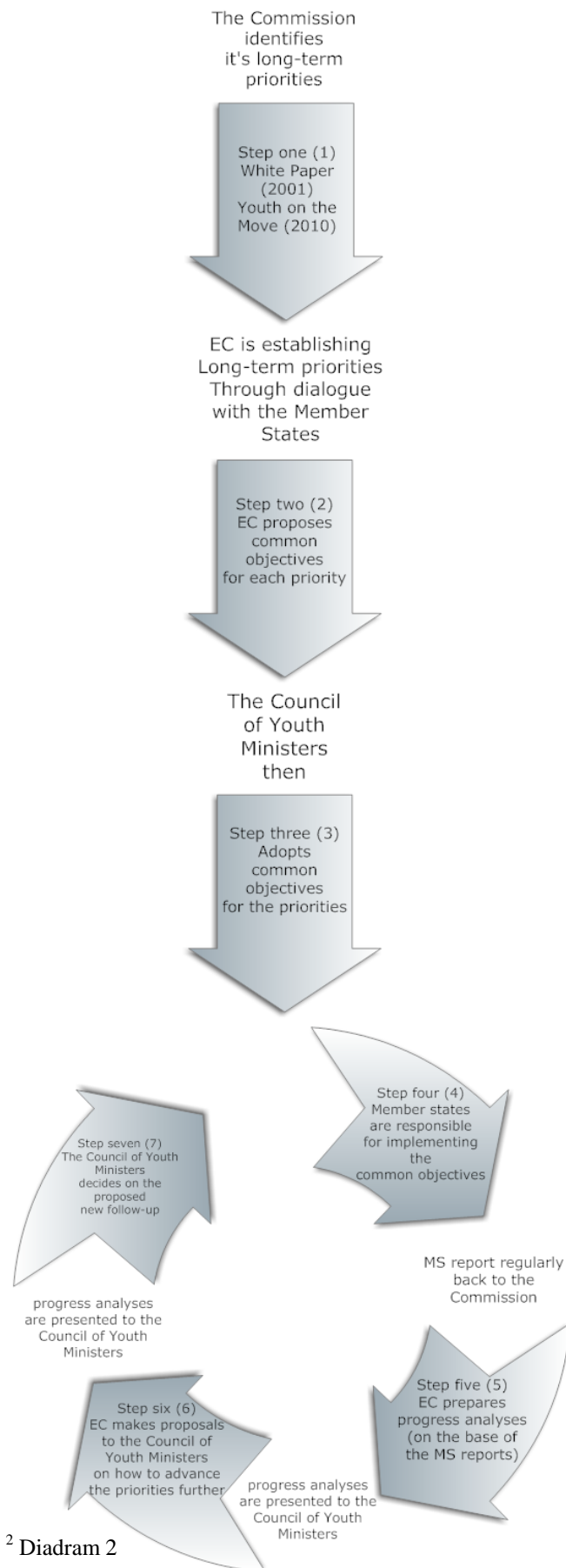
Throughout the 90's, there were several processes which were embodying features from the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and in March 2000 the OMC was finally established by the Lisbon European Council as a model of “new European governance architecture”. The OMC has no official sanction system and is mainly based on mechanisms such as indicators, guidelines, benchmarking, multi-lateral surveillance better know as 'soft law' mechanisms. In basic it works as an intergovernmental model through which the Commission is trying to “get a foot in the door” in policy areas where the responsibility is in the hands of the national governments. This modernization of European public action is established on the base of the *five fundamental principles: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence* that were introduced with the Commissions White Paper on European Governance from 2001. Additionally this OMC method is opening the EU decision-making process and enabling European citizen's to be involved in the creation of decision which concerns them. The main objectives of the OMC are the following:

- fixing guidelines for the Union combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals;
- establishing, where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks (comparing best practice);
- translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific targets;
- periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organized as mutual learning processes.

The implementation of the OMC in the youth field was introduced with the Framework for European co-operation in the Youth Field (2002) and latter on developed and strengthen through the European Youth Pact (2005) and the Structural Dialogue (2006) and reevaluated and reinforced with the renewed Framework for European cooperation in the Youth Field adopted in 2009 for the period from 2010 till 2018.

²1.3.1. Framework for European co-operation in the Youth Field (2002):

The Open Method of Coordination was becoming increasingly important as a new mode of governance in the European Union and its usage was extending in several fields, among them was the youth field with the Framework for European cooperation in the Youth Field from 2002. The main reason why the OMC method is the most appropriate to be used in this field is because the challenges in youth field are very diverse and changing from state to state and the OMC is specially tailored to answer on diverse needs of the Member States with an emphasized European dimension. This method offers the possibility for the Member States to create common European aims, then to learn from each-other through comparing best practice on how to translate the European guidelines into national and regional youth policies. The whole process of the Framework for European co-operation in the Youth Field of identifying priorities, setting specific targets and benchmarks, doing periodic monitoring and evaluation goes as illustrated in diagram 2 on the right in seven steps.



² Diadram 2

The framework for European co-operation in the Youth Field had very important meaning in the process of establishing young people into the policy development process. It lasted for 7 years when new renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field was established in 2009. In the meantime the framework was revised, deepen and reinforced with the “European Youth Pact” and the “Structural Dialogue” both on which I will reflect in the following chapters in continuation.³

3 Finn.Y. D. (2009). *Youth Policy Manual, How to develop a national youth strategy* http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/YP_strategies/Research/Youth_policy_manual_pour-mep.pdf

1.3.2. The European Youth Pact (2005):

On the base of the White Paper on Youth, and moreover as an update to the Framework for European co-operation in Youth Field and in line with the Commission's Strategic Objectives for 2005-2009, the Council adopted the European Youth Pact as one of the key instruments of achieving the Lisbon objectives by 2010. *"The main aim is to improve the education, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young Europeans through fully integration and reinforcement of the measures of the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, the Education and Training 2010 Work Program, the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Strategy, so that young people can benefit the most out of these initiatives."*⁴

The Pact is foreseeing measures for the employment, integration and social advancement of young people with specific actions in employment and social inclusion, the Pact is also proposing measures with specific actions for education, training and mobility and measures for reconciliation of family and working life. The European Youth Pact also plays a role as an extended hand of the OMC in the youth field by focusing on actions to strengthen active citizenship among young people. To have an integrated and comprehensive youth policy approach the EC is identifying the following guidelines to put the Youth Pact into practice:

At national level, Member States, in consultation with young people, should develop measures for the Pact within the national Lisbon reform programs.

- The Commission will continue to include a youth dimension in other relevant policies.
- The Commission underlines the importance of the programs that facilitate lifelong learning, mobility, entrepreneurship and citizenship of young people, within the framework of the financial perspectives.
- The consultation and involvement of young people and youth organizations are essential for implementing all the measures presented in the Pact.⁵

In other words the role of the Pact is essential in strengthening EU actions and promoting new forms of European governance in youth field by reinforcing the measures concerning youth in several EU programs and strategies so that young people can benefit from these EU opportunities as much as possible.

⁴ EC Communication. (2005). *Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0206:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁵ Ibid

1.3.3. The Structured Dialogue (2006):

The ongoing cycle of discourse between EU policy-makers and young people from across Europe is called the Structured dialogue (SD), it's a discourse which through defined framework of facilitation works towards understanding of the problems of young people and agreeing on the EU youth policy priorities and implementation procedures. The SD was primarily established with a Council resolution in November 2006 and further supported with the Commission communication on 'Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society' where under the part Young people and the EU the Communication is proposing A strengthen partnership. Additionally the SD was further developed and enhanced with the Council Resolution on a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field adopted in November 2009 where it was upgraded with multi-level consultation mechanisms with specific bodies, events, and cycles on national and European level.

Participants in this inclusive platform are young people, youth organizations, National Working Groups, European Youth Forum and other European associations as well as EU representatives, representatives of the national youth councils, national agencies and others. Furthermore the structured dialogue runs in 18-month cycles, where there are three six-month presidencies during which the three countries are setting an overall agenda with special focus on some youth related issues. The dialogue officially started with the Spain, Belgium and Hungary trio presidency where 'social inclusion', 'youth work' and 'active citizenship' were set as separate priorities for the period January 2010 till June 2011.

The dialogue is conceptualized by having National Working Groups which are performing individual consultations in their own countries on specific youth related issues, during each cycle there are three EU youth conferences (one on each presidency) where the conclusions from the conferences will be part of the Council Resolution on the Structured Dialogue which is then being adopted by the EU Council of Youth Ministers and on that way the dialogue leads to direct results and ultimately to better policies for young people.

European Youth Week is an important event which serves as a meeting point for EU officials and young people and with that is one of the key supporting elements of the Structured Dialogue process. As an example of the importance of the European Youth Week can be taken the fact that in 2011 some of the key political figures such as the President of the European

Commission, José Manuel Barroso, the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Ms.Androulla Vassiliou, and the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Mr.László Andor, have participated in the debates with young people. “European Youth Week represents the culmination of an entire cycle of dialogue with young people across Europe that spans one-and-a-half years and three EU presidencies”, explains Sergej Koperdak, Head of the European Commission’s Youth Policy Unit. *“It gives young people a forum to share their opinions with policy-makers first-hand, in a highly structured way.”*

It can be concluded that the Structural Dialogue is Commission's initiative aiming at building common European consensus among youth policy-makers on which are the main challenges facing European youth and in the same time how to answer to those challenges. With other words the SD is aiming at finding ways how to improve the cooperation and strengthen partnership between local and EU authorities and the representatives of young people, youth and the civil sector.

1.3.4. Renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018):

On the basis of the new European strategy for youth named 'Youth - Investing and Empowering' published in April 2009 the Council adopted a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field on 27th November 2009. This renewed framework is created for the period from 2010 till 2018 and is setting the two main overall objectives to create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labor market; and to promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people. This framework is identifying 8 priority fields of action, six instruments for implementation and key general initiatives.

Priority fields of actions:

The main specific fields of interest of the renewed framework for cooperation in the youth field are taken from the EU Strategy on Youth – Investing and Empowering, thus they are the following *8 priority fields of action*: Education and training; Employment and entrepreneurship; Health and well-being; Participation; Voluntary activities; Social inclusion; Youth and the world; Creativity and culture.⁶

Instruments of implementation:

Probable the most important gaining from the renewed framework are the 6 identified instruments for its implementation with more then ever concrete and comprehensive tools. The instruments should serve as channels for better dialogue and more cohesive youth policy development approach responding to the crucial needs of young people on national and European level.

- Knowledge building and evidence-based youth policy:

Only if high level of cooperation exist between youth organizations, youth researchers, young people and relevant state authorities European Youth policy can be evidence-based, thus better understanding can be achieved of the challenges facing modern European youth. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, the Eurydice - EU wide analytical capacity and the EU Youth Report can play big role in this process towards evidence-based policy making.

⁶ Council Resolution. (2009). On a renewed Framework fore European Cooperation in the youth field.
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1648_en.pdf

- Mutual learning:

In this framework the mutual learning is one of the most important elements which will be achieved on European level through conferences, seminars, forums, web-based networks, peer learning activities and many others. While being open for new ideas off-course the focus of these activities should be closely connected to the previously established youth policy priorities.

- Progress reporting:

Big stress is put on the importance of the EU Youth Report which has been published for the first time on 27.04.2009 and such report should be published by the Commission at the end of each three years working cycle. The report should be based on national reports and evaluate on the progress made on national and European level in coming closer of achieving the overall objectives of the renewed framework. The EU Youth Report will be taken as a guideline for the setting of the priorities for the following 3-year working cycle.

- Dissemination of results;

In order to have greater visibility and impact of the renewed framework from national to European level, the outcomes of the OMC framework process in youth field need to be disseminated among all relevant stakeholders.

- Monitoring of the process:

The process of monitoring should be based on indicators set out on national and European level by the Commission, additionally the Council should propose new indicators where it's needed. Within this monitoring frame structured dialogue should be organized with young people and youth organization in order to reflect on the realization of the established priorities and the implementation of the European cooperation in the youth field. The inclusive aspect of the dialogue has to be respected and it should be developed at local, national, regional and EU level.

- Mobilization of EU Programs and Funds:

Under this framework effective use needs to be made of all of the relevant EU Programs and Funds open for young people such as the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and Competitiveness and Innovation programs, Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning, Culture,

Progress, Media, and the Structural Funds. Maximum usage needs to be made as well out of other relevant EU Programs and Funds in the areas of external relations and development cooperation.

Key general initiatives:

The key general initiatives are focusing on rising European involvement and achieving greater understanding of the challenges facing youth within the scope of the 8 priority fields of actions and furthermore setting specific actions in order to answer to those challenges through the following initiatives:

- Developing and strengthening cooperation between policy makers in the respective fields of action and youth policy makers, inter alia through improved dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and expertise;
- Encouraging and supporting the involvement and participation of young people and youth organizations in policy making, implementation and follow-up;
- Providing quality guidance and counseling services;
- Improving access to quality youth information and disseminating information through all possible channels at local, regional, national level;
- Supporting the development of better knowledge about the situation of young people, for instance through support to youth research, research networks, specific studies;
- Supporting the development of youth work and recognizing its value;⁷

With this renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field the Commission has tried to improve its approach, making the framework more concrete and inclusive by giving clearer space for young people to be one of the key youth policy makers. The concrete instruments of implementation and the specific general initiatives certainly add to this simulative and inclusive new framework for cooperation in youth field.

⁷ Ibid

1.4. An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering 'A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities' (2009):

On the basis of the White Paper on Youth (2001) and the European framework for cooperation in the youth field (2002) and with an aim of further development and enhancement of the existing European Youth Pact (2005) and Structured Dialogue (2006) the Commission has launched a communication in form of a new EU Youth Strategy 'Youth - Investing and Empowering'. This Communication was as well a response to the renewed Social Agenda from 2008 which set youth as one of its seven priorities and in the same time this Communication represented the basis for the renewed European framework for cooperation in the youth field which came out latter on in 2009.

The new Strategy on Youth tries to reinforce the Union's focus on youth and to utilize Union's mechanisms on how to furthermore include young people in the creation of Youth Policies in order to empower young Europeans and to have specially tailored policies which will respond to their needs. Therefore this communication proposes a new enhanced Open Method of Coordination that will use a cross-sectoral approach with-short term priorities and long-term Strategy with main objectives of:

- *Investing in Youth: putting in place greater resources to develop policy areas that affect young people in their daily life and improve their well being.*
- *Empowering Youth: promoting the potential of young people for the renewal of society and to contribute to EU values and goals.*⁸

This Communication was based on the already existing policy process of European cooperation in youth field established and developed through the cycles of EU youth programs and policies and currently functioning under the following three pillars: Active citizenship of young people via the OMC; Social and occupational integration through the implementation of the European Youth Pact; Youth main-streaming in other policies.

Respecting and acknowledging the achievements in youth field under the guidance of at that time the existing European framework for cooperation in youth field which ended the same 2009, the Commission with the new Strategy for youth is calling for a new reinforced, more efficient and better coordinated framework with a capacity to deliver and to answer to the

⁸ EC Communication. (2009). An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. Brussels

needs of European young people. Under the request of the European Parliament's Declaration on Youth Empowerment from 2008 the Commission puts stress on the cross-cutting sectoral approach with greater collaboration between youth policies and other policy areas, in the same time priority was given to the creation of conditions for 'joined-up' policy making by making the voice of youth heard and implemented into the policies. The new strategy is also acknowledging the important supportive role of youth work and youth activities in the process of mobilizing young Europeans into giving their contribution in the joined policy making.

*The Strategy is organized in three years cycles with specific action-plans in the following determined fields of interests (actions): education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, health and sport, participation, social inclusion, volunteering and youth and the world.*⁹ Within each field there are proposed specific objectives and action plans for the three years cycle time-frame, the first one is from the beginning of 2010 till the end of 2012. The short-term priorities and the fields of action are established on the frame of the following overall goals: Creating more Opportunities for Youth in education and employment; Improving Access and full participation of all young people in society and Fostering mutual Solidarity between society and young people.

With the help of the existing mechanisms the different evolving challenges facing young people will be taken in consideration when the priorities for the next three years cycle will be proposed in the new strategy for youth. The Youth – Investing and Empowering Strategy was furthermore taken over, developed and practical implemented with the renewed European framework for cooperation in youth field on which I have referred in the previous chapter.

⁹ Ibid

1.5. Youth on the Move - “An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union”:

In response to the rising economical, social, demo-graphical, educational and scientific challenges and in order the Union to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy the EU has launched “The Europe 2020 Growth Strategy”. Taking in consideration that there are around 100 Million young Europeans, their involvement is essential to achieve the Europe 2020 target objectives and as a result of that the “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative was created. The “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative was put on place to unleash the potential of Europe's young minds, to improve the level of quality of education and vocational training for better transition of youth to the labor market, to reach greater mobility and to ultimately reach the Unions target objectives concerning youth in the fields of education and labor market. It is a framework agenda with an aim to directly respond to the challenges facing young people and to help them to progress in this knowledge-based economy by announcing key new actions, reinforcing existing activities and ensuring their implementation at EU and national levels, while respecting the subsidiarity principle.

Europe’s future prosperity very much depends on its young people. Young Europeans face many challenges, but maybe the biggest is the successful transition from education to the labor market. Youth unemployment is high at almost 21% and in order the Union to reach the 75% employment target for the population aged 20-64 years by 2020 the transition of young people to the labor market needs to be radically improved. Additionally *it is estimated that by 2020 the number of jobs requiring high-level qualifications will rise from today's 29% to 35%, which means plus 15 million job places will demand such qualifications. Concerning education, EU with 31% (of people with higher education) is far behind the US with more than 40% and over 50% in Japan. The Europe 2020 Strategy has set the EU headline target that by 2020, at least 40% of 30-34 years old should have higher education. Currently, 14.4% of 18-24 years old in the EU are in the category of early school-leaving and the EU benchmark concerning this is to reduce it to fewer than 10%.*¹⁰

Beside the existence of the flagship initiative on inclusive growth “An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs” and others which are partly focusing on resolving the problems of young Europeans

¹⁰ EC Communication. (2010). Youth on the Move.
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0477:FIN:EN:PDF>

which I have mentioned above, the main answers from EU to the challenges of the modern youth are concentrated in this flagship initiative for smart growth “Youth on the Move”. The main characteristics of this initiative are the four main focus interests, five priority fields of action and 28 concrete actions, all of which are contributing this initiative to be very concrete and comprehensive in the same time.

1.5.1. Focus of the initiative:

The “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative is focusing mainly on non-formal educational activities such as trainee-ships, voluntary activities and vocational training, furthermore it focuses on higher education, learning mobility and on reducing youth unemployment. Following are the four lines of focus of the initiative:

- EU needs to recognize the importance and to support non-formal educational activities, in the same time EU is promoting high quality trainee-ships and apprenticeship-type of vocational training with intention to broaden the learning opportunities for young people and to build stronger bridges to the labor market.
- Through this initiative EU will seek to improve the quality and attractiveness of higher education, to promote higher and better mobility and employability with goal of increasing the percentage of young people participating in higher education and attracting high-qualified young people from around the world in EU.
- The international dimension of learning mobility in EU will be reinforced. By 2020 all young Europeans should have the possibility to spend a part of their education abroad, including via workplace-based training. “Mobility Scoreboard” will be created to measure the progress of the Member States and the Commission will propose Youth on the Move card to facilitate mobility. Additionally a new intra-EU initiative called “Your first EURES Job” will encourage and support both employers and young employees to create and to look for job openings for young mobile workers.
- The fourth main focus of the Youth on the Move is to reduce youth unemployment through framework of actions at EU and national level in order to facilitate the process of transition from school to the labor market and to reduce labor market segmentation. European Vacancy Monitor will be created to ensure that all young people are either in

education, activation or job within six months form leaving school.¹¹

1.5.2. Priority fields of Interest for the 'Youth on the Move':

The aim of the Lisbon strategy to make the European Union "*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*" by 2010 has without doubt failed in the opinion of many experts including the President of the Commission Mr. Barroso who stated "*Believe me, Europe 2020 is different,... we have learnt our lessons, we have clear targets and we have the seven flagship initiatives,..*"¹² As a result of the learned now beside setting out clearer targets incorporated in the 7 flagship initiatives the segment of European governance is also stronger than ever. "Youth on the Move" flagship initiative is contributing to the vision of Europe 2020 based on the smart growth objective of developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.

The five priority fields of the Youth on the Move flagship initiative are the following:

- Developing modern education and training systems to deliver key competences and excellence:

In this segment the Commission was focusing on higher investment in education and training on national and EU level, reducing early school leaving and strengthening early childhood education and care; reducing youth unemployment by further development of quality career guidance services and vocational orientation and with that establishing common language between the world of education and the world of work. Additionally for the first time the Commission is clearly recognizing and supporting the expansion of non-formal and informal learning as highly beneficial tools for life-enhancing learning, inclusion of people with fewer opportunities and lot more by proposal for the recognition and validation of non/in-formal learning within national qualification frameworks.

- Promoting the attractiveness of higher education for the knowledge economy:

The image of EU as knowledge-driven economy with a clear and smart growth objective of developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation is founded on the quality and promotion of third-level education. In order to achieve its economic and social objectives and to respond to the rising number of jobs requiring high-level skills, EU aims to reach 40%

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Public Service Europe. (28th July 2011). *Europe 2020 can drive economic growth.*

<http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/109/europe-2020-can-drive-economic-growth>

attainment of people with higher education by 2020. As well quality assurance at European level needs to be reinforced in order to maintain high level of quality and attractiveness of higher education. Additional reinforcement of the 'knowledge triangle' between education, research and innovation needs to take place in order to use the full potential into building the EU innovation capacity.

Additionally an EU internationalization strategy will be created in 2011 to emphasize the need of increasing the international cooperation, international program's and policy dialogue in higher education in order to attract the world best students, teachers and researchers from other regions of the world.

➤ Supporting a strong development of transnational learning and employment mobility for young people:

In these modern times when everything is progressing so fast and the national economies and societies around the world and especially inside the EU are more and more interdependent, young people are the link between the societies through their mobility. This can be concluded through the fact that the majority of 'mobile' people in the EU are between 25 and 34 years old. Major factors which are influencing on the higher mobility among young Europeans are that they tend to have fewer family obligations, better understanding of foreign languages, there are many opportunities open for them through different youth funds, program's and etc. Youth on the Move initiative is recognizing the fact that young people are one of the main links between societies through their mobility and therefore is strongly supporting learning and employment mobility as one of the key actions that can help in the development of their knowledge, skills, intercultural competences and in the same time strengthen their future employability and their development as active citizens. European Voluntary Service, Erasmus programs, as well as the introduction of the 'mobility scoreboard', 'European skills passport', 'Youth on the move card', 'Your first EURES', 'European Vacancy Monitor' and others are one of the key elements of EU youth policy when it comes to learning and employment mobility.

➤ A framework for youth employment:

Taking in consideration the high level of youth unemployment around Europe the Youth on the Move initiative has identified a need of more comprehensive policy coordination in this field at EU level, leading to common principles which will ensure a real improvement for

young people. The final goal should be reaching the Europe 2020 - 75% target of employment with proportional contribution from the European youngsters. Under this priority field of action the flagship initiative has set its focus on the following 4 objectives: to help young Europeans to get the first job and start career; to support youth at risk; to provide adequate social safety nets for young people; support young entrepreneurs and self-employment.

➤ Exploiting the full potential of EU funding programs;

Several existing programs already support the Youth on the Move objectives such as Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus, Youth in Action and others like Marie Curie or Tempus. With the new flagship initiative their objectives are strengthened and rationalized or with other words adjust to better support the objectives of the Youth on the Move. The Commission will propose a greater focus to be put on entrepreneurship mobility for young people and in the same time greater focus on mobility of teachers, scholars, trainers who as multipliers will advocate for mobility in broader frame.

To better utilize the EU opportunities in the youth related fields of interests the Commission is examining the possibility additionally to use other funds or programs like the European Regional Development Fund, PROGRESS, the new European Micro-finance Facility, the European Social Fund and others. Additionally the Commission is planning to create a student lending facility (which will be actually created with the new “Erasmus for All” program) in order to offer direct financial support for youngsters through study loans so that they will be able to undertake entire study programs abroad.

1.5.3. Youth on the Move 10 key actions:

In order to accomplish the previously stated priorities and objectives and in the same time to respond to the new demands of having concrete, specific and measurable initiative the “Youth on the Move” has established 28 actions covering all of the 5 priority fields and from these actions the following 10 are pointed out as most important ones:

- In order to channel the information's about EU youth program's, about different opportunities and rights of young people, info's about education, training, job and funding opportunities the Commission has launched a new *Youth on the Move website*. This web will as well serve to link EU actions with national and regional initiatives.

- Maybe one of the most important action is the pilot project *"Your first EURES job"*. This project will offer support for young European job-seekers who want to work in another European Member State and in the same time this project will serve as a back up for the companies which are interested to hire young job-seekers. The network of European Public Employment Services will manage this project.
- One *'Mobility Scoreboard'* will be introduced to benchmark and measure the progress of the Member States in removing the obstacles to learning mobility with a goal to promote mobility among young Europeans.
- The Commission wants to create a *'European student lending facility'* to support students who wish to study or train abroad.
- To *'Benchmark Higher Education Performance and Educational Outcomes'* the Commission is developing a *'Multi-dimensional Global University Ranking System'*. This ranking system will be establish in order to provide a more complete and realistic picture of higher education performance than existing rankings and it will take into full account the diversity of higher education institutions within the EU.
- To facilitate mobility for all young people such as students, trainees, researchers the Commission will develop a *'Youth on the Move Card'* which will provide benefits for young people in EU and will make the integration process of mobile learners smoother.
- A new *'European Vacancy Monitor'* is created to provide an intelligence system on labor market demand across Europe for jobseekers and employment advisors. More precisely it will show where the jobs are in Europe and which skills are needed.
- The Commission's also launched the new *'European Progress Micro-finance Facility'* to support young entrepreneurs to set up or develop their businesses. In cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) the new Facility will increases the accessibility and availability of micro-finance and with that will ease the access to finance for people who want to start up or further develop their own business but have difficulties in accessing banking loans. Additionally the Facility offers guidance and coaching for young micro-entrepreneurs with the support of ESF.
- A *'Youth Guarantee'* is introduced in order to ensure that all young people within the period of six months of leaving school will be in further education, some kind of activation like trainee-ship or volunteer, or in job. This will require using instruments adapted to the needs of young people and full involvement of the Member States at

national and local level. The Member States are also asked to identify and overcome the legal and administrative obstacles that might block access to these measures for young people who are inactive other than for reasons of education.

- Based on Europass (European online CV), the Commission will propose a '*European Skills Passport*' to record the competences acquired by people through variety of learning settings, including e-skills and informal and non-formal learning. This 'Passport' should facilitate mobility by easing the recognition of skills across countries.¹³

1.5.4. Reaction on the Youth on the Move initiative from some of the main youth stakeholders:

In its reaction the *European Youth Forum* a platform representing 98 National Youth Councils and International Youth Organizations from across Europe welcomed the European Commission's Communication "Youth on the Move". *"The YFJ is delighted from the concrete benchmarks mentioned in the initiative, with regards to increasing the rate of graduates with tertiary or equivalent education, increasing the number of young people in apprenticeship training, reducing the rate of early school leavers, the proposal to develop an EU benchmark on employability and specially YFJ welcomes the encouragement towards Member States to provide Youth Guarantees to young people within six months of leaving school."* On the other hand YFJ believes that there is a serious drawback when it comes to EU funding programs that are supporting the Youth on the Move initiative because they are not given sufficient attention. *"Moreover, the reference to these programs omits their role in supporting active citizenship and participation of young people. Quality education and a strong labor market, both contributing to European growth, need to be accompanied with genuine tools for participation, to ensure that the society, in this case young people, take ownership of and responsibility to contribute to the realization of specific policy measures."*

The *European Students' Union* (ESU) an umbrella organization of 45 national unions of students from 37 countries representing 11 million students has published an reaction to the Youth on the Move stating that *"ESU appreciates that the Commission sets the support to the development of transnational learning mobility for young people as one of the key action lines*

13 EC. (2010). *Youth on the Move – Strengthening support to Europe's young people*.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1124>

within the Youth on the Move. ESU is happy to see the shift from treating mobility as solely a catalyst for the economy to emphasizing the added value it can bring by enhancing quality and transparency of higher education as well as fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding. This is vital for the social cohesion and future development of European higher education and for society at large.” ESU is nevertheless concerned that the grants through the main program which is supporting learning mobility – ERASMUS program are not sufficient and can not meet the real needs of the students who are going abroad through this program. “ESU also calls upon the Council to recommend the Member States to discuss and implement a Framework agreement for countries on supplementary measures to promote mobility by providing adequate support for incoming students, designed to also fill the financial gaps caused by differences in living costs and economic capacities in different countries of Europe – and to sign a Mobility Treaty”.

With its reaction to the flagship initiative the *Erasmus Student Network (ESN)*, a network present in 341 Higher Education Institutions from 34 countries, working with 150.000 international students per year fully supports several of the goals and key actions set out by the Youth on the Move initiative. *“ESN further believes that in order to meet the ambitious targets outlined in the EU2020, youth mobility should be a main priority. However, if the Commission believes that Youth on the Move is the mean to financial development and sustainability, a much firmer commitment to financial support of education and youth mobility is needed. In order to support some of the proposed measures, ESN would encourage their more complete description. Additionally ESN would like to see a firmer commitment to finance some of the proposed actions.”*

1.5.5. Summary of the Youth on the Move flagship Initiative:

Within the Europe 2020 strategy a new improved step in the youth field was expected from the Commission and the flagship initiative “Youth on the Move” is representing this new more comprehensive and advanced European governed approach in coping with the challenges in youth field on national and European level. It is a initiative which is focusing on the promotion and support of non-formal education, rising the quality of higher education, promoting learning and employment mobility and working towards reducing the number of unemployment young people. The improved and more concrete dimension of this initiative can be seen in the 28 specific actions which are consisted in the “Youth on the Move”.

This initiative was very well welcomed by European youngsters and youth representatives as an answer on the rising demands of young people around Europe. Many of the youth organizations are satisfied with the fact that this initiative is not only setting objectives but is also presenting some concrete actions how the objectives will be achieved, although some organization's would prefer to have even more specific and concrete tools in coping with the upcoming challenges in youth field.

1.6. Summary of EU Youth Policy (2000-2010):

With the adoption of the *White Paper – ‘A new impetus for European Youth’* in 2001 the Union has given a European dimension to Youth Policy and it has become a field of EU common interest and an area of co-decision. The two main elements of the White Paper on Youth are the introduction of a new framework for European cooperation by applying the OMC in the youth field and taking better account of youth dimension in other policy areas.

One year after the White Paper the *Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field* has introduced a seven steps practical and successful mechanism and the so called “rolling agenda”¹⁴ in order to implement the OMC in youth field. To reinforce the Cooperation Framework in 2005 was adopted the *European Youth Pact* with an aim to fully integrate and strengthen the measure of the current EU initiatives such as the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs, the Education and Training 2010 Work Program, the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Strategy so that young people can benefit the most out of these initiatives. In 2006 the *Structured Dialogue* was introduced to further implement the OMC in the field of youth with the introduction of the so called trio-presidency. By setting specific priorities for each six-month presidency, performing consultation's on national level in the Member States, sublimating the outcomes in a European conference after each presidency and integrating those outcomes in Council Resolution on the SD, the Structured Dialogue has made an significant step forward in the process of making young people partners in the EU consultation and the decision-making processes.

Furthermore the *EU Strategy for Youth - ‘Investing and Empowering’* adopted in 2009 tries to reinforce the Union's focus on youth and to utilize the Union's mechanisms on how to include young people more in the creation of EU policies, thus the Commission puts stress on the cross-cutting sectoral approach with greater collaboration between youth policies and other policy areas and promotes 'joined-up' policy making. As a result of the Youth Strategy latter on the same year the *renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field* for the period from 2010 till 2018 was adopted by the Council. The renewed Framework has defined instruments for implementation and has set the focus on creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in labor market and on promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

14 See Diagram 2

Within the EU 2020 Strategy the Union has deepened its interest and dedication towards young people by adopting the “*Youth on the move*” flagship initiative, an initiative that is both comprehensive and inclusive and is focusing on quality education and training, including non-formal education, higher mobility and successful labor market integration. Besides the clear focus, the initiative has specifically determined fields of interest and more concrete than ever 28 actions introducing many new tools, pilot projects and specially tailored for youth elements such as the “Mobility Scoreboard”, “Your First EURES Job”, “European student lending facility”, “European Vacancy Monitor”, “Youth Guarantee” and many others.

The overall conclusion about the EU Youth Policy (2000-2010) is that finally Youth Policy has received the deserved Union's attention and a European dimension. Starting from the 'White Paper' through the 'Youth Strategy' to the 'Flagship Initiative' it is more than noticeable that the proposals from the Commission are getting more concrete and tangible, which is certainly demanded and needed from the young people i.e. to have more actions instead of words. Additionally, it can be noted that with the 'Frameworks for Cooperation', the 'Youth Pact' and the 'Structured Dialogue' the EU's consultation and decision-making processes have furthermore opened up for inclusion of young people. However, from the reactions to the EU proposals and researches, it can be noted that some youth organizations and young people are considerably disappointed that although extensive and inclusive consultation processes are taking place, the contributions from young people and their representatives are not implemented in the final version of the proposals from the Commission.

Chapter two

The transition for the independent European Youth Program to the integrated “Erasmus for All” Program.

2. European Youth Program's 2000 - 2013:

In order the objectives from the EU youth strategies and initiatives to be achieved and on base on the Treaties and Youth related documents the EC from 1988 has started to establish EU youth programs. The European Youth program, formally called Youth for Europe now called Youth in Action is the largest most comprehensive program which is exclusively construct for satisfying the needs of European youth. During the decades there were many youth related or semi youth related white papers, communications, Council conclusions and programs which are representing the legal and theoretical background for the European Youth Program. As a result of that the first part of this chapter is going to reflect upon those EU initiatives and programs till the year of 2000 in order to create clearer picture of the process of development of the Youth Program, afterwards the Youth Program (2000–2006) will be presented with all of it's results, in the third part of this chapter the ongoing Youth in Action (2007–2013) will be shortly analyzed and in the last fourth part of this chapter on base of the detailed proposal by the Commission, the new integrated “Erasmus for All” program (2014-2020) will be presented as a continuation of the ongoing Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus and Lifelong Learning (LLL) programs.

2.1. Background of the European Youth Program's till the year of 2000:

The legal basis of the Youth Program, especially in the period till 2000 can be found in the Maastricht and the Amsterdam treaties. In the articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (1992) it is stated that "the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States" and that "the Community shall implement a vocational training policy". These pledges were confirmed and reinforced with the Amsterdam treaty (1997) which states that “the Community is also to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for its peoples through a wide access to education and through a continuous updating of knowledge.”

Furthermore the European Councils of Essen (1994) and Cannes (1995) stressed the need for additional action to enhance the social and vocational integration of young people in Europe. The conclusions of the European Council of Florence (1996) emphasized the importance of making it easier for young people to enter the labor force. Additionally the Commission with the White Paper on Education and Training ‘Teaching and learning - Towards the learning society’ (1995) focused on encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge and in the same time bring school and the business sector closer together and combat exclusion. In its Green Paper ‘Education, training, research: the obstacles to transnational mobility’ (1996), EC intended to contribute to the development of transnational voluntary service activities and highlighted the advantages of mobility for people and competitiveness in the EU. The EC communication ‘Towards a Europe of knowledge’ (1997) set out the guidelines for Community action in the field of education, training and youth for the period 2000 till 2006.

From the side of youth related or semi-youth related there were many exiting programs till the year of 2000 which served as basis for the creation of the ongoing Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus and the Youth in Action (2007-2013). Starting from 1987 with the Erasmus (for mobility in higher education), Comenius (for schools) and Lingua (languages) which were integrated into the Socrates program form 1995 and the Comett (cooperation between higher education institutions and the labour market representatives), Petra (primary vocational schooling), Force (vocational training), Eurotechnet (innovation in the teaching methods) which were all integrated in the Leonardo da Vinchi program also by the year of 1995. These two main educational programs Socrates and Leonardo were furthermore integrated into one program Lifelong Learning starting from the year 2007, now within the LLL are integrated 4 main sub-programs Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinchi and Grundtvig. In the same time Youth for Europe 1 (1988 - 1991), Youth for Europe 2 (1992 – 1994), Youth for Europe 3 (1995–1999) and the European Voluntary Service (1998-1999) were the predecessors of the Youth Program (2000–2006) and the ongoing Youth in Action (2007–2013).

On one side there were several programs which are now integrated into the education and training program Lifelong Learning, on the other side the only program which is exclusively oriented only to the needs of European youth remains the Youth Program (2000-2006) and the curing Youth in Action program respectively. In following parts of this chapter the Youth, Youth in Action and the new “Erasmus for All” will be shortly analyzed and presented.

2.2 Youth program 2000 – 2006:

As a result of the predecessors Youth for Europe 1, 2, 3 and the European Voluntary Service and several policy papers, especially the Commission communication ‘Towards a Europe of knowledge’ (1997), on 13 of April 2000 the European Parliament and the Council established the Youth program. The Commission together with 31 national agencies was coordinating and governing this program which had budget of 615 millions of EUR.

2.2.1. Aim and objectives of the Youth program:

The Youth program was guided upon the priorities and objectives set by the Commission's communication “Towards Europe of Knowledge”, it has also utilized diverse aspects from other EU policy papers before and after the program was launched, especially the White paper on Youth – A Impetus for European Youth (2001), the framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2002) and the European Youth Pact (2005). Based on the previously mentioned the Youth program had the following main objectives:

- to allow young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competences which may be one of the foundations of their future development;
- to promote an active contribution by young people to the building of Europe through their participation in transnational exchanges;
- to encourage young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity so that they may take an active role in society and to foster active citizenship on the part of young people;
- to promote respect for human rights and to combat racism and xenophobia;
- to reinforce cooperation in the field of youth.¹⁵

The importance of the establishment of this Program can be seen in the exclusive role of the program as a promoter of Non-formal education, promoting European and active citizenship of young people and raising the employability of young Europeans. In the period after the 1995 EU enlargement with Austria, Sweden and Finland and facing the big eastern enlargement¹⁶ the Union needed one program which will focus mainly on building the European spirit, rising the mobility within EU and with the others European countries (future members), reinforcing the communication and cooperation among young people and

¹⁵ EC Youth Archive. (20th June 2011). http://ec.europa.eu/youth/archive/program/index_en.html

¹⁶ In the year of 2000 there were 12 eastern European and Mediterranean countries as applicants for EU membership

combating racism and xenophobia. By developing a higher cooperation in the field of youth policy on European level this program is additionally promoting the Europe of Knowledge initiative.

2.2.2. *Actions of the Youth program:*

In order to implement the Program's objective the Youth Program foresees 5 program action such as the Youth for Europe, European voluntary service, the Initiative for youth, the Joint action and the Support measures.

- *Youth for Europe:* mobility activities for groups of young people based on transnational partnerships:

This action focuses on youth exchanges and has in itself integrated activities from the former Youth for Europe program. The aim of this action is to give opportunity to young Europeans to plan, coordinate and organize youth exchange, off-course when needed with help from some experts or professionals. The youth exchange can be organized on almost any field of interests of young people such as sports, environment, history, culture, traditional cooking, typical country children games, typical dances, local heritage or similar, the important thing is the thematic concept to be of common interests for all of the participants. The most important aspect to be covered by this action is to bring together groups of young people from different European countries to get to know each-other, to learn about others culture, language, tradition or just to stay in contact and be friends. Beside the fact that the youth exchanges are promoting active citizenship, the key priority of this activity is to promote European citizenship. According to the Youth program objectives this action strongly supports active and European citizenship and promotes active contribution by young people to the process of building Europe, furthermore it combats racism and xenophobia and reinforce cooperation in youth field by using and promoting non-formal and informal education methodologies. It can be also concluded that the Youth for Europe sub-action is complementary to the White Paper on Youth by covering the priority fields of participation and voluntary service among young people.

- *European Voluntary Service:* participation of young volunteers in a non-profit organization in a European Country other than the one in which they reside in:

The main aim of this action is to support a non-formal intercultural learning experience for young Europeans by having a voluntary working experience in non-profit organization in

other European country. This is a great learning experience where the volunteers beside the basic accommodation, food, local transport and allowance receive personal and task-related support, mentor, language training and certificate on the end. Beside the volunteers there are two other actors in one EVS project, they are the sending and the host organization. For the volunteer the greatest benefits comes from the intercultural working experience, the diverse intercultural and practical knowledge and skills that s/he is gaining and with that their highly improved employability aspects. As for the organizations the benefits comes from having young persons from different cultural backgrounds in addition to their staff and with that having increased productivity and possibility for richer and more diverse organized programs and the second big benefit is the establishment of new partnerships with other non-profit organization's around Europe. Additionally in the same time due to the kind of work done by the volunteers and the organization's there is benefit for the local society as well, probable the greatest benefit among all is the raised active participation and social integration of European young people and their contribution towards integrated, improved and more socially inclusive European Union. This sub-action is also covering the priority fields of participation and voluntary service among young people of the White Paper on Youth.

- *Initiative for youth:* support for innovative and creative projects being promoted by young people:

The added value of this action was that it gave support to young people from age 15 till 25 to plan, organize and coordinate project on their one at local level. It also provided an opportunity for former EVS volunteers to make a kind of follow up of their volunteering experience and use their newly gained skills and expertise and organize project in their own community. The overall aim of this action is to give young people chance firstly to express their ideas and initiatives and secondly a chance to further develop their ideas and put them into practice and with that to develop filling of self-confidence, active citizenship and self-initiation. The initiative for youth sub-action is as well compatible with the White Paper covering participation and the voluntary service among young people.

- *Joint actions:* It provided support for actions undertaken jointly with other EU programs in the field of education and youth policy:

The uniqueness of this action was that it was connecting the three existing EU programs in the fields of education, training and youth, the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and the Youth

Program. The overall aim was to promote the “Europe of Knowledge” and to connect initiatives, projects that were cross-sectoral and more comprehensive both thematic-wise and in the part of the actors involved in the project itself. The unique characteristic was that this Joint Action was included in all of the three Programs and by that it reinforced the cooperation between the different actors in the education, culture and youth field. It served for the programs to complement each-other and to develop creative innovative approaches to analyze and solve problems that are cutting across several areas.

- *Support measures:* supportive activities for better cooperation, education and information sharing in the Youth Program:

The base for successful running of the Youth program is solid preparation with good cooperation between the actors in this Program as well as accessible youth information's and training opportunities. The Support Measures were the main tools that were assuring that the actors in this program will receive the necessary guidance and support to carry out their planned initiatives and projects under the Action 1, 2 and 3. The guidance and support was organized in the following nine types of supporting activities: *Practical training experience (job shadowing), Feasibility visits, Contact-making seminars, Study visits, Seminars, Training courses, Youth information, Transnational partnerships and networks, Support for quality and innovation.* Furthermore, this action had additional value due to the fact that many of the actors in the Youth Program, especially in the first years were new in the whole process of planning, applying, organizing and executing an EU project. These supportive mechanisms gave the opportunity for learning by the examples of others, having trainings, study visits, partnerships support in the process from project idea till the phase of project execution. The Support measures sub-action is complementary to the White Paper by covering the priority field of information.

2.2.3. Youth program summary and evaluation:

The Youth Program was exclusively developed for young individuals and diverse groups of young people, youth leaders, youth workers, youth organization's and other non-profit organization's, with key priority of finding mechanisms how to include young people with fewer opportunities into it's actions. The overall aim of the program was “*to promote Europe of knowledge by developing a European area of cooperation in the field of Youth Policy, based on non-formal education and training.*”

From the *final external evaluation of the Youth Community Action Program* from 2007 it can be concluded that the Youth program is in line with the objectives of EU Youth policy (White paper, European Youth Pact) and is complementary with the National Youth policies as well. Furthermore it was concluded that the program is only partially complementary with the Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates Program and in future the cooperation between the programs needs to be reinforced. By promoting and supporting the cooperation in the field of non-formal education the program additionally supports the “*Europe of knowledge*”, it is also noted that the program influences more on youth work on national and European level than on youth policy.

One of the greatest benefits from the program is the improvement of participants communication and social skills, sense of solidarity¹⁷ and diverse competences which are leading to increased active citizenship¹⁸, better overall understanding of European values¹⁹ and greater employability.²⁰ On the other hand although special focus group of the program are young people with fewer opportunities, young people in risk and socially excluded group, the evaluation results has shown that participants of the program are mainly higher educated young people,²¹ and from the young people with fewer opportunities who were participating in the program the majority were also highly educated. This is clearly stating the main challenge of the program and in the same time missed opportunity to activate young people with fewer opportunities who have less education through the program's non-formal educational methodologies. As concerning the youth workers the program has supported their professional development and it raised the level of youth workers participation in EU networks. The youth and other non-profit participating organizations also benefited from the

17 80% feel an increased sense of responsibility, and 90 percent say that the program contributed at least to some extent to a stronger feeling of solidarity.

18 Around one third of participants became active internationally as a consequence of the program, while slightly fewer than a quarter became active at national level

19 The percentage of the feeling of being a European citizen after the participation in the program increased from 70% to 85-90%.

20 62% of the EVS (action 2) participants reported that the participation in the program helped them in their professional career, 56% states that the program has given them better job opportunities.

21 - For Action 1, 60% of participants were highly educated while the percentage for Action 2 is higher at 75%.

program by having international volunteers, which brought an added international dimension of their work and improved their partnership prospects on European level.

Beside the main challenge of responding to the needs of young people with fewer opportunities and their inclusion in the actions of the program, the evaluation has shown that also in the part of beneficiary organizations the program was facing challenges. That is to say that less experienced organizations were facing difficulties concerning the application procedures and that mostly a select group of organizations were benefiting from the program. Due to the fact that there were no uniform criteria to systematically monitor the reports from the participating organizations in the evaluation report was mentioned the monitoring process as one of the challenges for the next program. This monitoring challenge is creating lack of precise information's on national and European level that are needed in order to adjust the program to respond more adequately to the needs of its target group.

On the end it can be concluded that the Youth Program needs to develop strategy on how to involve young people with fewer opportunities, how to improve the monitoring process and in the same time to make the necessary adjustments to ensure efficient running of the program at national level. In the final external evaluation of the program was also noted that the *“Youth program has wider aims and objectives, but the linkages to the operational objectives, measures and Actions are not always clear and adequately attention needs to be paid.”* Having all this in mind it can be concluded that the new Youth in Action program needs to further strengthen the involvement of young people to take them as partners both in the consultation and decision-making processes, thus tailoring the Program's focus and actions to the specific needs and demands of the European young people and their representatives.

2.3. Youth in Action Program (2007-2013):

The legal basis of the Program comes from the decision of the European Parliament and the Council of EU on 15th of November 2006, the Youth in Action (YiA) Program to be established for the period from 2007 till 2013. As a successor of the Youth program the focus and structure of the Youth in Action are more or less in line with its predecessor, thus having five objectives, four Program priorities, as well as additional annual priorities and five actions with 16 sub-actions. The added value of the YiA is that through the annual priorities the program is more adjustable to the changing needs of the European society and to the new strategies and initiatives that are of concern for young Europeans.

2.3.1. Priorities and objectives of the Youth in Action program:

The Youth in Action program is based on 5 objectives and 4 priorities which are setting the long term path of the program and additionally every year annual priorities are set to respond to some topical issues on European level for that particular year.

The general objectives of the YiA Program are: to promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular; to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to reinforce social cohesion in the EU; to foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries; to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organization's in the youth field; to promote European cooperation in the youth field.

Based on the above mentioned general objectives the program has set out as its priorities the European citizenship, participation of young people, cultural diversity and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, additionally each year the program also sets its annual priorities.

- **European Citizenship**

The idea of EU citizenship is contributing to bring the people of EU closer together and as such is of key importance for the Union in order to be able to build inclusive and competitive society respecting each-other cultures and differences. Therefore all of the 5 actions of the program are partially or fully aimed at actively involving young people in shaping the future

of the Union, through working together and learning about each-other the feeling of being European citizen through the years is being significantly raised.

- Participation of young people

In line with the framework for European cooperation in the youth field the second priority is focused on promoting and supporting various forms of active participation of young people in their community's and increasing the role of young Europeans in representative democracy. The program additionally focus on encouraging regional and National Authorities to support young people's participation in the democratic process and strengthening dialogue between young people, politicians and policy-makers.

- Cultural diversity

European Union as a union consisting of many diverse cultures, languages and traditions while building European citizenship it needs to respect and foster it's cultural diversity. At the central interest of the Youth in Action is the respect for diversity and the fight against racism and xenophobia, in line with this the projects and activities supported by the program are including young Europeans from different cultural and ethnic environments to work together.

- Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities

Social cohesion and inclusion are as well at the center of interests for the program, in particular Youth in Action focus on ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities will participate in the program and by that their active citizenship, social inclusion and employability will be significantly raised.

- Annual priorities

Each year there are annual priorities in order for the program to be more specific and responsive to the changing needs of European young people and to adjust to the new EU strategies and initiatives such as the EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering from 2009 and the Youth on the Move initiative 2010. These annual priorities on the base of the already set program priorities are additionally specifying thematic fields of interests and topical issues concerning youth at European level.

The 2007 was the *European Year of Equal Opportunities for All*, where priority was given to projects focusing on fight against xenophobia, racism and discrimination. The following 2008 was the *European Year of Intercultural Dialogue*, other annual priorities in this year were: combating violence against women; sport as a tool to promote active citizenship and social inclusion of young people; promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activities including sport. The year 2009 was better known as *European Year of Creativity and Innovation* and additional value was given to projects which were focusing on the following annual priorities: Young people's active participation in the European Parliament elections; combating violence against women; sport as a tool to promote active citizenship and social inclusion of young people; promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activities including sport; intercultural dialogue; Roma Communities and others. *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion* was the 2010 where the focus was set on projects that were focusing on raising the awareness of young Europeans about the common responsibility to tackle poverty and exclusion on one hand and to promote inclusion of all on other hand. The same 2010 focused as well on *Youth unemployment and promotion of young unemployed people's active participation in society*; and on *Awareness-raising and mobilization of young people about global challenges*. The 2011 or better known as the *European Year of Volunteering* was additionally focusing on *Youth unemployment; inclusive growth; global environmental challenges and climate change; creativity and entrepreneurship and EU-China Year of Youth*.²²

The European Commission with the DG Education and Culture and depending from the priority with other DG's are responsible for the implementation of the annual priorities on European level, additionally in every Member State there is a national coordinator for the implementation of that year priorities at national level.

2.3.2. *Actions of the Youth in Action program:*

Having in mind the complexity of the program's priorities and objectives and build upon the predecessor Youth Program the ongoing YiA has 5 actions, Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service, Youth in the World, Youth support systems and the action Support for European cooperation in the youth field with 16 sub-actions.

²² EC. (2008). *Youth in Action Program Guide*. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc599_en.pdf

The *first action - Youth for Europe (1)* is promoting active and European citizenship by enhanced multicultural learning and is fostering young people's creativity and entrepreneurship through supporting their initiatives and promoting greater inclusion of young people in Europe's democratic life. The Youth for Europe action is complementary with the following priorities fields from the White Paper: participation, voluntary service among young people, greater understanding of youth and taking more account of youth in other policies. This action is also complementary with the EU Youth Strategy by covering the priority fields of participation, creativity and entrepreneurship, volunteering and social inclusion. It also covers non-formal education from the Youth on the Move flagship initiative and has 3 sub-actions:

The first sub-action the *Youth Exchanges (1.1)* is focusing on reinforcing young people's active participation in projects where one group of young people from a European country is hosting one or more young groups from other European countries. The added value of this sub-action is that through multilateral group mobility activities it supports the multicultural sharing and learning, thus young European are becoming more aware about the different social and cultural backgrounds of young people around Europe and in the same time their feeling of being European citizens is strengthened.

Youth initiatives (1.2) is the second sub-action aimed at developing young people's creativity, initiative and enterprise through support of projects, initiatives planned, organized, coordinated and fully executed solely by young people. The projects can be at local, regional and national level and the participant age is between 18 and 30 with special focus on including young people with fewer opportunities.

The third sub-action is the *Youth democracy projects (1.3)* and these projects are fostering young people's active participation in the democratic life on local, regional, national or international level. The overall aim is to develop new approaches to young people's active participation in the democratic life of Europe and therefore consultations can be organized or activities where on international level can be shared experiences, ideas and good practices from projects already organized on national level.

The *second action European Voluntary Service (2 - EVS)* is more or less the same as the second action (EVS) in the previous Youth program with focus on developing solidarity and promoting active citizenship among young Europeans. It can last from two to twelve months with participants aged from 18 to 30 and it covers participant's expenses, insurance, travel and additional small allowance. Additionally the Commission has set some quality standards that the voluntary service has to include non-formal education methodologies through which the volunteer will be prepared at personal, intercultural and technical level. The only new additions to this action are the EVS accreditation where all of the Countries from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus need to be accredited in order to participate in the program and the EVS charter where each EVS organization adheres to the provisions from the charter. The EVS is covering participation, voluntary service among young people from the White Paper; participation, employment, volunteering and social inclusion from the EU Youth Strategy and from the Youth on the Move it covers non-formal education, learning mobility and reduce youth unemployment.

The *third action* in the YiA Program, the *Youth in the World (3)* is a fully new one and is enriching the program by developing and enhancing the relations between young people from the EU and the neighboring countries as with other programs partner countries around the world. Youth in the World is covering the priority fields of participation and voluntary service among young people from the White Paper; participation, volunteering and youth and the world from the Youth Strategy and non-formal education from the Youth on the Move. It has the following two sub-actions:

Cooperation with the neighboring countries of the EU (3.1) is supporting projects with the neighboring Program partner countries and with the Russian Federation and Western Balkan countries. It fosters exchanges of experience, expertise and good practice between young people, youth workers and youth organization's from EU and the neighboring countries with focus on supporting long-term partnerships between them. It does so mainly through multilateral activities such as youth exchanges and training and networking, providing young people with the opportunity to become aware of the different social and cultural realities, to improve their linguistic and intercultural competences by planning and organizing projects together. This sub-action is also trying to introduce and promote innovative approaches in the youth field.

Cooperation with other countries partner countries in the world (3.2) is the second sub-action supporting cooperation activities in the youth field between EU countries and partners from different part of the world. It supports bilateral and multilateral exchanges and training activities with focus of developing of networking and partnership between youth organizations.

The aim of the *fourth action Youth support systems (4)* is to develop the quality of youth support structures, to support the role of those active in youth work and youth organization's, to develop the quality of the Program and promote the civil participation of young people at European level by supporting bodies active at European level in the field of youth. It is complementary to the White Paper, the Youth Strategy and Youth on the Move by covering participation, information and non-formal education and it has eight sub-actions.

Support for bodies active at European level in the field of youth (4.1) aims at providing necessary support for Non-profit organization's and youth organization's that are working in the direction of realization of a goal of European interest in the youth field. The Commission is selecting beneficiaries based on calls for proposals and it makes one-year or multi-annual partnership framework agreements. The beneficiaries of this sub-action are mostly youth organization's who are working in the following fields of European common interest: promotion of intercultural learning and understanding, promotion of young people's active participation and citizenship, debates on European issues and youth policies, and organization's that are working in the field of non-formal and informal learning and youth activity programs. What is specific about this sub-action is that the beneficiaries must find at least 20 % of the budgets from other non-Community sources.

Support for the European Youth Forum (4.2), the European Youth Forum (YFJ) as an organization which is pursuing a goal of general European interest is receiving annual financial support from the Commission of not less then 2 million EUR. YFJ is actively contributing to the EU political processes concerning youth, the main activities of YFJ are: to represent youth organizations and young people in general at EU level; to transfer information on youth to the European institutions and from the EU to the national youth councils, youth organization's and young people; to promote and facilitate active participation of young Europeans in democratic life; to contributes to the development of youth policies, youth work

and educational opportunities; and to develop representative structures for young people throughout Europe. As for the previous sub-action in this case also at least 20 % of the European Youth Forum's budget must be covered by non-Community sources.

Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organizations (4.3) is a sub-action that support projects which are either promoting exchanges, cooperation and training in the field of youth work or leading to the development of further projects under the Youth in Action Program. It includes activities where it involves youth workers, project leaders, supervisors and other who are working in the youth field to participate in: training courses, seminars, study visits, feasibility visits, job shadowing, partnership building activities etc.

Projects encouraging innovation and quality (4.4) foster innovative approaches in the youth field on local, national and European level. Where the (4.5) sub-action supports *Information activities for young people and those active in youth work and youth organizations*. The second one is focusing on improving young people's access to relevant information's and communication services with an aim to increase their active citizenship and participation. It supports diverse user-friendly and accessible information products such as publications, events or local, regional, national and European youth portals.

Partnerships (4.6) is the sub-action supporting the relations of the European Commission with the municipalities, regions, diverse social actors and other bodies on local and regional level in order to develop partnerships on long-term level that will help to develop projects which combine various measures of the 'Youth in Action' program.

The sub-action *Support for the structures of the Program (4.7)* is funding the National Agencies and other implementation bodies on national level as the national coordinators, the EURODESK network, the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform and the associations of young European volunteers. This measure is oriented towards the support of the bodies which are helping the program to run successfully on European and national level.

Through the (4.8) sub-action *Adding to the value of the Program*, the Commission can support by grant or directly fund and self-organize activities to promote, monitor and evaluate the program with publications, dissemination of appropriate information's and organize seminars

or meetings to facilitate the implementation of the YiA program.

The aim of the *fifth action Support for European cooperation in the youth field (5)* is to promote the cooperation between young people, youth organization's and EU youth policy decision makers, and the cooperation of EU with international organizations in youth field. It is complementary with the White Paper and the Youth Strategy by covering the priority fields of participation, information and greater understanding of youth.

Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy (5.1) is very important measure which promotes and supports the structured dialogue between young people and the EU decision makers by funding activities as the European Youth Week. Additionally it supports seminars, events and all kinds of cooperation between young people, youth workers, youth organization's and the youth policy decision makers in order to enhance the dialogue in line with the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field.

The *Support for activities to bring about better understanding and knowledge of the field of youth (5.2)* is supporting projects that are working on development of methods for analyzing and comparing the results of youth studies and that are working on identification of existing challenges in the youth field and how can these challenges be answered.

Cooperation with international organizations (5.3) is funding the cooperation of EU with international organizations such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe in the youth field.²³

2.3.3 Evaluation and summary of the Youth in Action program:

The Youth in Action interim evaluation final report from February 2011 states that the YiA Program is in line with the EU youth and wider strategies and policy objectives, it is complementary to other EU programs and it also contributes to the objectives of the White Paper and the European Youth Pact. According to the final report the program is successful in achieving objectives regarding young people, it also contributes to strengthen the quality and recognition of youth work and non-formal education. Beside the planned impact over young people determined by the programs objectives it has also impact over the personal confidence,

²³ Ibid

widening social networks, and future participation in related activities of young Europeans as well as increased mobility. It is noted that greater focus needs to be made on employability and inclusion of people with fewer opportunities. Furthermore the mix of support to youth organizations and youth workers and direct grants for young people is estimated as a effective step, additionally the Youth-pass is seen as an excellent tool for giving value to the participants in the program and giving them currency on the labor market but in the same time further promotion of this tool is needed. It is also confirmed that the program has influence over the national youth policies but it has rather limited influence on national legislation and that the administrative burden for applicants needs to be reduced.

According to the evaluation the intervention logic of the program has been improved in regard to the predecessor Youth program. Despite the improvement it is rather hard to maintain clear focus and have internal coherence when there are 4 permanent priorities, many annual and 5 general and 26 specific objectives. In addition to this it is noted that there is a strong need of more measurable indicators linked to the specific objectives in order to have clearer picture of the effectiveness and results of the program, thus a better monitoring process.

2.4. The EU integrated program in Education, Training, Youth and Sport “Erasmus for All” program (2014-2020):

On the 29th of June the Commission has announced the integrated program in Education, Training, Youth and Training under the name “Education Europe” with the communication 'A Budget for Europe' and on the 23rd of November the EU Commission has published the detailed proposal for the new integrated program named “Erasmus for All”. This new program has been one further step in the attempt of the Commission to unify EU programs in the field of Education, Training and Youth with an addition of the Sport dimension. The first programs started back in 1987 with the higher education mobility program Erasmus, followed by Comenius, Lingua, Comett, Petra, Force, Eurotechnet, Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service all of which latter on integrated in Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, the Youth Program and the Erasmus Mundus, latter on in 2007 the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci were furthermore integrated into one Lifelong Learning and from 2014 Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus and the Youth in Action will be integrated into the “Erasmus for All” program²⁴ with higher then ever budget of 15.2 billion EUR and is estimated to have 5 million of beneficiaries.

The “Erasmus for All” is based on the articles 165 and 166 of the Lisbon Treaty, the program will be complementary to the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy in the field of education, training, youth and sport, with special attention to the objectives set in the flagship initiatives: “Youth on the Move”; “an Agenda for New Skills and Jobs”; “Digital Agenda for Europe”; “Innovation Union” and the “European platform against poverty and social exclusion”. Additionally the new program will act complementary to the “Education and Training 2020”, the new “EU strategy for youth – Investing and empowering”(2009); the renewed framework for European Cooperation in Youth Field (2010-2018) and the Commission Communication on “Developing the European Dimension in Sport”(2011); the Council resolution an EU Work Plan for Sport (2011);

2.4.1. Aim and objectives of the “Erasmus for All” program:

As previously stated the “Erasmus for All” was created based on the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and five of it's seven flagship initiatives are more or less depending from the further development and modernization of the education and training

²⁴ For better illustration see diagram 1 (The Education & Youth Programs Pyramid)

in the Union. The new program with its highly increased budget of 73% (compared to the budget of its predecessors) is responding to the need for increased investment in Education and Training from the EU, in the same time through rationalization and simplification of delivery and management procedures the new program aims at reducing the implementation cost by up to 40%. The program also sets its focus on promotion of education-business partnerships, and it focuses specially on reinforcing and developing the actions from its predecessors that have the highest European added value and strongest multiplier effect. The “Erasmus for All” aims to create greater synergy between the existing programs and between the different educational sectors and with that to increase the coherence and comprehensibility of its actions.

The overall aim of the program is to contribute to the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy, the Education and Training strategic framework 2020 and the renewed framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field (2010-2018). Thus by working towards modernization of the education and training systems in the Member States and non-EU partner countries to ensure that education and training systems deliver the knowledge and skills needed in the ever changing labor market.

The specific objectives of the “Erasmus for All” are:

1. Increased participation of young people in EU democratic life and to improve the level of competences and skills of young people that are relevant for the labor market;
2. To foster quality improvements, innovation excellence and internationalization of educational institutions through enhanced transnational cooperation between education and training providers;
3. To support modernization of education and training systems, to support non-formal learning and European cooperation in the youth field, as well as to promote policy reforms on national level and to promote the emergence of a European lifelong learning area;
4. To enhance the international dimension of education, training and youth;
5. To promote linguistic diversity;
6. To promote excellence in European integration.²⁵

²⁵ EC Communication. (2011). ERASMUS FOR ALL: The EU Program for Education, Training, Youth and Sport. http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/doc/com_en.pdf

2.4.2. “Erasmus for All” program's actions:

The new integrated education, training, youth and sport program has three key actions and two specific actions, those are the following:

1. Learning mobility of individuals;
2. Cooperation for innovation and good practice;
3. Support for policy reform;

and the Jean Monet specific action and action in the field of Sport.²⁶

The *first key action – Learning mobility of individuals (1)* with its four sub-actions will support both transnational mobility of staff and transnational mobility of young people and students in Higher Education and Vocational Training. This kind of mobility can be through studying at a partner institution or gaining some work experience abroad, or being involved in non-formal activities or participating in youth activities, including linguistic dimension. As concerning the transnational mobility of staff it can be in form of teaching at Universities of other participant's countries or taking part of professional development activities abroad. The overall budget for this action according to the Commission proposal is going to be 65% of the total expenditure. The learning mobility of individuals action is covering the priority fields of participation from the White Paper; participation and education from the Youth Strategy and from the Youth on the Move non-formal education (partly), higher education, learning mobility and reducing youth unemployment.

First sub-action Staff mobility (1.1)

With one million expected beneficiaries the first sub-action staff mobility is expected to be the leading actions in ensuring teaching excellence and develop innovative and efficient teaching and learning methods. This sub-action also foresees opportunities for learning mobility of youth workers as main multipliers in the youth field and for higher exchange of best-practices among youth organization's.

Second sub-action Student mobility (1.2)

The Commission is reaffirming and reinforcing its focus on learning mobility by setting benchmark of 20% mobility of higher education graduates and with that is significantly increasing the internationalization of the higher education sector, thus giving chance to

²⁶ Ibid

European students to be mobile internationally and non-European students to spend time learning within the EU. Joint degrees are also planned under student mobility where the Program will strengthen support for degree mobility within joint high-quality study programs, implemented by EU and non-EU universities. Through transnational traineeships, vocational education and training young people and students will increase their employability through learning methods, practices and technologies used in other countries and in the same time the link between education and business will be reinforced and the transition from education to the world of work will be fostered. The total number of beneficiaries for the second sub-action is expected to be at 2 million and 900 thousand for the period of 2014 till 2020.

Third sub-action Master degree mobility (1.3)

The so called Erasmus Master is aiming at raising the level of master degree mobility in the EU, through the establishment of the student loan guarantee scheme this sub-action will offer to Master students doing a full degree program in another EU or EEA country to access loans at favorable conditions. The number of expected beneficiaries is around 330 000 over the period of seven years.

The fourth sub-action is the Youth mobility (1.4)

With 540 000 expected beneficiaries in the youth mobility sub-action compared to the 374 000 from the ongoing Program the “Erasmus for All” continues to support the mobility of young people through youth exchanges and volunteering. Youth mobility as a kind of successor of the Youth in Action Program strongly supports non-formal learning, social inclusion, active citizenship, employability and personal development of young people.

The second key action – Cooperation for innovation and good practices (2) with its four sub-actions is going to support strategic partnership and knowledge and skills alliance between educational and youth organizations and between educational organizations and enterprises. This action will strongly promote and support strategic partnerships between organizations, institutions that are working in the field of education, training or youth activities with an aim to foster exchanges of experiences and best-practice examples and to develop joint initiatives and projects. The second part of this action is focused towards establishing knowledge alliances between higher education institutions and enterprises in order for the enterprises to offer relevant learning opportunities and with that to create the necessary link between the

educational system and the labor market in order to develop new curricula qualifications, promote employability, innovation and entrepreneurship. The estimated budget for this action will be not less than 25% of the total amount of the program according to the EC proposal. The second action is complementary with the White Paper by covering participation and greater understanding of youth (partly through the strategic partnership); it is also covering participation and education through the support of the staff at educational institutions; and is covering also the higher education priority field of the Youth on the Move flagship initiative.

First sub-action the Strategic Partnership (2.1)

The aim of the strategic partnership is to strengthen transnational cooperation between education institutions, youth organizations and other actors such as regional and local authorities from different sectors in order to foster innovative, more integrated lifelong learning approaches, more efficient use of resources and higher quality mobility schemes. The overall potential strategic partnerships are estimated at 23 000 partnerships and inclusion of 115000 institutions in the seven-year period.

Second sub-action Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances (2.2)

This sub-action aims at helping universities to modernize and enhance the quality and innovation of their work and to create new sector-specific curricula all in order to establish stronger link with the businesses sector and to have better tailored curricula and university programs. *Knowledge Alliances* are structured partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses which will foster creativity and entrepreneurship and design and deliver new curricula and qualification. *Sector Skills Alliances* on the other hand are focused on sectoral projects between businesses and education and training providers with an aim to further develop innovative ways of vocational teaching and training and to create new sector-specific curricula. The overall estimated impact of this sub-action is to have 400 alliances and 4 000 institutions in the period from 2014 till 2020.

Third sub-action IT support platforms and virtual mobility (2.3)

This pioneer sub-action through IT support platforms will offer peer learning and exchange of best-practices between large groups of beneficiaries at a very low cost. The existing *e-Twinning* initiative in school cooperation will be furthermore enhanced and will serve as an example for other similar initiatives for vocational education and training and youth. The

overall aim is to have 3 information technology platforms on EU level functioning by 2020.

Fourth sub-action International Cooperation and Capacity Building (2.4)

According to the EU external policy priorities the cooperation with third countries stays at the focus of the EU. The Program will support the capacity building of institutions and the modernization of higher education systems in EU's neighboring countries and will also support cooperation projects in the non-formal learning field. This sub-action will additionally foster cooperation with Asia, Latin America and ACP countries through support of bottom-up projects. The overall estimated impact of the sub-action is around 1000 cooperation projects.

The third key action – Support for policy reform (3) will support the implementation of the EU policy agenda on education, training and youth with its three sub-actions. The implementation of the EU transparency tools such as the Europass, EQF, ECTS, ECVET are falling under this action, it also supports the policy dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the area of education, training and youth and it supports the European Youth Forum. The activities under this action are in close connection with the Open Method of Coordination and are mutually complementing. The main aim of the policy reform is to achieve the Europe 2020 specific targets in the field of education and human capital. The budget for the support for policy reform will be not less than 4% from the total budget for the “Erasmus for All” program. This action is partly complementary with the priority field greater understanding of youth from the White paper.

First sub-action Open Method of Coordination and European Semester (3.1)

This sub-action is aimed at strengthening the support of the open method of coordination and other activities which help steer the EU agenda for education, training and youth through policy developments, policy analysis, comparative studies and development of indicators, statistics and benchmarks.

Second sub-action EU tools (3.2)

The program will enhance the support of EU transparency tools such as the Europass, European Qualification Framework (EQF), European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

Third sub-action Policy dialogue (3.3)

The program will focus on supporting specific key agendas which are out of special interest for the education, training and youth policies such as the Bologna process (higher education) and the Copenhagen process (vocational education and training), the Agenda for Schools of the 21st Century, the Modernization Agenda for Higher Education and the Structured Dialogue with young people.

Specific action - Jean Monnet

The Jean Monnet action has an aim to foster the European academic institutions which are pursuing an aim of European interest such as the European University Institute of Florence, the College of Europe of Bruges and Natolin, it also fosters research and teaching on European integration and promotes policy debates and exchanges between the academic world and the EU policy makers. The allocation for the Jean Monnet will be 280 million of EUR for the whole duration of the program.

Specific action in the field of Sport

Based on the consultation process the Commission has decided to include *Sport* in the frame of the new integrated “Erasmus for All”, with the following specific objectives: to promote good governance in sport in the EU; to promote health-enhancing physical activity through sport; to use sport in the fight against violence, racism and to foster social inclusion; to fight against doping. In order to achieve the specific objectives the Commission has proposed the following five activities: transnational collaborative projects; non-commercial European sport events; activities for strengthening of the evidence base for sport policy making; activities for support of capacity building of sport organizations and activities for fostering dialogue with relevant European stakeholders. The total allocation for the Sport activities will be 210 million of EUR.²⁷ This specific action is covering the priority fields of participation, health and sport and social inclusion from the White Paper and the Youth Strategy.

2.4.3. Summary of the program and expectations:

Summary:

The new “Erasmus for All” is the most comprehensive program covering parts from 5 of the 7 flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, having the highest ever budget in the field of

²⁷ Ibid

education, training, youth and sport of 15.2 billion of EUR²⁸. The new integrated program will try to utilize the positive experiences from its predecessors and in the same time will be complementary to the new strategies, policies and initiatives on EU level.

The program will focus only on activities which are providing a clearly identified potential for EU added value, it will support activities with transnational character and strengthen the links between education, training, youth systems and the needs of the labor market, it will foster non-formal learning and sports as a tool for combating racism and promotion of social inclusion, the program will also promote the use of EU tools for recognition of qualifications such as the Europass, EQF, ECTS, ECVET, and will support the priorities in EU external action in the fields of higher education. All of the previously mentioned will be in line with the Europe 2020 strategy in the field of education, training and youth and with the priorities of the “Education and Training 2020” and the “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative.

The governance and management of the program and the dissemination of its results will continue to follow as with the predecessors programs, i.e. the National Agencies are going to be responsible for developing a consistent policy for effective management of the programs actions at national level and the work of the National Agencies will be in line with the guidelines from the Commission and the executive agency EACEA will be responsible for the management of certain parts of the program on EU level.

The Commission is also proposing to put in place new tools, such as a *mechanism guaranteeing loans for master's candidates*, thus allowing them to follow a complete cycle of studies abroad. The executive also suggests creating '*knowledge alliances*' and '*sector skills alliances*'. The former are partnerships between higher education establishments and businesses offering new possibilities in terms of learning and new qualifications. The latter are partnerships between education and training professionals and businesses creating new courses per sector and elaborating innovative methods in teaching and vocational training.

28 A historical increase of 73% in comparison to the predecessors Erasmus Mundus, Youth in Action and the Lifelong Learning programs.

Expectations & Reactions to the integrated “Erasmus for All”:

The new “Erasmus for All” reaffirms the Commissions position that education and training are the areas of EU key interest for the prosperity of the European future. Androulla Vassiliou, the commissioner for education, culture, multilingualism and youth said that *“We need to invest more in education and training at all levels, so that we can provide the skills that are needed to be able to compete with the best in the world. Studying abroad boosts people’s skills, personal development, adaptability and employability...”* furthermore she states *“...the future of Europe depends on the knowledge, the skills and the capacity of its people to innovate“.*

The *European Youth Forum (YFJ)* is welcoming the significant budget increase for future programs and the focus on three key areas, however YFJ is concerned with the proposal for integrated Program the core values of youth work and the independence of youth policy are at risk. Therefore the Youth Forum stands firmly behind its request of a renewed separate Youth in Action Programme. *“Youth in Action ensures and represents a visible EU youth policy initiative and the continuation of diversity, quality and the unique character of youth work in the long-term”* affirms Peter Matjašič, President of the European Youth Forum.

Strong new programme should encourage the participation of all young people in democratic life and recognise that youth-led, volunteer-based, democratic European youth organizations are an indispensable channel for supporting active citizenship and for developing young people's skills and competences, both for the needs of the labour market and for an active and inclusive European society, and as such need to be given specific support. *“We demand the Youth Program to be independent and to give sustainable support to European youth organizations, to non-formal education and to youth work”* concluded Matjašič.

The European Youth Forum has also launched a campaign named “where are youth going” with an aim to raise the awareness about the importance of having independent Youth Program and will *“ask the Parliament and the Member States for strong and*

*independent Youth in Action, for non-formal education, youth work and democratic youth organizations and an ambitious European Youth Employment Plan”.*²⁹

European Student Union (ESU) welcomes the 70% increase of the overall budget, however ESU is disappointed that the Erasmus grants themselves have not increased. Allan Päll, ESU chairperson said that *“having in mind that the Erasmus grants are 250 EUR per average per month this is not nearly enough to cover food and accommodation in many European countries.”* Thus Erasmus student needs to pay great sum of money from their own pocket which is actually the main obstacle for higher student mobility³⁰. Furthermore about the *new master student loan guarantee scheme* Allan stated *“We fear that there is a high risk that loans will be very expensive for students, especially students from a lower socio-economic background”*. Further on ESU shares its concerns that *“...Indeed – while one might aim for more mobility, the question always remains – mobility of whom? ESU shows fear that funding for grants will eventually be replaced with funding for loan guarantees for students.”* That will add up for the program to be even less accessible for people with fewer opportunities.

The member of the European Parliament Jörg Leichtfried from the SPÖ Austria stated the following about the new “Erasmus for All” Program *“The danger is getting higher for the European Youth Policy to be reduced just to the promotion of Pupils and Students. The proposal from the Commission to raise significantly the overall budget is welcomed, however it is out of crucial importance for the Program to be inclusive towards everyone including those who are not in the formal educational process.”* Furthermore he states that *“while the “Erasmus for All” mainly focuses on Education in the European Youth Strategies there is significant attention also to other fields of interest such as employment, participation, social integration, voluntary service, health, creativity, youth and the world and others. Youth Policy has to be more than just Education Policy.”*

According to the Austrian national representative of youth Wolfgang Moitzi the “Erasmus for All” is focused mainly on Education and its formal structure, where many non-formal initiatives from young people are left behind. He goes on stating that *“it will be even harder to reach and involve young people with fewer opportunities”* and that the EU by losing the

²⁹ Where are youth going. (1st of December 2011). <http://www.whereareyouthgoing.eu/>

³⁰ As a recent survey on mobility from the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) clearly indicates.

YiA Program will lose the opportunity to facilitate and to ensure the involvement of young people in the work and decisions of EU institutions. He calls for *“young people to be taken more seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and decision making processes”*.

From these and many other reactions and debates about the proposal from the Commission the following few key elements are pointed out: Young people, organization’s working in the field of youth and education are welcoming the significant increase of the overall budget of more than 70%, however there is growing dissatisfaction from the detailed proposal for the integrated “Erasmus for All” due to the fact that the Commission didn’t take on board the main outcomes from the consultation process that the Commission was organizing for the European Youth Program (2014-2020) at that time named YiA2.0. Independent Youth Program keeping the name Youth in Action, stronger non-formal learning, youth work and enhanced support for youth organizations are some of the main demands raised by the consultation process but not addressed by the Commission’s proposal.

The Complementary dimension of the Programs with the Priority Fields of the Youth Policies

After reflecting and analyzing the programs it can be concluded that three of the five actions of the Youth Program are complementary with the White Paper specific priorities of participation and voluntary service among young people and one of its action is focused on the specific priority of information. Furthermore the Youth in Action is complementary with the White Paper but also to the Youth Strategy and the Youth on the Move which were both launched during the time of the current YiA, the program covers participation with all of its actions; Non-formal education with 4 of its actions; three are covering partly or fully voluntary service; greater understanding and social inclusion are covered by two of the YiA actions and furthermore with one action the Program is covering the specific priorities of taking more account of youth in other policies; creativity and entrepreneurship; employment; learning mobility; reduce youth unemployment; youth and information. The “Erasmus for All” as proposed by the Commission is covering the following priorities from the White Paper, Youth Strategy and the Flagship Initiative: participation with 3 of its actions; two of the actions are covering higher education and greater understanding of youth; furthermore are covered learning mobility, reducing youth unemployment, health and sport, social inclusion and only partly non-formal education.

Chapter Three

Analysis of the results from the research

3. Methodology

3.1. Field of research of the Thesis:

The field of research is the possible future effects that the integrated program “Erasmus for All” can have over the support and fostering of youth organization’s, youth work and non-formal education.

The path, of the independent European Youth Program in the EU has lasted for more than 20 years, starting with the Youth for Europe 1, 2 and 3 from 1988 till 1999 continuing with Youth Program from 2000 till 2006 and the current Youth in Action from 2007 till 2013. Now the European Youth Program is on a cross-road struggling to keep its independent functioning due to the fact that the EU Commission has proposed the Youth in Action program together with Lifelong Learning, Erasmus Mundus and 4 smaller programs Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the program for cooperation with industrialized countries to be integrated into one Program named “Erasmus for All”.

The Commission has introduced the integrated “Erasmus for All” as a program that will significantly reduce the overlap between the existent programs in education, training and youth field. It will also reduce the implementation cost for up to 40% and will raise the visibility and recognition of the program by using the well-known and recognized brand ERASMUS. On the other side young people and youth representatives are highly concerned about the future of the Youth Program, the further support to youth organizations, youth work and non-formal education. In this chapter the focus of the thesis is set on analyzing the proposal from the Commission and analyzing the reactions, Feedbacks from young people and youth organizations. Within the field of research of the Thesis are as well the EU Youth Policy Documents starting from the White Paper in 2001 till the Youth on the Move flagship initiative in 2010, the EU Youth Programs and the detailed proposal from the Commission for the integrated “Erasmus for All”.

3.2. Aim of the Thesis:

Aim of the Thesis is to analyze the potential impact that the new integrated “Erasmus for All” Program could have on youth organizations, youth work and non-formal education.

Specific aims:

To analyze the existing EU Youth Policies and their influence on the further development of the youth policy field.

To analyze the connection between the Youth Program, the Youth in Action and the “Erasmus for All”³¹ and to which extent they are complementary to the priority fields of the existing EU Youth Policies.

To get a Feedback from young people and youth organizations about the possible effects that the proposed integrated “Erasmus for All” program could have on the future promotion, support and fostering of youth organizations, youth work and non-formal education.

3.3. Hypothesis:

The integrated “Erasmus for All”³² will reduce the support to youth organizations and their work in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program.

Specific hypotheses:

- The integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the future promotion and support to youth work in comparison with the YiA program.
- The integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the future promotion and support to non-formal education in comparison with the YiA program.
- The integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the future direct support to Youth Organizations in comparison with the YiA program.

3.4. Methods and techniques:

The process of researching and writing the thesis consisted of the following activities: Desk research i.e. analysis of EU documents, Position Papers and reactions from Youth and

³¹ As stated in the detail proposal from the Commission on 23rd of November 2011

³² Ibid

Education Organizations; web-based surveys by questionnaires with young people, youth organizations and other stakeholders active in the field of education and youth; expert interview with the President of the European Youth Forum; an Feedback in a form of a questionnaire from the Head of the Youth in Action Unit at the DG EAC; Analysis phase; Drafting the final version of the Thesis.

Techniques:

Documents analysis

In the stage of documents analysis, around 10 Commission communications, reports, documents were reviewed as well as around 10 documents, such as position papers from European Youth or Education Organizations, their reaction to the proposals from the Commission and etc. Special attention was set on the following EU Youth Policies: 'White Paper – a new impetus for European Youth', the Framework for European Cooperation in Youth Field, the European Youth Pact, the Structured Dialogue, the EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering, the renewed Framework for European Cooperation in Youth Field and the Youth on the Move flagship initiative and on the Youth Program, the Youth in Action and on the detailed proposal for the integrated “Erasmus for All” Program.

Questionnaires

In this research two questionnaire were conducted through the web-survey network Survey-Monkey with specific focus group of young people active in youth organizations, youth work, non-formal education or who have interests in these fields. The first questionnaire was conducted from 7th till 20th of November 2011 it was before the Commission launched the detailed proposal for the integrated Program on 23rd of November. The questionnaire was send to 105 youth organization's, National Youth Councils, European platform organizations and international organizations and to 46 individuals active or interested in EU youth policy. The first questionnaire was further promoted through the Facebook pages of several young people active in youth policies and through further dissemination to the European Youth Forum expert group on the Youth in Action Program. On the end there were 36 respondents from whom 21 from youth or other non-profit organization, one representative from EU institution or national body and 14 individuals. There is further informations about the results from this questionnaire in the next chapter and the sample from the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

The second questionnaire was conducted after the detail proposal from the Commission and it was open-online from the 28th of November till the 5th of December 2011 with 52 total respondents from whom 33 are individuals and 19 are representatives of organizations. The questionnaire was sent to the same specific group of 105 youth organizations, National Youth Councils, European platform organization and international organizations and to 25 individuals active or interested in EU Youth Policy. The second questionnaire was furthermore promoted on the Facebook page of the “where are youth going” initiative of the European Youth Forum, on the Facebook pages of several people active in youth policy and was sent to the expert group for YiA of YFJ. There is further information’s about the results from this questionnaire in the next chapter and the sample from the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

Expert interviews:

On the 2nd of December 2011 Expert Skype Interview was conducted with the President of the European Youth Forum Peter Matjashic, the duration of the interview was 30 minutes and the focus was set on the consultation process about the YiA2.0 that took place in the end of 2010. Furthermore, on the outcomes of that consultation and if the outcomes were implemented in the final version by the Commission, the potential impact of the newly proposed integrated program over youth organization, youth work, non-formal education and the future of EU youth policy, as well as on the overall YFJ position about the new “Erasmus for All”.

On the 11th of December 2011 the Head of the Youth in Action Unit in DG Education and Culture Mr. Pascal Lejeune has answered a questionnaire focusing on the future support of the integrated “Erasmus for All” Program to youth work, non-formal education and youth organization. Furthermore, the focus was on the significantly increased budget, the ERASMUS brand and the future support of the main activities of the current Youth in Action program.

4. Results from the Empirical Research:

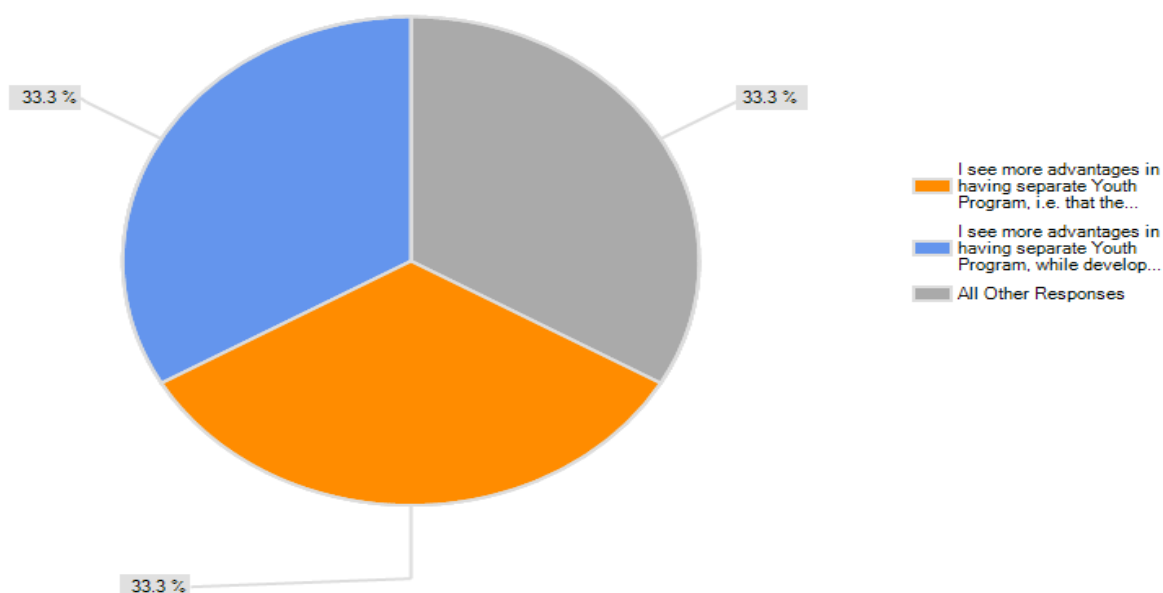
4.1. Presentation and analysis of the results prior to the launching of the detailed proposal by the Commission (i.e. from the first questionnaire)

Focus group

The focus group of this online questionnaire has been young people who have benefited from the YiA program or who are active or interested in EU Youth Policy. The profile of the respondents in great deal is matching with the predetermined focus group namely 83.3% of the respondents of the first questionnaire have benefited from the YiA and almost 50% have participated in the consultation process about the new Program at that time know as YiA2.0. Furthermore, around 58% were introduced with the Commission's proposal for the new integrated Program prior to this questionnaire and only 2 respondents haven't heard neither about the YiA or the new integrated program. The total number of respondents is 36 from whom 14 individuals, one representative of European institution or national body and 21 representatives of National Youth Councils, youth, education and other non-profit organizations. The respondents were from the following 18 European countries: Sweden, France, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Latvia, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Germany, Estonia, Netherlands and Bulgaria.

Future of the European Youth Program, independent or integrated Program:

Future European Youth Program (YiA):



Concerning the future of the European Youth Program two-thirds of the respondent have stated that they will prefer to have independent Youth Program 33% have stated that they would see more advantages in having separate Youth Program, i.e. that the program continues separately from other program's as till now. Furthermore, 33% have stated that they see more advantages in having separate Youth Program, while developing more integrated approach with the Lifelong Learning and the Erasmus Mundus programs. On the other side only 11% of the respondents have stated that they see more advantages in the integration of the Youth Program in the new integrated Program as proposed by the EU Commission. Additionally some of the respondents have stated that *“It is very important that the Youth Program remains separate, in order to acknowledge the importance of youth work and recognize youth field and youth as special group!”* other stated *“In the integrated program, youth, youth work and non-formal learning would suffer and disappear under the larger fields of formal education; The decision-making, finances, branding, etc. would be done by and for the persons related to formal education, especially to university students who are already a privileged group among young people”* others are concerned that *“I am scared that in program with Erasmus, Youth in Action with Non-formal learning may disappear little by little because the budget would be given to "more important" things, as Erasmus.”*

The consultation process (YiA2.0)

The overall consultation process was very accessible and inclusive for 6% of the respondents, somewhat accessible and inclusive for 39% and not accessible and inclusive for 21%, the response are only slightly better for the online public consultation. Additionally some comments were made as *“many young people wanted to be part of, but simply couldn't get any info about it; many decisions without consulting NGOs”* and some of the respondents went step further and stated *“If they do not abide our contributions, our opinion and don't care about researches, what's the point of having any process and can we really call it consultations?”*.

Was the voice of young people implemented when deciding to have the integrated Program?

Very high pro-cent of the respondents of more than 80% agreed that *the voice of young people was not heard when deciding to have integrated education, training and youth Program (2014-2020*. From whom 48% strongly agreed and 33% agreed and on other side only 6% disagreed. Some of the respondents furthermore stated that *“This was a very cynic decision*

and has created a very negative environment for the development and implementation of the future program; they should hear young people's voice, needs and opinion from youth sector! We - youth and youth organizations- are the one working on the field, know the situations and are willing to work with them. It's only respectful to expect the same from EC.” On the other hand some stated that *“it is the most important to get more funds for Erasmus, by merging the both programs administrative costs will be reduced, people should analyze the specific allocation of funds under the new program!”*

The significantly increased budget³³

The significantly increased budget of the program for more than 70% has been welcomed by all potential beneficiaries. Additionally 64% of the participants of this survey think that the increased budget will lead to *Significantly higher number of funded projects*, where almost 40% think that *it will lead to significantly greater direct support for young people in responding to their needs*. On the other side only 20% think that *it will lead to Significant reduce in fragmentation and overlapping of projects*. Some of the respondents have stated that *“we are happy about the increased funds, however we do not want that incensement to be mostly for formal education and other fields and not youth.”*

Visibility and recognition of the new integrated Program

Concerning visibility and recognition only around 15% agreed with the statement *that the new integrated EU education, training and youth program will have significantly greater visibility and recognition than its predecessors* the ongoing Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus. On the other hand around 30% of the respondents are disagreeing with this statement and around 40% were neutral and 15% stated that they can't judge. Some of the respondents have additionally stated that *“Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus and the Lifelong Learning are well established trademarks and have already very good visibility and recognition; the names are acknowledged by many people and have great reputation, at least for a while people will be confused what the new programs mean and thus the visibility nor the recognition will be significantly higher.”*

Expectations from the integrated Program

Potential positive effects that the integrated program can have over youth organizations, youth

³³ This was a rating scale question where for each separate statement the maximum is 100%

work, NFE and youth policy in general:

“Better visibility and having all forms of learning integrated; more funded projects and ensuring more participants in the projects; more possibilities for cooperation/joint projects with formal education institutions (possibly resulting with better recognition of the formal education players for NFE providers); more exchanges will happen.”

Potential negative effects that the integrated program can have over youth organizations, youth work, NFE and youth policy in general:

“Less support for individual projects; less accessibility for young people with fewer opportunities and making education more exclusive; danger that the youth field is going to be neglected and there won't be a full recognition of youth work and youth organizations.; the value of promoting active citizenship and youth participation as well as youth work itself will be diminished.” Furthermore some stated that *“there is great risk if youth organizations can't receive better structural support, because there is the possibility our sector will be blown away by the project writers of Universities who have much more financial capacity to contract European project officers. If this does not happen, it is likely that formal education and vocational training will take away the financial tools from the non-formal sector.”* Other added that *“the new program will not be as open to youth organizations as the YiA and we have already started to think on other sources of funding for our activities.”*

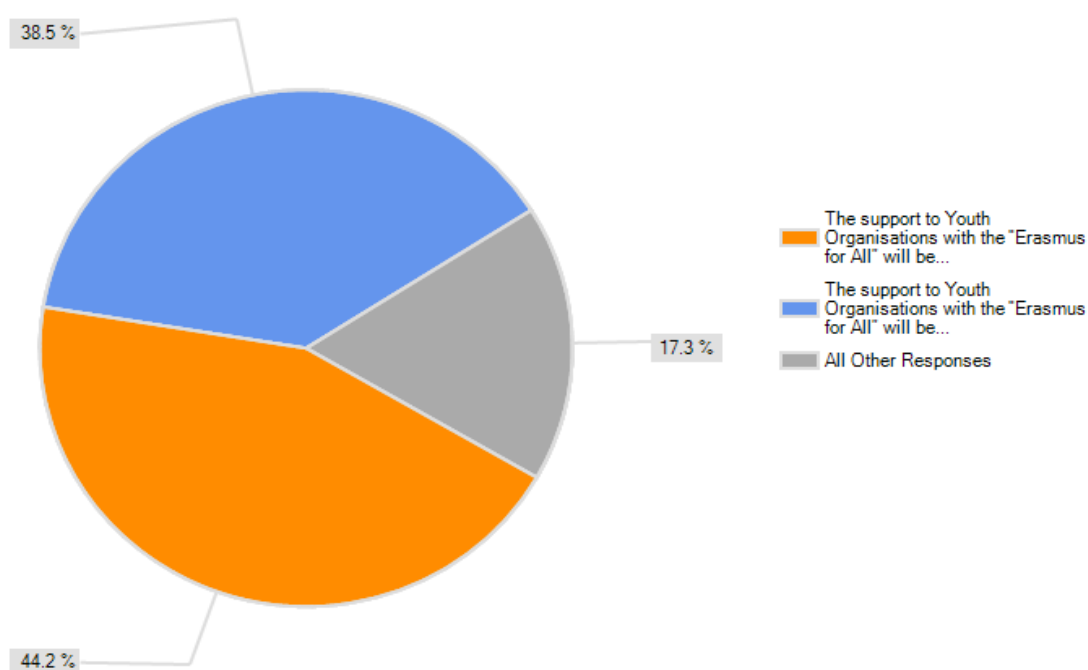
4.2. Presentation and Analysis of the results after the launching of the detailed proposal by the Commission (i.e. second questionnaire)

Focus group

The focus group of the second online questionnaire have been young people who have benefited from the YiA program or are interested in EU Youth Policy. The number of overall respondents was 52, from whom 33 have answered the questionnaire as individuals and 19 as representatives of organizations. The respondents are coming from the following 22 European countries: Poland, Romania, Albania, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Switzerland, Croatia, Finland, Latvia, Italy, United Kingdom, Serbia, Montenegro, Spain, Armenia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia, Luxemburg, Cyprus, and several international and European organizations. From the overall respondents more than 94% have benefited from the YiA, 42% have participated in the consultation process and almost 56% are familiar with the detailed proposal from the Commission. On the other side 19% are not familiar with the proposal form the Commission about the “Erasmus for All”.

Support of “Erasmus for All” to Youth Organizations

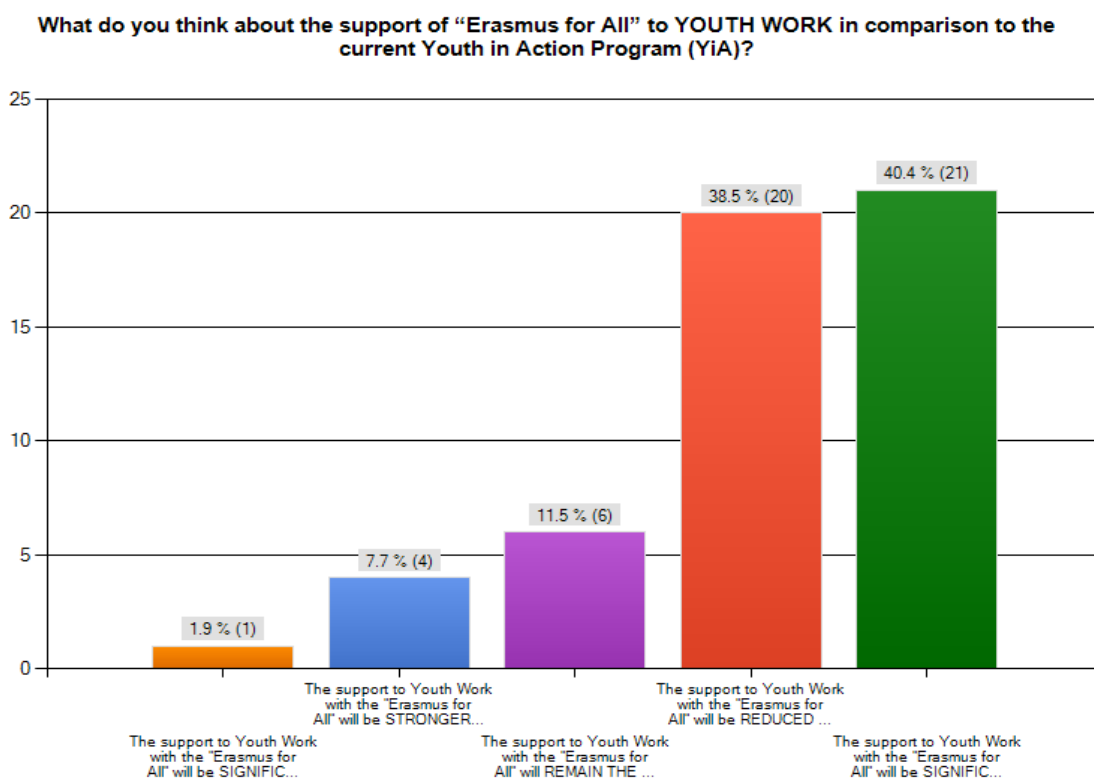
What do you think about the support of “Erasmus for All” to YOUTH ORGANISATION'S in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program (YiA)?



More than 82% of the respondents have stated that the support to Youth Organizations will reduce with the “Erasmus for All” from whom 44.2% have agreed with the statement that *the support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will be significantly reduced*. On the other hand almost 10% are of the opinion that the support to youth organization with the newly proposed integrated program will be stronger in comparison to the current YiA and 7% believe that the support to youth organizations will remain the same. Some of the respondents made the following comments: *“youth organizations (particularly small ones) are not in the centre of the entire programme; these will be big institutions that will benefit from it; the plan is to stop offering direct support to European youth organizations in the form of operational grants which has been the lifeline of many; we are afraid that with the integration of the programme less money will be put into non-formal education programmes for young people.”*

Support of “Erasmus for All” to youth work

From the graphic below it can be noticed that almost 79% of the respondents have stated that *the support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be reduced in comparison to the YiA*, from whom 40.4% have stated that the support will be significantly reduced. Again less than 10% have stated that the support to youth work will be stronger with the newly proposed integrated program and 11.5% consider it will remain the same.



Furthermore some of the respondents have stated that “*youth work seems not to be recognized at all in the new program;*” on the other side some have stated that “*it seems that there is within the sector Youth Participation a focus on mobility of youth workers. It remains to be seen how capacity-building and training will be included in the strands of the new programme.*” Furthermore some respondents are unsure about the future support of the “Erasmus for All” for youth work and have stated “*that it is not very clear to which extent the new proposal would support the real values of youth work and youth work as such, although it focuses on some specific aspects of it (e.g. NFL).*”

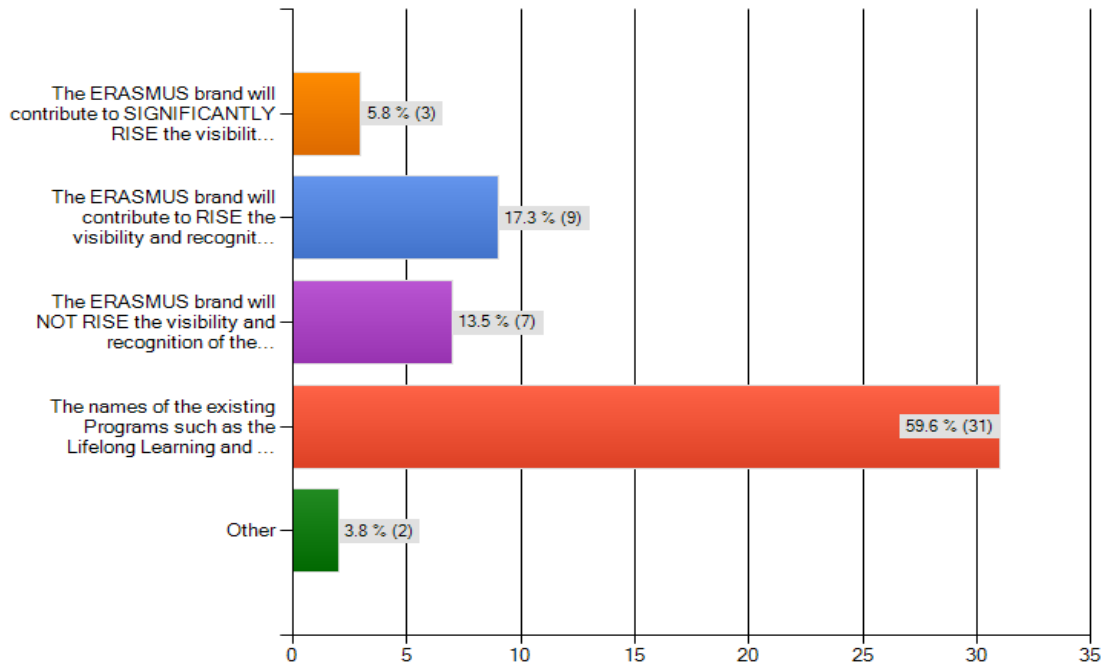
Support of the “Erasmus for All” to Non-formal Education

The majority of the respondents in total almost 52% have agreed with the statement *that the support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.* Additional 32.7% think that the support will be reduced, while 7.7% think that the support will remain the same and only 4 respondents think that the support to NFE with the “Erasmus for All” will be stronger or significantly stronger. Some of the respondents who consider that the non-formal education will be less supported by the integrated program have stated that “*NFE inside of "Erasmus for all" can not exist, the academic environment is not suitable for effective NFL especially not for young people with fewer opportunities;* “*Erasmus is not non-formal education;*” and “*NFE is not even mentioned;*” others say that “*Non-formal learning is mentioned but only related to formal education;*” some went step further in the analysis and stated that “*NFE (youth organizations) has a much weaker lobby in the EU than formal education (e.g. universities) have, therefore non-formal education will lose within an integrated programme and get less funding in future.*” In line with the previous comments one respondent stated that “*The new proposal speaks a lot about non-formal learning but it remains to be seen if NFE as we understand it will continue to be a priority and where the lines will be between formal and non-formal education and which providers of NFE will be among future beneficiaries.*”

On the question *can the new “Erasmus for All” be seen as a serious step towards reducing European Youth Policy to just Education Policy:* 59.6% strongly agreed, 26.9% agreed, 7.7% were neutral and only 5.7% disagreed or strongly disagrees.

The name of the integrated program

With which of the following statements (about the name of the integrated Program) do you agree?



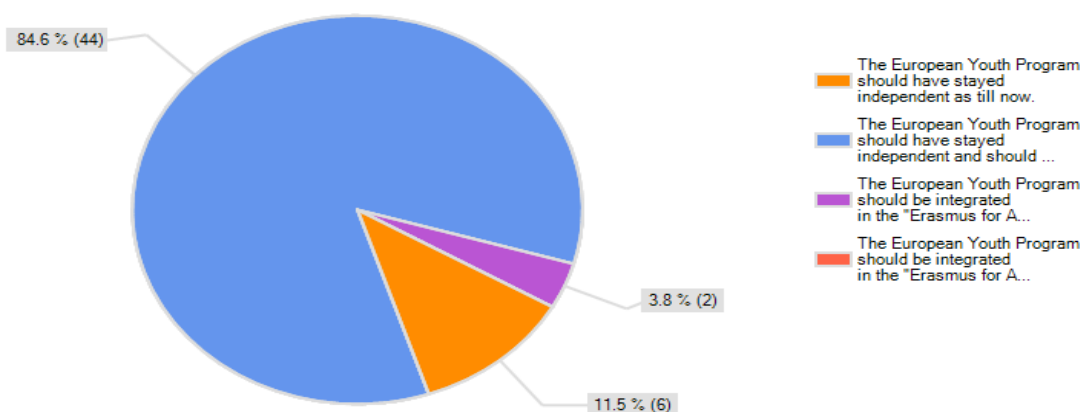
From the chart above it can be easily noted that almost 60% of the respondents have agreed with the statement that *the names of the existing Programs such as the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action have already established themselves as very strong and recognisable brands and the new ERASMUS brand will not rise and will even reduce the visibility and recognition.* On other side 23.1% consider that the visibility and recognition of the new program will be raised or significantly raised with the ERASMUS brand. Some of the comments are in the direction that *“We agree with the Commission that the Erasmus brand is well known, however most people only identify Erasmus with student mobility among European universities, and not with European values; It definitely does not encompass the wider scope that the programme has/should have and thus make all the other Programmes, especially the Youth Programme invisible and harder to promote and reach out to new and former beneficiaries of the programme Youth in Action.”*; others stated that *“Erasmus for all gives a totally wrong impression: it implies only university students as target groups and will definitely create confusion and misunderstandings.”* Others went step further and said that *“Erasmus is established as a name for a programme where you don't have to learn, but can party a lot instead. Youth in Action is connected to a programme where you learn because you choose to and you can take responsibility and ownership for your learning.”*

On the question *how would you rate to which extent the new “Erasmus for All” is dedicated to the following European Youth Policy priorities:*³⁴ social inclusion, cultural diversity, European citizenship, reducing youth unemployment, creativity and entrepreneurship, voluntary service, learning mobility, higher education, youth and the world, taking more account of youth in other areas and greater understanding of young people.

Higher Education was rated as the highest priority of the “Erasmus for All” by being rate as high or very high by 80.4% of the respondents, the majority of the respondents have also rated with very high or high Learning Mobility with 70.6%. On the other hand the respondents have rated as low or very low the Social Inclusion with total 59.6%, taking more account of youth in other areas with total of 71.2% as low or very low and they have also stated that greater understanding of young people is also low on the agenda of the “Erasmus for All” by rating low or very low of total 72.5%.

An independent Youth Program or integrated program

With which of the following statements about the European Youth Program (current Youth in Action) do you agree with?

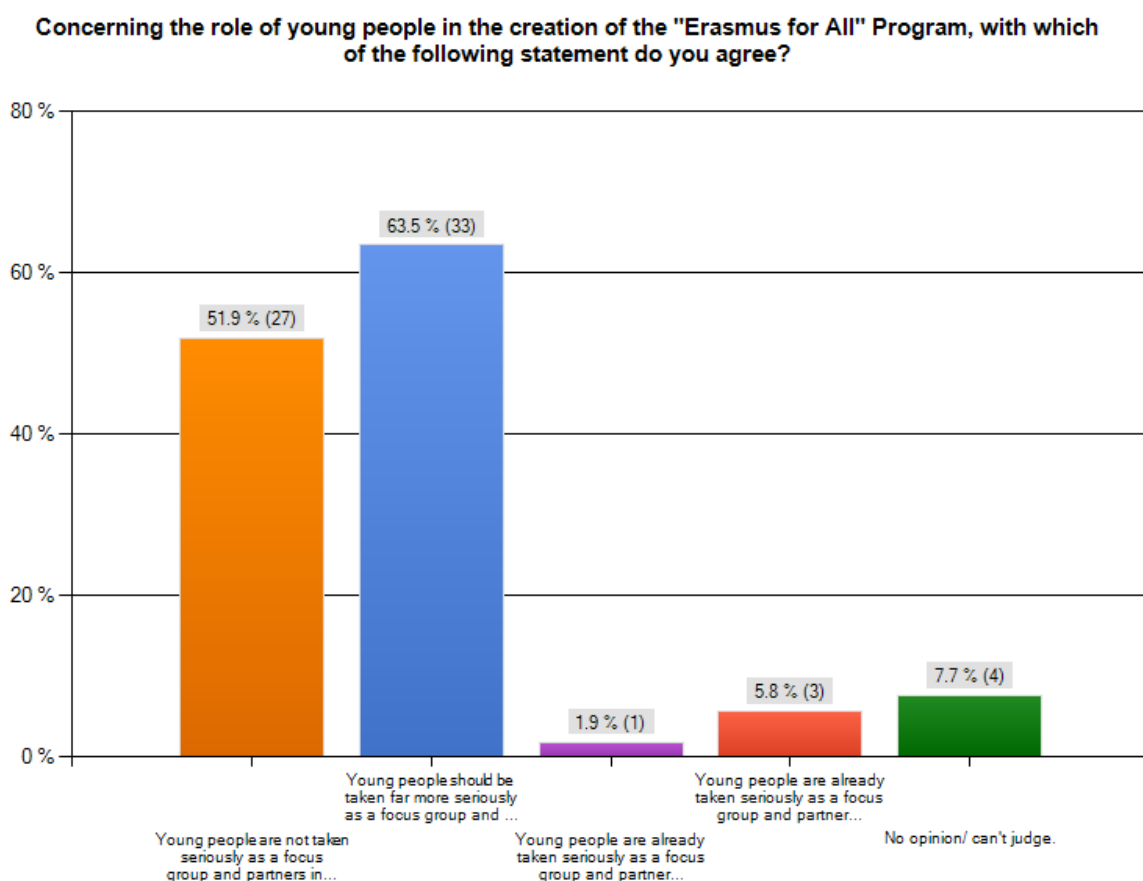


From the chart above its easily noticeable that with the exception of 3.8% everyone think that the European Youth Program should have continued to function independent and 84.6% are of

³⁴ This was a rating scale question where for each separate statement the maximum is 100%

the opinion that the program despite being independent should also furthermore strengthen the support to youth organizations, youth work and non-formal education. On the other hand only 2 respondents think that the program should be integrated as proposed by the Commission, however there should be special tailored eligibility, selection and award criteria for youth organizations. One of the respondents has additionally commented that *“The European Youth Program should stay independent and focus on NFE, Social Inclusion and Youth with fewer opportunities and therefore be easier approachable.”* On the other side there are some who will partly accept the legal frame set by the Commission *“integrated as its own pillar would also be possible, e.g. like done with sports”*. Others consider that *“the Youth Programme has to have its own specific space within the future programme and strengthen the positive aspects of youth work and involvement of young people.”*

The role of young people in the consultation and the decision-making process³⁵



Concerning the involvement of young people, 51.9% have agreed with the statement that young people are not taken seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and

³⁵ This was a multiple choice question where for each separate statement the maximum is 100%

decision-making process and 63.5% stated that young people should be taken far more seriously as a focus groups and partners. On the other hand 5.8% are of the opinion that young people are taken seriously, however their impact in the final version of the program should have been greater. Where only 1 respondent has stated that young people are taken seriously and their impact over the final version of the “Erasmus for All” has been sufficient. Some of the respondents have further commented that *“the majority part of the outcomes of the YiA2.0 have not been taken into account”* and *“the 7000 feedbacks for the Commission's questionnaire about Youth in Action one year ago seem to be totally ignored!”*

Expectations from the integrated Program

As positive expectations can be seen the comments from the respondents *“there will be more funding for more projects”* and *“we are satisfied with the significantly increased budget”*. On the other side there are numerous negative comments and concerns about the future of youth organizations, youth work and NFE, some of them are written in continuation: *“There will be much more space for institutional partners than civil society organizations and the administrative grants to youth organizations were not mentioned, which is a threat to the existence many organizations;”*. Additionally it can be noted that *“the personal support which is provided by many National Agencies will no longer be present and the risk exist that many youth organization won't be able to get funding for their activities and that youth will be “eaten up” by education focus.”* Other have stated that *“Youth in Action as such is much more to young people, especially in non-EU countries. It gives them opportunities and makes them a part of the big European family. We are afraid this will not be the case once the programs are integrated.”* Concerning NFE some respondents have stated that *“Non-formal learning and youth work will become institutionalised. I'm worried for young people that face challenges in the system of formal education. I'm afraid they will be excluded and it will lead to bigger social crisis and it will enlarge social gaps between educated and not educated.”* Furthermore some have stated that *“Youth policy will become invisible, what about all the white paper work that has been done? Youngsters from excluded groups, who suffer several problems, are not taken into account. The main values that YIA stands for are not taken into account. What about all the results that have been booked with YIA, they were never taken into account when making this proposal“* and *“there will be no money for simply tens who want to change something, but the world Needs them!”*

4.3. Interview with the President of the European Youth Forum - Peter Matjašič



Concerning the lobby process done by YFJ and their satisfaction from the Commission's proposal YFJ President Matjašič has stated that *"With all the channels sitting at our disposal we were constantly making a lot of noise for the value of the YiA and its specific actions to be recognized and valued. We were trying to remind the EC what the outcomes from the consultations were, YFJ is also organizing several events for raising awareness for the importance of independent YiA as the Stakeholder Breakfast Meeting and the campaign "where are youth going". After the launching of the proposal I can say that we are not extremely happy, we are quite disappointed with some of the points, however we are happy that there is significant increase of the funds allocated to the program and that they acknowledge the added value and will further strengthen the support of some action such as the EVS"*.

President Matjašič has stated that YJF aims at strengthened, improved and simple YiA with focus on 3-main headings youth works, youth decides and youth move. Concerning these YFJ priorities the Commission has taken strongly on board the youth move through the different mobility schemes, furthermore the Commission's support for policy dialogue and cooperation with new partners are taking on board youth decides. He further stated *"However it can be noted that with the proposal for the new program we definitely miss youth work by not having actions that are going to foster activities such as active citizenship, youth participation and recognition of youth organizations as main providers. As concerning Non-formal education and Non-formal learning opportunities it can be noted that the principles of NFL maybe are respected but the question is who will provide and implement NFL opportunities and this is not very clear for us and this is one of the things that we will keep fighting for."* He further noted that YFJ is concerned about the scraping of the administrative grants and added that the Erasmus brand would not help the visibility of the program since youth in action is well established brand especially among those who matters the most i.e. young people.

"What we would like to ensure is that there is enough money to invest in young people and we are more than pleased with the allocation of money and we would like the Member States and the Parliament to approve this increase. However when it comes to the detailed proposal we

believe that it has to go hand in hand, active citizenship, youth participation, volunteering, participation in youth organization all these soft skills are not just attributing to fight unemployability but are value by itself and should be cherished,” affirms Matjašič.

Concerning the enhanced focus of the proposal on Higher Education the president of YFJ comments that *“we can live with the fact that 80% is for rather Higher Education, it is not so much about the percentage, what is important is that the part which is designated for youth of 7% which will present 25% increase in comparison to the previous will be spend for youth lead activities, YFJ would like to avoid Universities and other institutions to start doing what we are doing, hence EVS, youth exchange should remain being done by youth organization and should be done with young people, that is not clear with the proposal who is going to be the provider who is going to be the direct beneficiary and how this will be implemented.”*

Young people said what they want and Matjašič ensures that *“now we lobby in the parliament on what to be the focus, we are pushing our priorities and our main priority remains definitely independent youth program, because an integrated program as introduced now it can reduce, and even endanger youth policy.”* He continues stating that *“the fear is that now when everything will be under one, when there are no clear guidelines no separate youth program that there will be a constant fight and education will prevail because it already has 80% of the funds. Additional practical question arises, would there be proper youth experts who can than implement those 7% that are allocated to them or are these finance going to be eaten up by the educational portfolio? And this is a real fear knowing the national realities in the EU.”*

YFJ President Matjašič concludes that *“having in mind that young people have spoken, youth organizations have spoken, the Member States have spoken and the Parliament has spoken I don’t recall when was the last time when the commission has so blindly ignored the voices from so many different stakeholders”.* He continued *“Generally the proposal is a step backwards, however if on the end of the day we get everything that we want in terms of action in terms of value, it’s not going to be the worst thing to be within the legal basis proposed by the Commission. In the same time this would be acceptable if we have independent program within the legal basis proposed by the Commission such as the separate chapter for Sport in the detailed proposal we would want to ensure that for YiA as well”* concluded the President of the YFJ Peter Matjašič.

4.4. Questionnaire with the Head of Youth in Action Unit Mr. Pascal Lejeune



Talking about the merger of the education, training, youth and sport programs Mr. Lejeune has stated that *“what is more important is the content of the programmes and the level of funding to be allocated to them. One can see that, beyond the architectural issue, the main activities currently supported under Youth in Action are kept for the future; furthermore, the budget increase (around 70%) for Erasmus for all deserves to be noticed.”*

Concerning the question was the voice of young people heard when designing the detailed proposal? Mr. Lejeune noted that *“It is true that the design of the Erasmus for all programme took into consideration not only the results of the various public consultations but also other strong arguments, like the objective of simplification and streamlining of the current programmes; and these objectives applied all across the board, as an horizontal objective for the whole EU budget. But the budget increase proposed for youth activities does not suggest that there would be less non-formal learning opportunities; on the contrary. And the support to youth work is clearly identified as one of the objectives of the Erasmus for all propos”*.

Regarding the future support of the integrated “Erasmus for All” to youth work, non-formal education and youth organizations Mr. Lejeune affirms that *“The Communication which accompanies the Erasmus for all proposal clearly mentions the objective of an increased support to the youth sector (between 25% and 40%). The main activities of Erasmus for all in the youth non formal learning sector are identified under the three strands which will structure Erasmus for all: mobility of young people (youth exchanges and the European Voluntary Service) and of youth workers; cooperation projects involving youth organisations; support to the EU Youth Strategy. However the concrete terms and detailed implementation considerations will be precisely defined with other instruments to come such as program Guide, a call for proposals and etc.* Furthermore the Head of the YiA Unit stated that *“having in mind the highly increased budget for a continued support to the main activities of the current Youth in Action programme does not sound like “giving up” from the YiA program as a mechanism for reaching young people of all social classes and support of youth work and youth organizations”* and he ensures that any sector should gain from the increase proposed by the Commission, not only the Higher Education sector.

Concerning the strengthened focus to Higher Education and the potential danger that with the integrated program slowly EU Youth Policy can be narrowed to Education Policy Mr. Lejeune comments that *“any merger may be seen as a risk, but why should the youth sector a priori consider that it would lose in a new context where the main activities are maintained and get the possibility of a larger financial support? It will be for us all to prove the effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the European added value, of what we do in the non formal learning sector, which should be easy based on the achievements of Youth in Action! And this all refers not only to the Education and training line of action issue by the EU Youth Strategy: the Strategy, in its entirety, will be served by Erasmus for all, which has to be seen as a tool supporting the EU 2020 Agenda, the Education and Training 2020 Strategy as well as the EU Youth Strategy”*.

In reference to the brand name of Erasmus Mr. Lejeune has noted that I have doubts if *“Youth in Action”* is as well known as *“Erasmus”*. Unfortunately, I have also doubts if *“Lifelong Learning”* is as well known as *“Erasmus”*. The merger in one single programme suggests identifying one single name. The well established brand *“Erasmus”* should help ensure visibility and recognition for the whole new program.”

Furthermore if the new program represents a step forward or a step backwards for EU Youth Policy Mr. Lejeune concludes that *“We have a Youth Strategy. And we will have a strong programme to support, among others, this Strategy. This reality would translate in a “step backward” only if the youth work did not feel “on board” of this new programme, which would be a pity considering all what the European programmes have achieved in the youth field during two decades. I invite young people and youth organisations to share and showcase as widely as possible what Youth for Europe, Youth and Youth in Action have brought to them; this is the best way to ensure a bright future for the activities that these successive programmes have support.”*

4.4. Conclusion of the Empirical Research:

General conclusions

The high majority of 88 respondents of the questionnaires and the interviewee are active in youth field and have benefited from the Youth in Action Program, furthermore the majority of them have been introduced with the “Erasmus for All” proposal prior to the survey. By having respondents from 28 European countries representing 41 National Youth Councils, youth and education organizations, European association and international organizations the findings of this thesis can be considered as relevant and representative.

Concerning the future of the European Youth Program in the first questionnaire 66.6% of the respondents have stated that they will prefer to have an independent program, additionally vast majority of the respondents of the second questionnaire of 96.1% have also stated that they are for independent youth program. The President of YFJ Peter Matjašič has also stated that it is of high priority for the European Youth Forum to have an independent youth program in the future. On the other hand Mr. Lejeune is transferring the focus to the content of the integrated program and stated that *“the main activities currently supported under Youth in Action are kept for the future”*.

The first questionnaire was also reflecting on the consultation process where 45% considered the process as accessible and inclusive and on the other side 21% was of the opinion that the process was not accessible and inclusive. In continuation of this it can be noted that 81% of the respondents of the questionnaire considered that the voice of young people was not heard and 51.9% in the second questionnaire were of the opinion that young people are not taken seriously as a partner in the consultation and decision-making process and that their contributions were not sufficiently implemented in the final version of the proposal.

Only 20% of the respondents in the first questionnaire have stated that the Erasmus brand will contribute towards greater visibility, on the other side 30% disagreed and in the second questionnaire 60% of the respondents were of the opinion that the names of Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action are well known and good established and that the Erasmus brand will even reduce the visibility and recognition of the program. The president of YFJ together with 87.5% of the respondents in the second questionnaire have shared the opinion that the “Erasmus for All” as presented by the Commission in the proposal can narrow and even

reduce EU Youth Policy to just Education Policy. On the other side the majority of the respondents have stated as a positive thing that the significantly increased budget will contribute to have higher number of funded project. Concerning the name of the integrated program the Head of the Youth in Action Unit has stated that the YiA and the LLL are not so well known brands as the Erasmus and that the Erasmus brand will ensure greater visibility and recognition of the whole new program.

Hypothesis testing

Having in mind the results from the empirical research it can be concluded that the first specific hypothesis *the integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the promotion and support of youth work in comparison with the YiA program* has been confirmed. That can be noted through the result from the questionnaire where almost 79% of the respondents have stated *that the support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be reduced in comparison to the YiA*, from whom 40.4% have stated that the support will be significantly reduced.

The second specific hypothesis *the integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the promotion and support of non-formal education in comparison with the YiA program* has also been confirmed due to the fact that 84.7% from the respondents in the second questionnaire have stated that the support to non-formal education will be reduced or will be significantly reduced with the integrated program as proposed by the Commission.

The third specific hypothesis *the integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the direct support for Youth Organizations in comparison with the YiA program* has been confirmed by the empirical research having in mind that more than 82% of the respondents have stated that the support to youth organizations will be reduced with the integrated program.

Conclusively it can be noted that the general hypothesis *the integrated “Erasmus for All” will reduce the support to youth organization’s and their work in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program* has been confirmed having in consideration that all of the three specific hypothesis have been confirmed by the empirical research.

Conclusion

In this time of economical austerity and uncertain future of the European Union, the Union needs to ensure that the new investments and the structure of the post 2013 EU Programs in the field of education, training and youth will respond both to the needs of young people and to the needs of the labor market. The historical investment of raising the budget for more than 70% needs to be backed up by programs that will represent a step forward in the process of ensuring the future of the Union and achieving the 2020 goal to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. On one hand, the newly proposed “Erasmus for All” has been seen as both remarkable step forward in concern of bigger budget and greater focus on Higher Education. On the other hand it is seen as a step backward for EU youth policy by losing the only independent EU program exclusively tailored to satisfy the needs of young people. The main focus of the thesis was the new controversial proposal for the “Erasmus for All” and its possible future effects over the support to youth organizations, youth work and NFE and in continuation, the final findings, main challenges and proposals will be laid down.

The overall conclusion of the reflection of the existing EU Youth Policies is that the analyzed Policy documents have significantly contributed for the Youth Policy to have a strong European dimension. It is more than noticeable that young people are demanding strong and concrete measures i.e. to have more actions instead of words. It can be noted that the Youth Strategy was far more concrete than the White Paper and the latest initiative the “Youth on the Move” with its key actions has set a new criteria for tangible, concrete and in the same time comprehensive measures. Similarly, each of the European Youth Pact, the Structured Dialogue and later on the renewed Framework were more concrete than its ‘predecessor’. Furthermore it can be overall noted that although there are many successful tools for inclusion of young people and youth organizations in the consultation and decision-making process, many young people feel that they are not taken seriously as partners in the creation of policies and programs that affect them.

Concerning the Youth Program, the Youth in Action and the integrated “Erasmus for All” and their complementarity to the existing EU Youth Policy, it can be concluded that the Youth Program focuses the most on participation and voluntary service and partly on information. The YiA has its main focus set also on participation with a strong support to NFE and voluntary service and it further supports, greater understanding, social inclusion, taking more

account of youth in other policies, creativity and entrepreneurship, learning mobility, reducing youth unemployment and information. On the other hand, the “Erasmus for All” beside participation, its main focus is set on higher education and it also covers greater understanding of youth, learning mobility, reducing youth unemployment, health and sport, social inclusion, voluntary service and only partly NFE. It can be concluded that the focus on participation remains with the new integrated Program, however, the focus on NFE in the independent youth program will be shifted to the higher education with the integrated program.

From the empirical research, it can be shortly concluded that the high majority of the respondents were in favor to continue to have an independent youth program in the future. Additionally the majority’s opinion was that the Lifelong Learning and the Youth in Action are well know established brands and that the Erasmus brand will not help the visibility or recognition of the future program where Mr. Pascal Lejeune considered that the Erasmus name will ensure the visibility and recognition. The respondents were more or less satisfied with the consultation process for the new European Youth Program, however, the high majority of them considered that the voice of young people was not heard and that young people are not taken seriously as a partner in the consultation and decision-making process. Furthermore, high majority stated that the integrated “Erasmus for All” as presented by the Commission’s proposal could endanger and potentially narrow and even reduce the EU Youth Policy to just Education Policy on which Matjasic the President of the European Youth Forum agreed. The results from the empirical research have also confirmed the hypothesis that the integrated “Erasmus for All” program will reduce the support to youth organizations, youth work and NFE in comparison to the current YiA.

Having in mind that the process till the final version of the new program will continue in 2012 and 2013 and in line with the goal of the thesis to serve for the further negotiation process the following issues were pointed out as main challenges for the new program:

- The biggest challenge is to ensure that youth work and non-formal education as such will not be overtaken by the formal education institutions (e.g. Universities) and that youth organizations will continue to have the support by the program i.e. continuation of the administrative grants and other mechanisms of support.
- There is a danger that the Erasmus brand will reduce the visibility and social recognition of the YiA and will make it harder to include the wider population of

young people. “Erasmus Youth Participation” will not function have argued young people and new compromise about the name of the program is needed.

- “Youth in Action” is the only EU Program which has also as a focus-group young people with fewer opportunities, and young people with youth organizations want to ensure that this focus-group will stay as a European priority.
- Some young people and youth organizations fear that the Council of Youth Ministers will lose its role and importance and will even stop to exist and with that, one of the important bodies in the field of youth policy will be lost.
- Some of the Youth organizations consider that they could be ‘eaten up’ by the project writers from formal education. If the program stays integrated as the proposal from the Commission, there will be strong need of having separate sub-actions with separate eligibility, selection and award criteria for the youth and other non-profit organization on one side, and for the formal education institutions on the other side.

On the basis of the findings of the thesis and on the basis of the identified challenges, the following proposals are made on how to proceed in the coming period of negotiations:

1. To have an Independent European Youth Program as till now.
2. The European Youth Program to be integrated into the legal basis of the “Erasmus for All”, however, to have separate program, i.e. such as the proposed Sport program.
3. If it stays within the frame as foreseen in the detailed proposal of the Commission, there should be separate eligibility, selection and award criteria in order to ensure that youth organizations will be the main providers of NFE and youth work.

Through the consultation process, through many stakeholders events, researches and through the empirical research of this thesis, young people and youth organizations have spoken for an independent European Youth Program which will empower and include young people from all social classes. This program will also foster cultural diversity, youth initiative, social inclusion, European citizenship. On the end of the day, the EU institutions will decide on the final version of the future program and if they will fully have in mind the needs and demands of the young people for whom this program is made for or not. The challenge remains to find compromise which will be in line with the needs and demands of young people, youth and other non-profit organizations, educational organizations and the demands of the labor market in order to have strong, comprehensive and at the same time inclusive Program.

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First Questionnaire - prior the launching of the detailed proposal by the Commission

1. Are you answering this survey as individual or member of an organization or institution?

Individual

Member of organization (youth or other non-profit)

Representative of EU or National institution

2. Country?

3. What's your previous knowledge and experience with the Youth in Action (YiA) program and the proposed integrated "Education Europe" Program³⁶ (2014 - 2020)?

I, or my organization have benefited from the YiA Program.

I have participated in the consultation process of the new YiA2.0 Program.

I haven't benefited from the program or participated in the consultation process but the field of EU youth policy is of strong interest of mine.

I am familiar with the Commission's proposal to launch the integrated education, training and youth "Education Europe" Program.

I am not familiar with the Commission's proposal to launch the integrated education, training and youth "Education Europe" Program.

I haven't heard neither about the Youth in Action or the integrated education, training and youth Program prior to this questionnaire.

4. Future European Youth Program (YiA), with which of the following statements do you agree?

I see more advantages in having separate Youth Program, i.e. that the programme continues separately from other programme's as till now.

I see more advantages in having separate Youth Program, while developing more integrated approach with the Lifelong Learning and the Erasmus Mundus programme's.

I see more advantages in the integration of the Youth Program in the new integrated Education Europe Program (as proposed by the EU Commission).

I don't have an opinion/ can't judge

Add comment

³⁶ The Commission on 29th of June 2011 has announced the integrated education, training, youth and sport program under the name of "Education Europe", this questionnaire was conducted before the Commission has launched the integrated Program under the name of "Erasmus for All"

5. The Consultation process on the new Youth in Action2.0 (after 2013) program was?

Very accessible and inclusive

Somewhat accessible and inclusive

Somewhat not accessible and non-inclusive

Not accessible and non-inclusive

No opinion/ can't judge

6. In the online public consultation from 6787 respondents 83.2% stated that the new Education and Youth programs should continue being implemented separately. Having in mind that more than two thirds of the respondents were young people, to which extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

The voice of young people was not heard when deciding to have the integrated education, training and youth program Education Europe (2014-2020).

Add comment

7. The significantly increased budget from 8.8 billions (in total for the YiA, LLL and Erasmus Mundus programs) for the period 2007-2013 to 15.2 billions of EUR (73% increase) for the 2014–2020 period will ensure:

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree / No opinion

Significantly higher number of funded projects.

Significantly greater direct support for young people in responding to their needs.

Significant reduce in fragmentation and overlapping of projects.

No significant change in the above mentioned aspects.

8. The new integrated EU education, youth and mobility program Education Europe will have significantly greater visibility and recognition of the program in general and the program's activities than its predecessors the ongoing Youth in Action, Lifelong Learning and Erasmus Mundus?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree / No opinion

Education Europe will have significantly greater visibility

Education Europe will have significantly raised recognition

Add comment

9. What is your expectation concerning the following aspects?

I or my organization expects that the new Education Europe will answer better to the specific needs of young people than the ongoing Youth in Action program.

I or my organization expects that the new Education Europe to be less able to answer to the specific needs of young people than the ongoing Youth in Action program.

I or my organization expects that by replacing the Youth in Action with the Education Europe the promotion and support of the youth organizations will be significantly reduced.

I or my organization expects that by replacing the Youth in Action with the Education Europe the promotion and support of the youth organizations will remain the same or will even strengthen.

I or my organization expects that by replacing the Youth in Action with the Education Europe the promotion and support of non-formal education and youth work will be significantly smaller.

I or my organization expect that by replacing the Youth in Action with the Education Europe the promotion and support of non-formal education and youth work will remain the same or will even be higher.

Add comment

10. What do you personally or your organization expect from the new education, youth and mobility Education Europe program? i.e ... What will be gained? What can be lost? What kind of change will the new program make? What is the added value of the new integrated Education Europe program?

(Optional)

Second Questionnaire - after the launching of the detailed proposal by the Commission

On the 23rd of November 2011 the EU Commission has launched the detail proposal for the new integrated Education, Training, Youth and Sport Program "Erasmus for All" (20142020) on the following link you can find out more about the newly launched Program: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmusforall/> This questionnaire is the second part of an survey aiming at GETTING AN FEEDBACK from young people, youth representatives and others interested in EU youth policy about the new integrated "Erasmus for All" Program in comparison to the current Youth in Action (YiA) Program.

The results from this questionnaire will be used in the Master Thesis of Borko Naumovski EU Youth Policies transition from Youth in Action to the integrated "Erasmus for All" Program and its impact over youth organizations and their work, and will be sent to the DG Education and Culture, European Youth Forum and other Youth Policy makers.

1. Are you answering this questionnaire as an individual or as a member/representative of an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Your name or the name of your organisation (optional)

2. Country?

3. What's your previous knowledge and experience with the Youth in Action (YiA) Program and the new upcoming integrated "Erasmus for All" Program (2014 - 2020)?

I or my organisation have benefited from the YiA Program.

I or my organisation haven't participated in the consultation process.

I or my organisation haven't benefited from the YiA or participated in the consultation process, however Youth Policy is of strong interest of mine.

I am familiar with the Commissions detailed proposal on the "Erasmus for All" Program from the 23rd of November 2011.

I am not familiar with the Commissions detailed proposal on the "Erasmus for All" Program from the 23rd of November 2011.

Other (please specify)

4. What do you think about the support of “Erasmus for All” to YOUTH ORGANIZATION'S in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program (YiA)?

The support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will be STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will REMAIN THE SAME in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will be REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Organizations with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

Add comment

5. What do you think about the support of “Erasmus for All” to YOUTH WORK in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program (YiA)?

The support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will REMAIN THE SAME in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Youth Work with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

Add comment

6. What do you think about the support of “Erasmus for All” to NON-FORMAL EDUCATION in comparison to the current Youth in Action Program (YiA)?

The support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will be STRONGER in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will REMAIN THE SAME in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will be REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

The support to Non-formal Education with the “Erasmus for All” will be SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED in comparison to the YiA.

Add comment

In its Communication on the “Erasmus for All” the Commission has stated that the Erasmus brand “is widely recognised among the general public in EU and non EU participating countries as a synonym of EU learner mobility but also European values such as multiculturalism and multilingualism. Thus it makes sense to avoid multiple names and to capitalise on the popularity and awareness of the Erasmus brand and to name the new integrated Program “Erasmus for All”.”

7. With which of the following statements (about the name of the integrated Program) do you agree?

The ERASMUS brand will contribute to SIGNIFICANTLY RISE the visibility and recognition of the Program.

The ERASMUS brand will contribute to RISE the visibility and recognition of the Program.

The ERASMUS brand will NOT RISE the visibility and recognition of the Program.

The names of the existing Programs such as the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action have already established themselves as very strong and recognisable brands and the new ERASMUS brand will not rise and will even reduce the visibility and recognition.

Other

Add comment

Having in mind that the new integrated “Erasmus for All” Program is focusing most of its attention towards higher education and partly towards vocational training and youth organisations and is partly or fully neglecting Non-formal Education, youth work and some of the already established priorities in youth field such as social inclusion, greater understanding of young people and others how would you answer the following question.

8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

The new “Erasmus for All” can be seen as a serious step towards reducing European Youth Policy to just Education Policy.

Add comment

9. How would you rate to which extent the new "Erasmus for All" is dedicated to the following already established priorities in the field of European Youth Policy?

***** (1being lowest and 5being highest) *****

*

(1) Very low (2) Low (3) Medium (4) High (5) Very High

Social Inclusion

Cultural Diversity

European Citizenship

Reducing Youth

Unemployment

Creativity and Entrepreneurship

Voluntary Service

Learning Mobility

Higher Education

Youth and the World

Taking more account of

youth in other areas

Greater understanding of

young people

Add comment

Having in mind that till the final version of each of the actions (sub-actions) and their application procedures of the new "Erasmus for All" Program a process will take place of standardisation of the procedures of all of the previous programs, there exists a danger for the youth stakeholders that they will be "outvoted" when it will come to this standardisation of the Program. "Outvoted" in sense that the final design of the Program (concerning eligibility, selection and award criteria) can be more in line with the demands of the big players from the educational and labour sector and not to the demands of the youth organisations!!!

10. With which of the following statements about the European Youth Program (current Youth in Action) do you agree with?

The European Youth Program should have stayed independent as till now.

The European Youth Program should have stayed independent and should furthermore strengthen the support to Youth Organisation's, Youth Work and Non-formal Education.

The European Youth Program should be integrated in the "Erasmus for All" as proposed by the Commission, however there should be special tailored eligibility, selection and award criteria for youth organisation's.

The European Youth Program should be integrated in the "Erasmus for All" as proposed by the Commission and it will be positive to have open competition with the Educational stakeholders by having common eligibility, selection and award criteria.

Add comment

11. Concerning the role of young people in the creation of the "Erasmus for All" Program, with which of the following statement do you agree?

Young people are not taken seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and decision making processes and they didn't have sufficient impact over the final version of the "Erasmus for All".

Young people should be taken far more seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and decision making processes and their impact on the final version of the "Erasmus for All" should have been far greater.

Young people are already taken seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and decision making processes and they have sufficient impact over the final version of the "Erasmus for All".

Young people are already taken seriously as a focus group and partners in the consultation and decision making processes, however their impact over the final version of the "Erasmus for All" should have been greater.

No opinion/ can't judge.

Add comment

12. What kind of positive or negative effects do you personally or your organisation expect from the new integrated "Erasmus for All" Program concerning Youth Organisation's, Youth Work and Non-formal Education and can it answer better to young people needs than the current Youth in Action Program?

(Optional)

Interview with the President of the European Youth Forum Peter Matjasic

1. What were the positions of YFJ & the MO's and to which extent are they included in the Commission's detailed proposal?

Having in mind that huge majority of the respondents from the online consultation on the new YiA2.0 have clearly stated that they would like to see again independent youth program that will also keep the name YiA, to have higher non-formal learning opportunities, contribute to developing, recognising and supporting youth work; continue to improve the capacities, quality and sustainability of the activities of youth organisations;

2. How would you comment that five of the key issues that young people raised were not addressed by the Commission? Or in other words: Was the voice of young people heard?

3. What do you expect to happen with youth work, non-formal education, how will the integrated program influence youth organizations and their work?

4. Do you think that there is a danger that with the integrated program Youth Policy can be reduced to Education Policy?

5. Is the "Erasmus for All" really for all or is it just for higher educated people and those who can afford it?

6. With giving up from the YiA Program, Is the Commission giving up from it's main tool (mechanism) for reaching young people of all social classes, for fostering creativity, diversity and most of all fostering youth initiatives, youth work and NFE?

7. Do you think that by naming the program "Erasmus for All" that the ERASMUS brand will

raise the overall visibility & recognition of the program? Or, Do you think that YiA & LLL were good established brands & there was no need for new branding?

8. We now the saying's from the President of the Commission Mr. Barroso the "*Every euro spent must bring added value in terms of jobs and growth*" and "*the aim is to get full potential from every euro spent.*" Having in mind the significantly raised for more than 70% budget and if I rephrase a bit the saying would you agree with Mr. Barroso that young people are getting the full potential from every euro invested in them or would it be more like Higher Education and Students will get "every euro"?

8. Is the transition from the independent European Youth Program to the integrated "Erasmus for All" a step forward or a step backward for EU Youth Policy?

Questionnaire with the Head of the Youth in Action Unit Mr. Pascal Lejeune

The time has shown that young people and youth organizations had to lose or to be on the edge of losing the independent Youth Program in order to fully show our appreciation and gratitude for the YiA.

1. Do you think that young people of Europe deserve independent youth program exclusively tailored to respond to their needs?

Having in mind that huge majority of the respondents from the online consultation on the new YiA2.0 have clearly stated that they would like to see again independent youth program, the program to keep the name YiA, to have higher non-formal learning opportunities, to contribute to developing, recognising and supporting youth work; to continue to improve the capacities, quality and sustainability of the activities of youth organisations;

2. How would you comment that five key issues that young people have raised during the online consultation were not fully addressed by the Commission? Or in other words:

Was the voice of young people heard when designing the detailed proposal?

After the detailed proposal from the Commission was launched on 23rd of November many youth organizations and young people started to fear of losing the Union's support to youth work, non-formal education and youth organizations.

3. How would you address these young people and youth organizations, how will the integrated "Erasmus for All" further support youth work, NFE and youth organizations? (I.e. will the support increase or reduce with the new program).

4. By giving up the Youth in Action is the Commission giving up from it's main tool (mechanism) for reaching young people of all social classes, for fostering creativity, diversity and most of all fostering youth initiatives, youth work and NFE?

5. Having in mind the strengthened focus to Higher Education, do you think that there is a danger that with the integrated program slowly EU Youth Policy can be narrowed or even reduced just to Education Policy?

The reactions of young people are that the Erasmus brand is more known among higher educated people including the members of the EU Institutions, however the YiA is much wider known and much more inclusive brand among young people in Europe.

6. Do you think that by naming the program “Erasmus for All” that the ERASMUS brand will raise the overall visibility & recognition of the program (as claimed by the Commission)? Or, Do you think that YiA & LLL were good established brands & there was no need for new branding?

7. We now have the saying’s from Mr. Barroso that *Every euro spent must bring added value in terms of jobs and growth* and that *the aim is to get full potential from every euro spent*. Having in mind the significantly raise for more than 70% of the overall budget of the Programs and if I rephrase a bit the saying, Would you agree with Mr. Barroso that young people are getting the full potential from every euro invested in them or would you agree that Higher Education and Students will get “every euro”?

The White Paper, the OMC in youth field, the Structured Dialogue, the Strategy on Youth and the Youth on the Move all have given hope to young people and youth organisations that the field of youth, i.e. including all youth is of prime interest for the EU. What will be your comment on this?

8. Is the transition from the independent European Youth Program to the integrated “Erasmus for All” a step forward or a step backward for the EU Youth Policy? And as Head of the YiA Unit what kind of guidelines would you give to young people and youth organizations if they want to keep the independent separate European Youth Program?