**DRAFT Notes**

**6th European Steering Group Meeting 9th cycle**

**Trio Presidencies: France, Czech Republic and Sweden**

20 September 2022, 15:00-17:30, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Karmelitská 529/5, 118 12 Praha 1, Czech Republic and online

1. **Welcome & Adoption of the agenda and of the minutes from the last meeting**

The agenda and the minutes from the last meeting were adopted with unanimity. The point on grant updates from EACEA was brought to the top of the agenda for timetabling reasons.

1. **Update from the EC on the grants for to NWGs**

EACEA gave an overview of what is happening with the top-up EYY grants for National Working Groups. Overall the procedure has been smooth, questions have been answered quickly. There were some delays in getting the additional grant agreements signed, since unfortunately the top-up could not be included in the original grant agreement.

Regarding payments, there were some delays in pre-financing, but the top-up was paid together with the first instalment. Each coordinator from the NWG was contacted to know which Work Package the top-up should be attached to. Most groups chose Work Package 3 (dissemination and information activities), which was dedicated to websites and printing. The Swedish NYC asked for clarification if the payment was received automatically by NWGs upon signature; EACEA confirmed that it was automatic.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) asked if the funds could still be used in 2023, and what the final deadline was. YFJ also asked if all grant agreements had been signed.

EACEA answered that funds may also be spent in 2023, as according to the 2023 work plan, that period will be dedicated to a follow-up of the European Year of Youth. Two countries had still not signed the grant agreements: Poland and Romania. For Romania, this is likely a result of staff changes. For Poland, there has been a certain breakdown in communication. ESG members were invited to reach out through any contacts they had with Poland and Romania to help get the agreements signed as soon as possible.

1. **The EU Youth Conference in the Czech Republic**

The report from the Conference in Prague can be read [HERE](https://zenodo.org/record/6901343#.YvDvOHbP2Uk). It has been disseminated widely. The researcher pointed out that the report is not research-based, but summarises the ideas of participants during the workshops. It also mentions success factors, hurdles and support mechanisms for how to spread best practice examples. The Czech presidency recognises that this was a key report of the 9th cycle as it captures the phase of the national consultations, debates during the Youth Conference in Prague and will influence the Council Conclusions, in line with the track outlined by the French presidency. The Swedish government thanked the researchers for the very good report.

1. **The EU Youth Conference in the Czech Republic – feedback**

The Czech NYC presented feedback received by participants via the online form. There was also a feedback moment on the spot during the conference, with 4 corners (highlights, lowlights, recommendations, expectations vs. reality) which garnered more answers.

* **Highlights** → overall organisation, practical info, facilitation and harvesting, vegetarian/vegan food, networking, evening programme.
* **Lowlights** → missing EU policymakers, INGYOs needed better involvement, not enough diversity of participants, methodology was confusing, some policymakers not very-well prepared or lacking expertise.
* **Recommendations** → wanted more relevant policy-makers, better preparation for delegates and policymakers, more background documents/webinar, introduction to the EUYD, to understand which phase we are currently in, more time in working groups instead of speeches.

The Youth Forum praised the sustainable aspects of the conference (e.g. vegan food, interrail train tickets.) The European Commission asked whether the criticism of policymakers not being prepared enough had been raised before. The Youth Forum replied that this comment had also been mentioned during the Slovenian and French conferences too. Perhaps preliminary meetings with policymakers could help to solve this.

The Czech NYC commented that previous recommendations from the Youth Forum had been to avoid calling the session “conversations with policymakers” as it can create some confusion. Local councillors or national MPs are not always relevant for participants from other countries, but budgetary restrictions prevented many external politicians from being invited.

The Swedish NYC asked if participants mentioned what kind of politicians they wanted to meet. Perhaps they expected higher-level staff from the ministry, although they do not always have enough youth-specific knowledge. The Youth Forum replied that the relevance of each policymaker depends on the working group. Some policy advisors were from other departments and struggled to connect their work to the youth conference or the dialogue. The term “policymaker” can refer both to elected politicians and people working in the ministry, as both make policies.

The European Commission wondered if the policymakers’ profiles should be described more clearly in the programme. The Swedish government suggested that expectations needed to be managed better; the youth conference is not a forum for direct democracy. The idea is not to influence a policy maker, it is an exercise in discussing with politicians on how they work with youth policy. It is not supposed to be an exercise for participants to share ideas that they expect policymakers to follow-up on. The Swedish government plans to have a preparatory meeting webinar for ministerial reps as well. The vast mix of people labelled as “policy makers” made it confusing, so Sweden will deliberately focus on a small subsection of that group.

1. **Recommendations for the SE Conference**

The summary documents for the Swedish conference have been sent around to everyone. The Czech NYC commented that it would be important to consider the following aspects in the planning: institutional set up, composition of the organisational team, webinar, travel arrangements.

1. **Final consultation report – state of play**

The researcher gave the update that 25 national working group reports plus the INGYO transcript have been received thus far. 4 NWG reports were still missing. The Youth Forum indicated that they contacted those 4 NWGs individually to get reports.

The researcher replied that they would try to be as flexible as always, but would need to have a cut off date, after which any late reports could not be considered.

The researchers were currently analysing reports, and putting together the summary report with 5 sections:

1. An intro to each of the 5 sub-themes (from youth goals 3 and 10)
2. One summary of responses on intergenerational dialogue
3. Participant background and methodology, demographics
4. Overall summary of findings.

The researchers will not have a separate section on inclusion, but will mainstream it throughout. In total, there are 8 different documents (one as summary, one on participant background, one summary on intergenerational dialogue, and then 5x reports for the subthemes). These will be split into separate files instead of one large document, and will be finalised by mid-October, ready for the presentation during the webinar. There will be a chance to discuss it before the launch on 20 October, during the next steering group working meeting on 14 October.

The Youth Forum indicated that of the four NWGs who had not yet submitted the reports:

* Portugal: a personnel change had made it difficult for them to finish the report before October. The Youth Forum told them this was too late.
* Lithuania: Asked for an extra week. Now two weeks has passed and they have still not delivered the report.
* Slovenia: Not responsive at all
* Romania: The NWG asked if they could send the report in October as the ministry changed. Romania hasn’t submitted any reports in the 9th cycle.

Furthermore, the Youth Forum added that they were informed about Croatia not setting up an official NWG, the NYC is informally doing all activities and reporting themselves.

This point would be discussed during the next ESG meeting, to see if there are any updates or ways to support these NWGs.

The Czech government asked whether having all the reports in one document might not be easier. The researcher replied that each document might have a different target audience, so it might be helpful to keep them separate.

The Youth Forum pointed out that this was the third report released during the time of the Czech presidency, perhaps one document, with a shorter summary, could be more accessible. The researcher replied that the summary of findings is meant to bridge all three existing documents so far (the mid-term report, conference report and final report).

 **7. Summary from the reports for the Council Conclusions**

The Meeting at Council level will be on 28 November; it is unlikely that there will be tough deliberations during the Youth Working Party meeting on 7 October; the text is likely to be adopted as it is, with some elements perhaps moved to the annex.

The deadline for input is 2 October, as the draft documents need to be sent submitted on 3 October. The Czech government wanted the ESG to see the summary before it goes into the Council text. The researchers will send it round to the ESG, with a quick turnaround (likely 24 hours), meaning no time to re-write passages, but space to clarify or ask questions. The Youth Working Party meeting will be on 7 October.

The Czech government would like to have the details in an annex of 1.5-2 pages, where they will concentrate on intergenerational dialogue. Aware that this does not quite match the topics of the 9th dialogue cycle, they will put the text in the annex, not to render the main text imprecise. There is no difference in terms of the legal value, since the conclusions are not binding anyway.

The researchers highlighted that the input to the conclusions should be political, and that the researchers simply summarised the ideas shared by young people.

The Youth Forum asked how the outcomes of the youth conference would be present in the council conclusions, since the topic is different - how would they stress the importance of the EUYD and participatory process.

The Czech government indicated that the annex would reflect all of the following documents: definitions of the main concepts, the summary of the final report (results of national consultations with young people. They explained that they would focus on the importance of creating spaces for young people to participate in decision-making processes. Any results that feature in the main text, must be seen as the real input of young people, coming directly from the EUYD. Therefore the summary of the researchers cannot be seen as true input from young people, rather it brings in 5-6 examples of success factors. Therefore the Czech presidency proposes to have them included in the annex.

The researcher explained that the summary would build on the previous reports. Therefore it would include the content from all other parts of the cycle. The European Commission highlighted that the conclusions could contain those parts of the consultations that are relevant to the topic, since this council conclusion is a contributing part of the whole process. It could help with boosting the visibility of dialogue, since the council conclusions go beyond the youth sector.

The Youth Forum again added that the text should also highlight the relevance and importance of the youth dialogue. Whilst many of the ministerial representatives are the same generation as the youth delegates, there is an instance of intergenerational exchange between the youth delegates and ministry representatives during the whole cycle.

**8. Discussion about dissemination, transfer from the consultation phase to the implementation phase, webinar for the NWG, webinar for public**

The Czech presidency opened the question of whether there should be a special webinar for the National Working Groups.

After discussion with the Youth Forum, they proposed one webinar on 20 October of two parts:
1. 2pm-3pm: public part - presentation of the report

2. 3pm-4pm: for NWGs only - discussion on the implementation phase.

The ESG agreed to this set up.

In response to the question of what should be presented to the National Working Groups, the Youth Forum indicated that it supported the idea of a combined session and that in terms of content, the guidelines prepared by the researchers were very clear. It might be worth focusing on the reporting needs for the implementation phase, since the consultation phase of the 9th cycle has now finished. The date for the final reports of the implementation phase also needs to be set by the Swedish presidency and the researchers.

Regarding the transfer from the consultation phase to the implementation phase, the Swedish government took note of the questions that were raised in the document. They appreciated the recommendations put forward, which were helpful for the planning of the conference. The government is working together with the National Youth Council and the National Agency on practical and substantive parts. They shared some details about the Swedish Youth Conference, which will take place 20-22 March, in Växjö, Sweden, with 19 March as arrival day plus informal welcome dinner, and 22 March the departure day. 22 and 23 March will also be the DG Meeting. It is confirmed that there will be no overlap between official parts of the youth conference and the DG Meeting. However, there is an ambition that the DG’s will attend the closing of the conference on the 22nd. Preliminary, the days will be divided so that day 1 workshops focus on Youth Goals 3 and 10, whilst day 2 workshops will focus on the EUYD process.

The Swedish government was also happy to open the conversation about the timing of the implementation report, asking the researchers what timeframe they think is feasible. The researcher indicated that he would prefer to consort with the other members of the research team, and give proper feedback during the next ESG meeting on 14 October. Thus the content of the second part of the webinar will be discussed and finalised during the ESG meeting on 14 October.

On the practicalities of the webinar, it was agreed that the Czech presidency would explore the possibility of hosting the webinar on their Zoom account, as the Youth Forum’s Zoom is capped at 100 participants. The Youth Forum proposed to send a save the date to the national working groups. The researcher also suggested doing a livestream of the webinar, for even better value for money.

**9. Exchange of views on the upcoming Council resolution on the 9th cycle under SE Presidency**

A concept note was shared with the ESG in advance of the meeting. The Swedish government highglihted that headings 3, 4 and 5 were the most important, since they cover the challenges that came up during the 9th cycle and the youth conferences.

The Swedish government enquired as to whether any previous Council Conclusions ought to be referred to; and if there were any other points that ought to have been addressed. They indicated the option of an annex, but preferred to single out four or five messages to put under headline number 3, “recalling that”.

The next steps would be consultations with the Swedish NYC, NA and internal discussions. A dialogue event will be held in Stockholm on 29 September, where current and prior participants will be invited to participate in that and share their views. The ESG were therefore invited to send feedback on the text before 29 September.

For the ESG, it would be important at this stage to focus on priorities, not a complete text. An early draft will be sent to the General Secretariat to get their comments. The Swedish government already had a discussion with the Council to see what is possible in a Council resolution, and received no red flags from them. The first draft of the text will be ready by the end of October and sent to the ESG at the end of the month. ESG members are encouraged to send their comments to the SW govt in writing, keeping other ESG members in copy.

The Swedish NYC asked whether the text should contain messages about the cycle itself, or messages about the ideas that came out of the cycle. The Swedish government replied that it is about both, namely how the dialogue works with the institutions and the outcomes (i.e. procedural + political content).

The Youth Forum encouraged Sweden to check the 8th cycle, as it focused on the Youth Goal on participation and could be a good example. The Youth Forum also wished to clarify the expectations towards the ESG; should the ESG formulate the 3-5 concrete messages to be included, or would those be broader lines that will be discussed during the Youth Conference.

The Swedish government encouraged all ESG members t0 send concrete bullet points if able (the language does not matter, but we should know the key ideas). Members should however feel free to send ideas at any stage of development, If any are unclear, they can be followed-up on during the Youth Conference. The idea is not to discuss everything during the Youth Conference, some concrete ideas will have been identified beforehand.

The European Commission asked whether the 6 main takeaways from the Youth Conference report might not be a good source from which to take the conclusions, since they have more legitimacy. The Swedish government replued that they could also come from the French or Czech presidencies conferences. Should it be something that the delegates recognise as their own input? The French government also suggested that their report following the seminar on youth participation held in Strasbourg on 9-10 June could also be taken into account. The Swedish government confirmed that it would be part of their analysis as well.

**10. AOB**

* Communication around the 9th cycle

The French government wished to carry out an internal reflection on the communication of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue at the national level. They would like to receive good practices from the others in the trio; notably about how they are planning to communicate about the 9th cycle (and the EU youth dialogue more broadly). The French government invites the ESG members to send their input in writing.

It will go on the agenda for the next meeting in October. All are invited to respond in writing between now and 14 October.

The European Commission added that they were in discussion with the Eurodesk network, who recalled that they are available to attend and disseminate info about the Youth Conference. The Commission’s pool of young journalists will also contribute; they can attend and publish articles about it.

The Youth Forum and the European Commission conducted together a mapping during the 8th cycle to see how the communications could be improved. The Youth Forum undertook to share it with the French government.

The Czech government shared that they were in discussions with Hungary about evaluating the cycle at its 10 year anniversary, and wanted to share that with the 10th cycle trio. The Youth Forum noted that the 10th cycle was already focusing on that, since all three countries, (Hungary, Belgium and Spain) were the same founding states of the EUYD 10 years ago. Anything produced during the 9th cycle that looks at the current state of play of the EUYD will be helpful for the 10th cycle.

The researcher welcomed the initiative of the French government, highlighting that transparency and communication of the results and of the procedures is a key component. We often talk about expectation management, and a great way to ensure this is to communicate transparently about the EUYD. The Czech presidency will organise a handover meeting with the 10th cycle in early 2023.

The European Commission also noted that they would update information about the 9th cycle on the EU Youth Portal, which has now moved to the Cloud. The Commission would share more updates about the timeline during the next ESG meeting.

* TAIEX Multi-Country Workshop on youth participation

DG Near had approached the Czech presidency to participate in the TAIEX workshop on 10 and 11 October. Christophe Devette and Severine Origny-Fleishman from the French government would also be there and wondered if it would make sense to align on what the ESG members would present. The Youth Forum indicated that Kristof Papp would also join, presenting how young people see the EUYD process, what are its success factors and hurdles. His intervention will focus on similar topics to what the Youth Forum said during the French presidency's youth participation seminar on 9-10 June in Strasbourg.

The European Commission stated that the EU Youth Coordinator, Biliana Sirakova

will give an opening speech and Jasna Maric Krajacic will also attend.

* 2025 grants

The Youth Forum asked the ESG and the European Commission to consider grants for INGYOs for the next cycle, starting in 2025. They would also like to see an increase in funding for the NYCs who are part of the trio presidency, as this entails more work, and the current grants they receive should be fully dedicated to the implementation of the EUYD process in their countries. What would be the timeline to start discussing this? In the European Commission’s view, the sooner, the better.

* Youth Breakfast

The French NYC asked about the Youth Breakfast, whether the date of 28 November was confirmed and who should attend. The Czech presidency confirmed the Breakfast for 8:30-9:30am on Mondy 28 November. Invitees include the French, Czech and Swedish presidencies, as well as the Spanish presidency which will take over next, the European Parliament, European Commission and European Youth Forum. Countries should aim to send one person from the ministry (ideally the minister), one young person and one accompanying person (e.g. youth attaché)

The meeting was closed, the next meeting will be held on Friday 14 October.

**ANNEX: List of Participants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Czech Presidency Team** |  |
| Martina Kotasova (Chair) | Government |
| Sarka Dolezalova  | Government |
| Zdenka Maskova | Government |
| Michaela Dolezalova (Chair) | National Youth Council |
| Zuzana Wildova  | National Youth Council |
| Kristyna Jelinkova | National Youth Council |
| **Swedish Presidency Team** |  |
| Mattias Ludvigsson | Government |
| Emilia Segerlind | Government |
| Anders Lindholm | Government |
| Tobias Adolfsson | Government |
| Johan Gebo  | National Youth Council |
| **French Presidency Team** |  |
| Christophe Devette | Government |
| Desiree Ristorto | National Youth Council |
| **European Commission (EC)** |  |
| Marta Touykova | DG EAC |
| Jasna Maric Krajacic | DG EAC |
| Malgorzata Palarczyk Vivancos | EACEA |
| **European Youth Forum (YFJ)** |  |
| Christiania Xenofontos | European Youth Forum  |
| Kristof Papp | European Youth Forum |
| Lauren Mason | European Youth Forum |
| **Youth researcher and facilitator** |  |
| Clara Drammeh | European Facilitator |
| Ondrej Barta | Youth researcher |