



# European Training Strategy

*in the field of Youth*

***Supporting the development of quality youth  
work in Europe through capacity building***

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## 1. Context

The European Training Strategy (ETS) of the European Commission was the main strategy for the development of quality youth work under the Youth (2000-2006) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) Programmes. The implementation of the ETS represented a major step forward in the assurance of the necessary quality and quantity of training and support measures in the Programmes in the Youth field.

With Erasmus+ (2014-2020), a new generation of an integrated programme started. At the same time, in the framework of the European cooperation in the youth field, quality youth work went high on the political agenda, e.g. the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)<sup>1</sup>, the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention (2010), the Resolution of the Council on youth work (2010)<sup>2</sup>, the Council conclusions on the quality youth work (2013)<sup>3</sup> and the Work Plan of the European Union for Youth for 2014-2015<sup>4</sup>.

The next phase of the ETS needs to take this new context into account. This document aims at describing the updated European Training Strategy, the strategy of the European Commission to support the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building.

## 2. ETS: supporting the development of quality youth work in Europe

The Council conclusions on the quality youth work define quality youth work as “a commitment to continually ensuring and enhancing optimum youth work provision and practice for young people, thus in aiming to ensure that youth work is relevant and responsive to both the interests and needs of young people and to optimise its role in contributing to their development, well-being and social inclusion.”

Furthermore, the study of the European Commission “Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU”<sup>5</sup> identifies the factors that lead to successful youth work outcomes and describes the following as elements of quality youth work:

- “The youth worker’s relationship with young people;
- Active outreach to young people in need of help and support;
- Flexibility, accessibility and adapting to the needs of young people;
- Learning opportunities, goal setting and recognition of achievements;

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<sup>1</sup> Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01))

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 19 November 2010, on youth work, OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:327:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

<sup>3</sup> Council conclusions of 16 May 2013, on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people, OJ C 168, 14.06.2013, pp 5-9, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:168:0005:0009:EN:PDF>

<sup>4</sup> Council Resolution on a EU Work plan for youth for 2014-2015, OJ C 183, 14.06.2014, pp 5-11, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2014.183.01.0005.01.ENG](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0005.01.ENG)

<sup>5</sup> European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU 2014, Brussels - February 2014, ISBN: 978-92-79-36196-8

- Safe, supportive environments enabling young people to experience life, to make mistakes and to participate with their peers in leisure time activities in an enjoyable and fun setting;
- 'Standing on their feet': allowing young people to drive their own learning and development and to have autonomy;
- Sustainability and partnerships with other actors (e.g. formal education, social work);
- Commitment from young people, youth workers and the community."

Based on the above, and to reach greater alignment of youth policy, provisions and practice, the ETS aims to contribute especially to the following recommendations of the Council conclusions on the quality youth work:

- "Promote, in youth work provision and practice, an emphasis on quality and the attainment of youth work outcomes which contribute to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (6.16).
- Support greater collaboration amongst all youth work stakeholders (in particular researchers, policy makers, civil society organisations, practitioners and young people) to determine the impact of quality youth work, ... , the youth sector and related policy areas e.g. through the development of evidence of the impact of quality youth work and by facilitating and improving the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning at national and EU levels (6.17).
- Promote, through quality youth work opportunities and programmes, experiential learning and skills development, ... , and the recognition and validation of such skills and competences (6.19).
- Support the youth sector in developing its structures, working methods and channels of communication so as to reach out to more young people, especially those at risk of social exclusion (6.20).
- Promote the contribution of quality youth work by maximising funding opportunities to support effective youth work (6.22).
- Encourage, through the relevant programmes, platforms and resource repositories, the European and international exchange of good practices, training, skills acquisition and peer-learning in relation to quality focused youth work (6.23).
- Seek to build on the findings of its forthcoming study on the value of youth work in identifying what initiatives are required to promote quality-based and effective youth work (7.25).
- Take account of other research studies and initiatives in this area. Disseminate the findings and develop learning for the policy, research, practice and youth communities, and for related policy areas (7.26).
- Consider a suitable follow-up to the forthcoming study on the value of youth work and the outcome of the thematic expert group on quality youth work (7.27)."

On this basis, the ETS will deliver a valuable and sustainable contribution to support capacity building as one of the key elements for the development of quality youth work in Europe. In the framework of the ETS, capacity building is in principle understood as:

- Micro-level - Human resource development: strategies and measures to equip individuals working as employees, free-lancer or volunteers in youth work with

professional competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.

- Meso-level - Organisational development: the elaboration of awareness, strategies, processes and procedures within a youth work organisation, but also in relationships between the different organisations and sectors (public, private and community).

Macro-level - Systemic framework development: making regulatory changes or creating systems and structures to enable organisations, institutions and agencies at all levels, and in all parts of youth work, to enhance their capacities.

### **3. Objectives of the ETS and measures to be carried out**

The ETS pursues six objectives, aiming at the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building. For each objective, the ETS defines sets of measures to be implemented.

With the implementation of the below objectives, the ETS intends to create a virtual “European Academy for quality youth work” as a sustainable and continuous element for capacity building in youth work in Europe.

#### **3.1. Encouraging European cooperation among the different stakeholders to foster quality youth work in Europe and its recognition through strategies for capacity building**

Under Key Action 1 - Mobility of Youth Workers, the Erasmus+ Programme supports project promoters to implement training measures and develop training concepts. Key Action 2 - Strategic Partnerships is supporting youth stakeholders and youth policy decision makers, at national, regional and local level, to foster innovation in quality youth work through new forms of capacity building, training models, material, curricula and strategies. Under Key Action 3, the annual calls for forward looking initiatives / prospective initiatives can be specifically dedicated to the development and implementation of capacity building strategies / measures in youth work at national level.

Under Key Action 2, through the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCAs), opportunities are offered for the monitoring of the implementation of this action with its impact on quality youth work and fora for project promoters to exchange best practice, present new concepts and tools and discuss the transfer of innovation into the practice of youth work.

As an element of the EU work plan for youth, the ETS will establish a peer learning process of decision makers, experts and practitioners on the development of quality youth work in Erasmus+ Programme and Partner Countries through capacity building. Those peer learning processes aim at exchanging, disseminating and exploiting existing concepts and good practices at national level, but also at developing recommendations for further strategies at European and national level.

The ETS envisages in 2017 a European conference for decision makers and practitioners. The conference should allow to learn from good practice in Europe, to explore further possibilities for the development of European strategies for the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building of youth workers and trainers, and to contribute to the development of the EU youth strategy from 2019.

The European Youth Work Convention is going to be the most important European platform for quality youth work in Europe. It aims to build a common ground within the diversity for youth work, to gain recognition of youth work, to present youth work practices and to discuss the current and future challenges for youth work in Europe. Building on the experience of the first two events in 2010 and 2015, a third European Youth Work Convention should put capacity building of youth workers and trainers on the agenda of the development of quality youth work in Europe.

### **3.2. Generating more knowledge about capacity building in youth work in Europe and its impact on quality youth work**

ETS has shown that there is limited knowledge about capacity building and training for youth workers in Europe and its impact on quality youth work. It is therefore a prerequisite for the development of quality youth work in Europe to make use of the existing systems to collect, develop and disseminate more knowledge in this field on a regular basis.

With the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY) and Youth Wiki, information about the development of quality youth work through capacity building at national and European level will be systematically collected and disseminated.

The development of quality youth work and impact of trainings for youth workers, implemented through capacity building will be included in the EU Youth Report.

The RAY network of the Erasmus+ National Agencies for the field of Youth will carry out a research based analysis of the impact of training and competence development on youth workers achieved through projects funded by the Programme. The results will be used for discussion to further improve capacity building strategies within the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Youth.

The study "Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union"<sup>6</sup> carried out by the European Commission recommends, in the chapter "Youth workers across the EU", to focus on high quality training for all youth workers or to introduce a set of quality standards. To explore the most promising approach for the next steps to be taken, a European study will be carried out to develop common guidelines for developing support and development tools and common quality frameworks for youth organisations and youth workers at national or EU level. It will provide organisations and actors on all levels with the opportunity to articulate their youth work practice, as well as structured frameworks to review and assess their work and to assist their continuous development.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU 2014, Brussels - February 2014, ISBN: 978-92-79-36196-8

### **3.3. Developing a modular system to train trainers in the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Youth to guarantee the development of the essential set of competences of trainers and the necessary high quality of trainings**

Within the Erasmus+ Programme, the ETS aims to develop, together with National Agencies and other experts, a modular system to train trainers. The system will serve as a coherent framework to train trainers and give orientation and guidance for the different actors in the field of training of trainers. The modular system will be based on the ETS set of competences for trainers developed under the Youth in Action Programme and its courses recognised as “ETS trainings for trainers”. The modular system should offer different kind of trainings for and of trainers, like standard courses, newcomer and advanced courses and a set of most relevant specific trainings, both for trainers from Erasmus+ Programme and Partner Countries.

Within this system, as one of the main pillars of the ETS, the European conference “Bridges for Trainers” it is envisaged to be organised every second year, aiming at sharing experiences and good practice, exploring trends in youth work and developing innovative approaches.

The ETS also aims to achieve more recognition for trainers of youth workers. Initiatives to recognise and validate learning outcomes of participants of the training courses offered as element of the modular system to train trainers need to be launched. Youthpass will ensure that competences developed in projects granted by the Erasmus+ Programme are documented. It will be developed further for trainers to document their participation in activities, but more importantly, to describe their learning process over a longer period and use a portfolio for further recognition and validation.

The ETS aims to establish a European “ETS trainer pool” of those trainers having participated in the trainings labelled as “ETS trainings for trainers”, offering reliable support to Erasmus+ stakeholders for the development and implementation of National Agencies' training strategies and activities for youth workers and trainers.

### **3.4. Building a modular system of trainings for youth workers in the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Youth to foster a sufficient quantity and high quality of training based on the set of competences of youth workers**

The Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Youth offers funding for training and development of training concepts mainly under Key Action 1 – Mobility of Youth Workers - and under Key Action 2 - Strategic Partnerships - for innovative measures and concepts in the field of capacity building in youth work. The ETS will offer fora for project promoters to discuss concepts, exchange best practice and make use of the ETS set of competences for youth workers in their trainings.

Within the new Programme, the ETS aims to maintain and develop the implementation of a concept of a modular system of trainings for youth workers, based on the ETS set of competences for youth workers. Such a modular system aims to serve as a framework for orientation and guidance for the different actors, in the field of capacity

building in youth work, and allows for a more coherent approach, both for youth workers from Erasmus+ Programme and Partner Countries.

Building on the existing practice, the ETS will foster the exploration of the needs and of the potential of distance learning to disseminate knowledge, experience and good practise to a wider audience. E-learning and blended learning formats should be developed further to offer opportunities in quality youth work for youth workers, trainers and experts and support the development of innovative e-learning models, methods and products and its dissemination and exploitation of results.

Through their Transnational Cooperation Activities, the network of National Agencies will support the implementation of this modular system of trainings for youth workers in the Programme and the development of quality youth work through a high number of European trainings and support activities. The ETS will support the network in adapting the training courses implemented within the Transnational Cooperation Activities to the ETS set of competences for youth workers.

To reach better recognition of quality youth work, the ETS aims also at supporting the development of Youthpass beyond the Erasmus+ Programme. With Youthpass, it is ensured that competences developed in projects granted by the Programme are documented and recognised. But the implementation of Youthpass should also serve in pilot projects as a model for the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work in national and other international contexts.

### **3.5. Offering at EU level capacity building tools for the support of quality youth work in Europe**

With [www.salto-youth.net](http://www.salto-youth.net), the ETS has established the most known and used European portal for experts in youth work, youth workers and trainers. The function of this portal should be enhanced to become the main European online communication platform for experts, youth workers and trainers in the youth field.

The following existing additional tools for youth workers and trainers in Europe will be maintained:

- The European Training Calendar (main instrument in Europe to launch calls for participants for trainings in youth work);
- Otlas (allows to find partners for youth work projects in Europe);
- The TOOLBOX (gives the opportunity to share pedagogical methods);
- TOY European trainers (offers the services of trainers to training providers).

New innovative online tools are to be created to deliver information in the field of capacity building in youth work, build cooperation and exchange good practice, facilitate online debates of youth workers, trainers and researchers and offer open educational resources and e-learning tools for the capacity building of youth workers and trainers.

In order to ensure visibility of the ETS and the dissemination and exploitation of its projects and products, an ETS newsletter for youth work experts will be provided, linked to an ETS dedicated web-space at [www.salto-youth.net](http://www.salto-youth.net). These measures will be accompanied by ETS Journals in 2017 and 2020 offering narrative descriptions of main achievements of the ETS, exploring new challenges to be tackled and supporting stakeholders to increase cooperation.



The ETS is building links to further platforms for communication and cooperation of stakeholders of trainings for youth workers and trainers, such as the European Platform on Learning Mobility and the annual Tool fair, to guarantee the flow of information, learn from each other, build synergies and facilitate cooperation.

### **3.6. Supporting the competence building of the Erasmus+ National Agencies for the field of youth and their staff in the understanding and attainment of the development of quality youth work**

The Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST) of the National Agencies network is the main instrument to support NA staff in the implementation of the Programme and reach out for a coherent European approach.

Within the ETS, the KMST will offer a set of trainings for National Agencies staff based on their competence profile. The "LAB" is one of its main elements, allowing regular discussions of concepts, training and exchange of best practice. As long as needed, a special focus will be put on the opportunities offered under Key Action 2 for the development of quality youth work.

Links will also be built with other training strategies developed in specific fields of the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Youth, such as the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy, the Youthpass & Recognition Strategy and the Strategy of training of Eurodesk staff.

The Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) will continue to be the core instrument for the implementation of the ETS and the annual TCA Meeting in the field of youth will support the setting up of common qualitative TCA strategies and activities.

A virtual TCA Planning Board for National Agencies and SALTO Resource Centre staff will allow ongoing partner finding and development of new European cooperation projects within the network of National Agencies under TCA.

Further measures will be developed to support the staff of the support structures to foster the development of quality youth work through capacity building, such as a manual to use the set of trainer competences etc.

## **4. Management of ETS**

The following structures and partners will advise and support the European Commission in the development, implementation and evaluation of the ETS.

### **4.1. ETS Advisory Group**

The Advisory Group will play a central role within the European Training Strategy. Its main tasks will be to:

- support the European Commission in defining the annual priorities and general directions for ETS,
- discuss ETS action plans, procedures and tools to be carried out under the ETS,
- support the monitoring of the overall implementation of the ETS,

- support dissemination and exploitation of ETS results.

The Advisory Group should meet at least twice a year; it will be chaired by the European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture. The members are representing the main European partners and working groups for the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity building of youth workers and trainers:

- representatives of DG Education and Culture;
- representatives of the network of Erasmus+ National Agencies for the field of Youth;
- representatives of the network of SALTO Resource Centres;
- representatives of the EU-CoE youth partnership;
- experts in the field of youth work, youth policy, youth research, and employers of youth workers, both as permanent member and on ad hoc basis;
- representatives of the Knowledge Management and Staff Training Working Group;
- representatives of the National Agencies Working Group for Transnational Cooperation Activities;
- representatives of the Youthpass Advisory Group;
- representatives of the Inclusion & Diversity strategy Steering Group.

In order to maximise the impact of the ETS the members of Advisory Group representing various working groups and partners should to the best possible extent:

- link their own work plans, procedures and tools with the development and implementation of the ETS measures;
- collect feedback within their WGs on ETS relevant subjects and address the recommendations to the ETS Advisory Group;
- support the visibility of ETS and support the dissemination and exploitation of results of the ETS measures.

## **4.2. SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre**

The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre will continue supporting the European Commission in the coordination and implementation of the ETS:

- The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre will support the European Commission in the strategic development of the ETS and the coordination of the measures described in chapter 3;
- Based on the expertise in all fields of the ETS, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre will continue designing and carrying out innovative ETS projects and activities;
- The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre will be actively involved and represent the ETS in relevant European conferences and events in the field of capacity building in quality youth work;
- The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre will support the European Commission in the preparation, implementation and follow up of the ETS Advisory Group meetings and the communication and cooperation between the meetings;
- The SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre will develop and disseminate the ETS newsletters, the ETS website and Journals and will be actively involved in above listed European WGs supporting the ETS.