

Youth Partnership

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



Perspectives on Youth

Young people's autonomy

Seminar report

Rapporteur: Adina Marina Șerban, PhD, PEYR/ECKYP

Editor: Lana Pasic

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

Contents	
Summary	2
Introduction	4
Young people’s autonomy and the youth sector triangle	5
Researching young people’s autonomy: living and working conditions of young people in contemporary Europe	6
Young people’s social rights.....	7
Addressing young people’s autonomy – Exploration workshops	10
Mentoring.....	10
Financial literacy.....	11
Entrepreneurship	12
Young refugees’ autonomy	13
European policy measures supporting young people’s autonomy	14
How can research, policy and practice support young people’s autonomy?	15
Internships.....	15
Financial literacy.....	15
Employment	16
Housing.....	16
Entrepreneurship and co-working	17
Young people facing multiple barriers	17
Synergies and actions to support young people’s autonomy	18
Conclusions and further exploration	19
Annexes.....	22
Annex I – Agenda.....	22
Annex II – List of participants	25

Summary

The Perspectives on Youth seminar brought together 34 participants representing the three angles of the youth sector triangle to discuss and reflect on the topic of young people's autonomy and independence. Looking at the multidimensional crisis that affects young people, the discussions were focused on the needs and challenges that young people are facing, both in the context of the recent and ongoing crisis, but also in light of the fact that recovery measures determined by the effects of the pandemic are still under development. The three working days included panel discussions with experts and representatives of different organisations, and workshops that offered participants the opportunity to have access to tools and instruments utilised by various stakeholders, from national governments, civil society, youth work practice and the private sector. These included reflections on mentoring, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and realities of young refugees' transition to autonomy.

At the end of the seminar, conclusions were drafted on the importance of exploring youth autonomy and transition processes by having an attentive look also at the social, economic or cultural aspects of their communities. It is expected that youth work practice, youth researchers and policy makers work together on responding to the three scenarios in tackling fragility of the youth population:

- avoiding addressing only consequences of the current crisis; focusing on putting in place measures designed for a long-term perspective
- the need to invest in the safety nets¹ for young people, strengthening outreach
- delivering youth work activities to young people who are not visible – namely, young people with fewer opportunities.

¹ The EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership's study on barriers to social inclusion, [Finding a place in modern Europe \(2015\)](#), refers to five areas of possible inclusion or exclusion: education, labour market, living, health and participation. The five areas of social inclusion can be referred to as "safety nets" since they provide basic resources and prerequisites for the fulfilment of everyday needs. However, some of the above-mentioned groups of young people are either facing difficulties in using these safety nets or are experiencing quite unstable safety nets, which leaves them socially excluded compared to other young people.

Additionally, topics like financial literacy, mental health and well-being, housing, co-working and co-living, youth involvement in the gig economy or entrepreneurship education should be addressed by the policy agenda both separately – through tailored measures, programmes and resources – but also in an interconnected manner, responding to the continuously changing needs and interests of young people. Moreover, a better understanding of the additional challenges that young people experiencing multiple disadvantages face is extremely urgent.

Introduction

The Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth organised a [Perspectives on Youth seminar](#) on 7-9 November 2022 at the European Youth Centre in Budapest (Hungary). The event brought together 34 participants to discuss and reflect on the topic of young people's autonomy and independence in the context of economic, political and social uncertainty, financial crisis, and precarity. This event was organised as one of the key activities under the European Year of Youth 2022.

In the context of increasing economic, financial, social and political uncertainty and overlapping crises, including rising inflation and costs of living, post-Covid-19 recovery, high levels of youth unemployment and precarious work, young people's economic and financial autonomy are extremely fragile. Over 2 million young Europeans (aged 15-29) lost their job in 2020,² young people were easily replaceable and overrepresented in labour market segments that were service-oriented and precarious, and less protected by job and income supports and other welfare schemes, especially when working part time.³ Research shows that young people from socially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, young people in non-standard employment and young women were up to twice as likely to become unemployed during this period.⁴

The seminar aimed to stimulate critical discussions around young people's autonomy and search for economic and financial independence, exploring topics such as youth transitions, co-working and entrepreneurship, the contemporary nature of work, including contractual precarity, unpaid labour/internships, gaining experience, quality of jobs for young people and the resulting social and economic issues that need to be addressed by youth policy and practice. Finally, discussions also explored potential policy instruments and practices, such as targeted youth employment

²Eurostat (2021) *Key figures on Europe 2021 edition*, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/13394938/KS-EI-21-001-EN-N.pdf/ad9053c2-debd-68c0-2167-f2646efeaec1?t=1632300620367>, accessed 7 July 2022.

³OECD (2021) Summary of the Youth Consultation on the building blocks of the proposed OECD Youth Recommendation, 20 September 2021, OECD Youth Week.

⁴ Moxon, D., Bacalso, C., and Şerban, A.M. (2021), *Beyond the pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on young people in Europe*. Brussels. European Youth Forum.

programmes, training, financial literacy and mentoring, housing and/or support measures for young people facing multiple discrimination, or young refugees. All inputs approached the existing and growing gaps and inequalities within the youth population.

Young people's autonomy and the youth sector triangle

The opening session of the seminar set the scene for the event, mapping out some of the main obstacles to young people's autonomy. Researchers, policy makers and young people have different understandings of concepts such as independence, autonomy, youth development, poverty or precarity. Young people have subjective, lived experiences of transition to independence, and their experiences are determined by the social, economic or cultural aspects influencing their autonomy processes. Consequently, understanding the youth perspective and the lived experiences of autonomy and independence could determine a better policy approach responding to the needs and interests of youth.

The seminar and the topic of young people's autonomy were introduced as "half traditional and half innovative", the tradition being perceived in previous work of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership on the topic, especially looking at the outcomes of the [Symposium Navigating Transitions: adapting policy to young people's changing realities](#) (2022) but also at the papers on [housing](#), [co-working](#) or [financial literacy](#). The innovative side of the seminar is linked to the current global context that asks for rapid responses in terms of policies, practice interventions or research activities in order to support young people's independence in times where high inflation rates, concerns related to mental health and well-being, post-Covid-19 recovery, high rates of youth unemployment, or conflict situations, would add to the existing challenges in youth development processes.

Clotilde Talleu, manager of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, Enikő Varga-Véghvári from the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Innovation, European Steering Committee for Youth

(CDEJ) and Gianluca Rossino from the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe stressed the need for better synergies and co-operation within the youth sector triangle, as follows:

- **Youth policy makers** are expected to put in place effective measures and programmes designed to support youth autonomy and youth development processes. The topic of autonomy can be approached through different lenses, and policy makers should be aware of the heterogeneity of youth groups, taking into account that permanent dialogue with youth organisations is essential to map out the current challenges young people are facing. Consequently, the co-creation process of youth policies is needed both at the European level and at grass-roots level.
- **Youth workers** should continue their work on stimulating young people's development, youth participation and social inclusion of young people and invest in the development of tailor-made youth programmes that would respond to the current needs and interests of young people.
- **Youth research** needs to develop thematic cross-country research projects that would map the trends and challenges in the lives of young people. It should support policy makers and youth work practice with the outcomes of their work, in order to encourage evidence-based and efficient youth policies and programmes.

Researching young people's autonomy: living and working conditions of young people in contemporary Europe

Young people's autonomy and economic independence became more prominent on the policy agenda as a result of the 2008 financial crisis and the recovery period that followed, the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis and period of inflation. Eurofound's research on [the impact of Covid-19 on young people](#), which was presented at the seminar by Massimiliano Mascherini, was tailored around a comparative perspective on youth unemployment trends, looking at the two above-mentioned crises. The recovery period following the 2008 financial crisis (until 2013) focused on the development of more employment opportunities for young people.

The current post-recovery measures, on the other hand, have to take into account a range of additional challenges, including the quick spike in unemployment during the lockdown, the high numbers of temporary contracts for young people, diversity of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), young people's changing preferences towards hybrid or work-from-home opportunities, the "parallel pandemic" related to the mental health challenges that young people face and to the additional obstacles that young women face in accessing youth employment opportunities.

The connections between young people's employment situations, housing, social services and well-being were further explored in the [presentation of research findings from the UpLift Youth](#) research project by Márton Medgyesi from TARKI Research Institute. This research aimed to find the roots of deprivation within urban youth groups. The outcomes of the project show that in order to analyse deprivation among young people we also need to understand the particularities of the local context in terms of both economic competitiveness and local policies. While economic competitiveness plays a prominent role in communities' development, research also shows that competitiveness brings not only better employment opportunities, but also additional costs for housing and challenges to affordable living in big urban spaces.

Young people's social rights

The second day of the seminar was dedicated to continuing the exploration of young people's autonomy, with the focus on access to social rights. Manon Deshayes from the European Youth Forum; Raluca Diroescu, co-ordinator of the Youth@Work Partnership, and Antigoni Papageorgiou, a post-doctoral researcher at Panteion University, explored the main challenges to access rights and the need for policy responses to overcome precarity. The European Youth Forum is currently running the campaign [Can you afford to work for free?](#), which aims to promote the need for paid, high-quality internships. The campaign also emphasises the need to offer better internship opportunities to young people with fewer opportunities. Discrimination based on a young person's socio-economic background and the connection between the high risk of

poverty and the ability of young people to earn a living should be considered in all employment and employability measures and programmes.

The [Youth at Work Partnership](#) (Y@W) brings together 11 Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs) and 4 SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres (SALTOs), tackling the urgent need for more and better investment in better employability measures and entrepreneurship support for young people. It also promotes the importance of cross-sector co-operation in developing sustainable measures which can support young people's economic independence.

One of the realities of young people's professional and living conditions – [co-working and co-living](#) – were presented by Antigoni Papageorgiou, facilitating the discussions around the new trends in young people's economic and living situations, and the simultaneous need for belonging to a community that shares the same interests. The Covid-19 pandemic determined both a preference and a necessity to move to peripheral areas of cities as the prices for rent – both for houses and offices – became unaffordable for young people.

The conclusions of the panel and questions from the participants highlighted the following.

- There is a need to create sustainable jobs for young people. For example, employment offices (local and national) could be brought closer to the youth sector triangle, working with youth organisations to promote employment measures while youth policy measures should be better framed around the need for better youth employment and around the need for frameworks defining consistent employability competencies. Except for the measures put in place by some states to support digital nomads (examples from Greece and Cyprus), young freelancers also face challenges in terms of social recognition and struggle to keep their businesses open when contracts are not ongoing. Consequently, flexible working conditions and freelancing deserve better legislative measures and additional financial support so that they do not affect other aspects of young people's lives, such as well-being or mental health.

- Young entrepreneurs also experience the loneliness of the process and need to connect to other young entrepreneurs or to communities of practice. Local authorities have a great role in supporting these communities of practice and encouraging and promoting youth entrepreneurship through adequate measures and policies.
- Young people need stable and decently paid jobs. Research, such as studies from Eurofound and [EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership Covid-19 Knowledge Hub](#), shows that young people are at a high risk of losing jobs when there are fluctuations in the labour market.
- Discrimination is still very present during recruitment processes or applications for internships. Age-based discrimination or discrimination determined by social and economic barriers should be addressed by support policy measures. Furthermore, the reduced proximity to these opportunities for young people living in rural and remote areas could be tackled through offering flexible working arrangements or additional support, such as support for transportation, incentives for affordable housing, etc.
- The gig economy needs to be better regulated, with more support measures for young freelancers and entrepreneurs. The gig economy and freelancing, even if appealing to young people, also come with risks related to insufficient measures for social protection or extra efforts needed in managing personal budgets to ensure the sustainability of the project/business. In order to address these issues, better policy measures should be devised to support young people in this sector and more education and information should be provided to young people regarding the possibilities and risks of freelancing or opening a new business.

Addressing young people's autonomy – Exploration workshops

While the economic and financial independence of young people remains a complex topic, exploration workshops presented the examples of support measures available to encourage their transition to autonomy. These include the national-level policy measures, private sector programmes, youth work and civil society initiatives and measures for vulnerable groups of young people.

Mentoring

Melvisa Miskic, [Mentoring in Youth Activities](#)

Jeanne Gorny, [1 young person: 1 mentor - French Youth Mentoring plan \(French Ministry of National Education and Youth \)](#)

The first round of workshops touched upon the tools and instruments used in mentoring processes for and with young people. Melvisa Miskic, an experienced youth worker, offered participants the opportunity to get acquainted with instruments that are being used youth organisations' practices, while Jeanne Gorny introduced the programme [1 young person: 1 mentor](#) of the French Ministry of National Education and Youth, designed to support youth organisations in delivering quality mentorship support to young people. In 2021, 100 000 young mentees were involved in the process. The programme is tailored around the youth needs and the process can take from six months to six years. The organisations that got involved with the programme are mainly working in urban settings, allowing both physical meetings and online support.

In both workshops, the discussions were mainly focused on the need for quality mentorship and coaching processes for young people. They also discussed the challenges that youth organisations are facing in reaching out to those young people who need their mentorship services, some of them being still reluctant to access the existent instruments and programmes. Even if the workshops were delivered by representatives of different sides of the youth sector triangle – a

non-governmental youth organisation and a national authority – the challenges encountered when implementing the programmes were the same: the struggle to reach out to different groups of young people and to ensure the sustainability of the process. Participants concluded that mentorship and coaching can have a great influence on youth autonomy and independence, but additional resources should be invested in understanding the real impact of the mentorship programmes and in following the professional and personal development of the mentees over a long-term span.

Financial literacy

Anikó Bátori, [Financial literacy activities](#) – OTP Fáy András Foundation

Mette Ranta, [Financial literacy](#), Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)

The second round of workshops explored financial literacy and the need for financial education in youth autonomy processes. Financial literacy is very different from financial capability. Education on financial literacy spans throughout life, starting from childhood, to adolescence, into adulthood and beyond. Financial capability refers to how people value different information and how they apply their knowledge in concrete life situations. It depends on the psychological concept of cognitive development; teaching has to be rooted in insights about specificities of each developmental stage. Financial socialisation and the family economic model are very important for the development of financial literacy. Financial capability and financial independence are one of the key indicators for entering adulthood; they are a source of independent living and autonomy. A failure to reach financial independence affects other life prospects and well-being. Financial knowledge transfers into financial self-beliefs (financial attitude, perceived behavioural control, financial self-efficacy), which results in financial behaviour (depending on the contexts). In addition to clarifying the terms, OTP Fáy András Foundation also presented the financial education programme developed both for young adults and also for the general population. The intervention starts at a very early stage – primary education. The aim of the corporate foundation is to work with educational institutions on a long-

term basis and meet learners at least annually, to analyse the impact of their educational programme on young people's transition to adulthood in terms of financial management and stability. Discussions at the end of the workshops also facilitated the mapping of other existing policies and programmes on financial education and financial literacy in participants' countries/regions and also concluded the need for introducing financial literacy in educational curricula, so that all young people would have access to the basic knowledge on managing personal finances. However, when it comes to expanding the outreach of financial literacy programmes to groups with fewer opportunities, participants highlighted the prejudice that in most countries and communities, subjects such as savings or investments are only dedicated to those with sufficient financial resources. Very little is available in terms of financial education to young people facing multiple barriers, and providing training on managing personal budgets would be an excellent asset in their autonomy processes.

Entrepreneurship

Kostas Filippidis, Association of Active Youths of Florina – [Entrepreneurship and co-working](#)

In line with the discussions of the morning's panel, the workshop on entrepreneurship and co-working allowed further exploration around the challenges that young entrepreneurs face, and the need for entrepreneurship education was discussed. Entrepreneurship education has a tremendous potential in supporting youth autonomy, especially when young entrepreneurs have the opportunity to get initial training on how to manage their entrepreneurial initiative. The projects that the Association of Active Youths of Florina have implemented so far were an excellent starting point on developing cross-sector co-operation activities aimed at investing in youth development processes at the local level, including training youth workers on developing entrepreneurship potential of young people. Discussions at the end of the workshop also included concern around the sustainability of projects and initiatives of young entrepreneurs

within the current multidimensional crisis and proposals for support measures for young entrepreneurs were envisioned by the participants.

Young refugees' autonomy

Mary Drosopoulos, Pool of European Youth Researchers PEYR – Young refugees' autonomy

The second workshop tackled the challenges that different youth migrant groups are facing, looking at the current crisis generated by the war in Ukraine. The workshop leader had an attentive look at the previous refugee crisis in Europe and opened the discussion around the potential policy support that would be needed to help young refugees to get through a smooth autonomy process. The discussions also went around the need for human rights education activities for the hosting population, while race and gender of young refugees were seen as generating even more challenges in the autonomy process – especially to those young refugees facing multiple discrimination factors. Good practices developing consistent and coherent support measures for young refugees were also identified (in Sweden, Austria or Luxembourg), while the suggested measures for support should start both with offering young refugees tailor-made measures in terms of access to education, to employment or to social security rights but also to educating the hosting population in changing the attitude towards the refugees.

Conclusions from all rounds of workshops were grouped around the following themes.

- The need for early interventions, when it comes to both mentoring and financial literacy, in order to ensure that young people have access to these services at an early age.
- The importance of research community to raise the questions of youth independence and constantly changing needs of young people, especially in times of crisis.
- The need to raise awareness of young people about actors and political systems at the European level that can support them. Most young people have very limited access to different support measures and programmes that could contribute to their personal and professional development.

- The need to multiply scholarships for young people and for opening access to more youth groups to the available scholarships.
- The need to emphasise differences per country in terms of support systems available for young people and respond with sustainable policy measures to these differences.

European policy measures supporting young people's autonomy

In the context of the European Year of Youth 2022, the [ALMA – Aim Learn Master Achieve](#) programme was announced by the European Commission in order to support young people's transition to employment and independence. The programme was presented at the seminar by Lucrezia Ioannoni Fiore and Peter Besselmann from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). The aim of the programme is to support young people to find their way to the job market, especially the most disadvantaged NEETs aged 18-30 who are vulnerable with regard to their chances of accessing work or training for individual or structural reasons (e.g. disability, long-term unemployment, insufficient school performance/vocational skills, migration background).

ALMA will offer participants:

- a supervised stay abroad for a period of two to six months in another EU member state
- a comprehensive project cycle implying coaching and counselling at every step.

The objective of the programme is to foster young people's inclusion within their home country by improving their skills, knowledge and experience and giving them an opportunity to create new connections across Europe. The ultimate aim is their social inclusion and that they find their place in the job market.

ALMA will be implemented under the [European Social Fund Plus](#) by member states and supported by the European Commission at the EU level. It will complement existing programmes supporting the mobility of young people like [Erasmus+](#) or the [European Solidarity Corps](#) by catering for a group of young people that are not captured by these programmes.

How can research, policy and practice support young people's autonomy?

Participants discussed the following themes relevant to youth autonomy: internships, young people facing multiple discrimination, youth unemployment, entrepreneurship and co-working, housing, and financial literacy, exploring the topics through the following questions.

- What are the main challenges for young people?
- What would be the responses (by policy makers at different levels – local, regional, national, European and by youth organisations, etc.)?
- What do young people need from different actors in order to address the issue of economic autonomy?

Internships

Young people face difficulties in accessing information regarding existing internship opportunities. Some of the internships offered do not bring an added value to the professional development process of youth, as they are often not based on quality criteria. Even if quality opportunities are offered, at times, mentoring processes are either weak or non-existent and a serious evaluation of the competencies developed during the internship is not attached to the designed programme. Participants suggested the need to have internship programmes opened to young people with fewer opportunities as well and to offer youth the chance for recruitment and networking at the end of the learning service. Policy makers should also show a strong political commitment to quality and paid internships.

Financial literacy

In most countries, financial literacy is taught as a secondary subject and provided at very late stages. The existing content is not formulated in a youth-friendly manner and most programmes are not tailored to youth needs and interests. Consequently, suggestions for introducing financial literacy as one of the key subjects in national curricula arose in discussions, while the necessity

for public-private partnerships to support the development of financial competencies of the youth group was mentioned as one of the key measures needed. Financial literacy should start at very early stages and should be open to all young people, not only to those young people who have the financial means to start up a business.

Employment

Youth employment and high unemployment rates were part of most of the inputs and discussion. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many young people lost their jobs or were only offered temporary contracts and precarious working conditions. The current financial crisis has worsened the situation, as the labour market offers very few opportunities to young people, especially to the ones from deprived areas or to NEETs and early school dropouts. Lacking practical experience and dealing with the lack of social recognition for their potential, young people tend to accept low-paid jobs and are mainly offered temporary contracts. Under-employment and de-skilling are recurrent in the career paths that young people follow. The proposals of the working group were mainly targeting policy makers, asking for better public services to support youth employment and for regulations for telework and hybrid work. More support and better promotion of the existing programmes for young people with fewer opportunities that assist them in their transition to autonomy, as well as for mentorship and coaching support, were required.

Housing

Young people face challenges in finding affordable housing. Therefore, co-living has become a norm for the majority of young people. The questions regarding co-living were related to the split between need and choice – in most countries and communities, co-living is rather a need determined by the difficult social and economic context than a personal preference. Participants asked for policy measures to support affordable housing, highlighting that social housing has become an urgent need for young people. Affordable housing is an issue for youth in both urban and rural areas. Living in rural areas became more popular during the pandemic, but living in

these areas is not cost-free. Consequently, developing support measures for young people who have decided to move to rural areas or who reside in rural communities should be developed.

Entrepreneurship and co-working

Even in times of crisis, young people need opportunities and support to develop their entrepreneurial ideas. In most communities, young people lack specific support for their start-ups. There are very few training programmes on running a business or on legal and financial aspects related to their activity, and there is no serious investment in creating co-working spaces for young entrepreneurs and for social entrepreneurs. There are also categories of young people whose numbers increased during the pandemic, such as digital nomads and entrepreneurs working in creative industries, who receive very limited or non-existent support. Proposals were made for developing policies and training programmes on entrepreneurial education based on a public-private partnership and ensuring support for the initiatives that exist already. Local authorities should direct more resources to creating programmes that attract young entrepreneurs, especially in regions that deal with a serious demographic decline.

Young people facing multiple barriers

The discussions mapped some of the subcategories of young people with multiple barriers: young people in foster care, young refugees, young people living in rural areas and facing economic/social problems, young people coming from minority ethnic groups, etc. The main conclusions and proposals were mainly related to developing sets of long-term policies and measures and abandoning the crisis-intervention approach. In most cases, supporting autonomy processes of young people facing multiple barriers requires cross-sector co-operation and also needs a well-developed mentoring and supervision framework. Authorities are expected to work with youth workers and education specialists who accompany young people during the transition processes.

Synergies and actions to support young people's autonomy

The final discussions of the seminar were dedicated to exploring the potential answers and support mechanisms that could be developed through co-operation between policy makers, practitioners and youth researchers. The discussion was guided by the following questions.

- What efforts need to be put in place to advance what was talked about?
- Which actors of the youth sector triangle (and beyond) can do what to advance young people's autonomy?
- What can I do from my side?
- What can I do in interaction with the other actors of the triangle?

Working in groups, participants identified recommendations for the three angles of the youth sector triangle as follows.

a. Policy makers:

- should work more with practitioners in developing tailor-made policies based on the current youth needs and interests;
- should develop evidence-based policies;
- for specific topics like housing, employment or financial literacy, cross-sector co-operation between different authorities and stakeholders is expected (youth policy actors working closely with social services and providers and with educational institutions);
- should map barriers and challenges that young people are facing and develop the policy responses to directly tackle these barriers;
- should be guided by the principles of accountability, monitoring and evaluation within policy development and implementation.

b. Researchers:

- should continue undertaking research projects in cross-national and cross-sectoral partnerships;

- should explore current needs and barriers young people are facing, especially in times of multiple crises;
- youth researchers are also expected to be proactive and to approach practitioners and policy makers with the outcomes of their work;
- should explore multiple discrimination and multiple barriers that young people are facing.

c. Practitioners:

- should be proactive and approach policy makers and youth researchers, informing them about the “real youth needs and interests”;
- youth workers and youth work specialists should also diversify the tools and instruments used in their work to respond to diverse youth needs related to youth autonomy and transition processes;
- should expand their outreach, trying to include different groups of young people (especially young people facing multiple barriers);
- should access diverse support schemes (European, national and local) in order to support young people in their autonomy processes (for example, the French national programme on mentoring).

Conclusions and further exploration

The seminar was an excellent opportunity for the participants to gather and explore themes that are urgent and highly relevant to the topic of youth autonomy. Between the traditional and innovative approach, participants had the chance to explore some of the existing evidence related to the impact of the pandemic on youth and also to reflect on the upcoming multidimensional crisis. The discussions took into consideration the responses and actions of the three angles of the youth sector triangle – youth policy, youth research and practice, asking for more and better synergies between all relevant actors in the youth field.

In this context, fragility is a constant in young people's lives and at least three scenarios would be needed in policy development processes:

- avoiding addressing only consequences of the current crisis and focusing on putting in place measures designed for a long-term perspective;
- investing in the safety nets of young people;
- strengthening the outreach and delivering youth work activities and targeted government support programmes also to young people who are not visible – namely, young people with fewer opportunities.

Some of the issues that emerged during the three working days and need further exploration were the following:

1. At times, the youth triangle becomes a vicious circle: participants emphasised that there is a need for better interaction, long-term co-operation among youth sector actors and a proactive approach to co-operation. The connections are often short-term and in response to specific crisis situations, rather than strategically planned.
2. Youth autonomy is not a metropolitan phenomenon: most of the research focused on young people, their employment or housing situations is collected by working with and for urban youth or youth living in metropolitan areas. Similarly, most internship programmes are happening in cities and financial literacy programmes are mostly delivered in cities. Very few initiatives and actions are dedicated to young people living in rural communities and to youth facing multiple discrimination. Thus, expanding the outreach and coverage of these programmes to rural areas and approaching the situation of different groups of young people facing multiple barriers is highly needed.
3. Young people's priorities and policy development processes have different speeds: when looking at the multidimensional crisis and taking into account the dramatic impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the youth population, it is obvious that youth policy

development processes are not able to keep up with the rapid change of youth needs and interests. Involvement of young people, youth researchers and youth work practitioners in policy processes is therefore essential in order to ensure effective and targeted policies that respond to the real needs of young people.

4. Actions and priorities are often motivated by crisis: participants concluded that the authorities tend to be more interested in the youth situation during the multidimensional crisis. Yet, crises are often also the time when the budgets dedicated to youth are reduced, which seriously affects the planned measures and programmes. A consistent approach and long-term policy perspective are needed to support young people's transition to independence.
5. Equal measures and unequal approach: research shows that young women were even more exposed to challenges and barriers during the Covid-19 pandemic than young men were. Some of them lost their jobs, some of these jobs were the subject of unequal pay and many of them carried a greater burden of responsibility for family matters (especially in terms of childcare or additional administrative responsibilities).
6. Innovation around traditional topics: in the seminar, autonomy and social inclusion were targeted by looking directly at themes that are very relevant in youth development processes and are less covered through the general lens of social inclusion. Consequently, mentoring, housing, refugee rights and specific measures for young refugees, entrepreneurship education, co-working and co-living, childcare support for young families, and financial literacy captured the attention of the participants and were the highlights of the working sessions.

Annexes

Annex I – Agenda

Perspectives on Youth seminar

Young people's autonomy

7-9 November 2022

European Youth Centre Budapest, Hungary

Agenda

7 November 2022

16.00 - Welcome and opening remarks

- Clotilde Talleu, EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
- Enikő Varga-Végyvári, European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)
- Gianluca Rossino, Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

16.30 - Young people's autonomy

- Living and Working Conditions of young people in contemporary Europe
Massimiliano Mascherini, Eurofound
- The effect of the local labour market, housing context and social services on well-being among youth in European cities
Márton Medgyesi, TARKI Research Institute

17.15 - Dialogue space

Young people's access to independence - trends & obstacles

18.00 - Plenary - Key points

18:30 - Cocktail reception

19.00 - Dinner

8 November 2022

09.00 - Young people's autonomy and social rights - panel

- Manon Deshayes, European Youth Forum
- Raluca Diroescu, Youth@Work Partnership
- Antigoni Papageorgiou, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Panteion University

10.30 - Break

11.00 - Exploration workshops (*in parallel*)

- *Round 1*

Melvisa Miskic, youth worker - *Mentoring*

Jeanne Gorny, French Ministry of National Education and Youths - *Mentoring*

- *Round 2*

Ani6o B6tori, OTP F6y Andr6s Foundation

Mette Ranta, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) - *Financial literacy*

- *Round 3*

Kostas Filippidis, Association of Active Youths of Florina - *Entrepreneurship & co-working*

Mary Drosopoulos, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) - *Young refugees' autonomy*

13.00 - Lunch break

14.30 - Plenary session: State of the art on young people's autonomy

15:30 - The ALMA initiative (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve): a boost for young people's inclusion

Lucrezia Ioannoni Fiore and Peter Besselmann

DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

16.15 - Coffee break

16:45 - Reflections - How can research, policy and practice support young people's autonomy?

18.00 - Closing of the programme of the day

19.00 - Dinner

9 November 2022

9.00 - Plenary session: Where do we go from here?

10.30 - Official closing

Lana Pasic, EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership

Adina Serban – Seminar rapporteur, PEYR

11.00 - Departures

Annex II – List of participants

Alejandro Cuevas Vidal, INJUVE

Ali Noor, VYRE

Álvaro Mella Lopez, Young European Federalists, JEF Madrid

Anikó Bátori, OTP Fay Andras Foundation

Antigoni Papageorgiou, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Panteion University

Atanas Stoyanov, Phiren Amenca Roma Youth International Network

Aysenur Bulbul, Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports

Carlos Manuel Ramos Saraiva Paz, Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth

Carolina Pastor Perez, Young European Federalists, JEF Madrid

Dunja Potocnik, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group

Elefteria Papadopoulou, Infinity

Enikő Varga-Végyári, European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)

Georgina Whiteman, Cardiff University

Gianluca Rossino, Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), Council of Europe

Gonzague Isirabahenda, Babes-Bolyai University

Imre Simon, ERYICA

Irine Gugunashvili, Youth Agency, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia

Jeanne Gorny, European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), French Ministry of Youth and Sports

Kostas Filippidis, Association of Active Youths of Florina

Lucrezia Ioannoni Fiore, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

Mary Drosopoulos, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)

Manon Deshayes, European Youth Forum

Maria Pia Napoletano, EU NEIGHBOURS east - Young European Ambassadors

Marina Galstyan, Center for Educational Research and Consulting

Marti Taru, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) Advisory Group

Martin Rimóczi, College of Diplomacy Budapest

Márton Medgyesi, TARKI Research Institute

Massimiliano Mascherini, Eurofound

Melvisa Miskic, youth worker

Mette Ranta, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)

Nebojsa Djeric, European Youth Centre Vojvodina

Nino Mikhanashvili, Youth Agency, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia

Paul Sullivan, CELCIS

Peter Besselmann, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

Raluca Diorescu, Youth@Work Partnership

Šimon Presser, European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYF)

Organising team

Aleksandra Maldziski, DYPALL - facilitator

Adina Serban, PEYR - rapporteur

Clotilde Talleu - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership

Lana Pasic - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership

Marietta Balázs - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership

Estelle Glessinger - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership