



DOMENICO VALENZA

SENIOR ACADEMIC ASSISTANT, COLLEGE OF EUROPE - VISITING RESEARCHER, UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE ON COMPARATIVE REGIONAL INTEGRATION STUDIES (UNU-CRIS) - RESEARCH FELLOW, INSTITUTE OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRATS

**PROMOTING POLICY REFORMS OR FOSTERING DOMINANT
IDEOLOGIES? ASSESSING THE NATURE OF EU-FUNDED YOUTH
ORGANISATIONS ACROSS EUROPE**

FUNDED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'A YOUTH
STRATEGY FOR EUROPE'S FUTURE'

This publication received financial support from the European Parliament. Sole liability rests with the author and the European Parliament is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	3
1. Youth organisations in global and European policy-making: a literature review	5
1.1. Defining youth and youth organisations: two contested concepts	6
1.2. Youth organisations: Issues of exclusion and representativeness	8
2. Assessing the nature of the EU-funded youth sector under KA3.....	11
2.1. Status of entities	13
2.2. Agenda of entities.....	15
2.3. Capacity of entities.....	16
3. Key findings and policy recommendations	19
Conclusion	22
Bibliography	23

Abstract

Recent literature stresses that youth organisations (YOs) are critical to advance initiatives and develop policies in Europe and beyond. Through YOs, youngsters can in fact exercise their right to participation and take action in order to reach out to other marginalised youth and foster their entrepreneurial skills.

While scholars have paid attention to the role of youth actors in promoting social change, the real nature of the EU-funded youth sector has been so far largely neglected. To fill a void in the literature, this paper attempts to assess the features of the youth sector promoting political goals and hypothesises that the EU supports selectively YOs based on their adherence to European standards and values. In order to justify the hypothesis, the paper analyses a selection of Terms of References (ToRs) under Erasmus+ Key Action 3, and uses the three indicators of status, agenda and capacity to assess the nature of eligible YOs.

Within this framework, the study looks first at YOs structure (formal/registered versus non-formal/non-registered; youth-led versus non youth-led) to assess whether their status affects the size of the EU-funded youth sector. Second, YOs requested agenda is analysed in an attempt to see whether those promoting controversial views are supported under KA3. Finally, the study enquires on the expected capacity of YOs receiving EU funding, including previous experience in management, staff and network resources.

Overall, the study shows that KA3 displays a significant concern for inclusion, and that the European Commission does not seem to impose its agenda to EU-funded YOs. Even though initial assumptions are nuanced, the study finds a number of barriers to participation, including a lack of opportunities for informal groups and the absence of stricter requirements on the involvement of youth-led organisations in order to avoid top-down actions. Also, it highlights a risk related to budget coverage and policy-makers' participation, resulting in a competitive advantage to those organisations owning greater financial and network resources.

Introduction

“We must work harder to ensure that all people can benefit from the opportunities the EU has to offer [...], including those who feel left behind, people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and refugees and migrants arriving in Europe”¹. In this reflection Tibor Navracsics, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport highlighted the main opportunities and challenges ahead “in building resilience, most importantly by empowering people, and in fostering a European identity”². In saying so, Navracsics pointed out that special attention should be paid on young people, ensuring that the EU is able to “reach out to them in schools and universities, in youth and sports clubs, in the cultural and creative sectors”³. Emphasis on youth comes at a crucial time in Europe as inequality, discrimination, and political disengagement among young people should serve as wake-up calls for policy-makers and political observers.

In the framework of the research project ‘A Youth strategy for Europe's future’, this study attempts to look at youth involvement in policy development and policy dialogue at the European level. Through youth organisations (YOs), youngsters can in fact exercise their right to participation and take action in order to reach out to other marginalised youth and foster their entrepreneurial skills. As a matter of fact, the role of YOs is also recognised by the European Union’s (EU) Erasmus+ programme, which supports activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. In its Key Action 3 (KA3), the programme aims in particular at increasing the participation of young people in politics.

By assessing the nature of the EU-funded youth sector under KA3, this paper attempts to answer three questions. First, to involve youngsters in politics what kind of actors does the EU target and fund? Also, does it engage with YOs with controversial views on EU policies or with narrower political, religious, or social affiliations? Finally, are youth actors requested to demonstrate proven operational and financial capacities and is there a risk of long term path dependency?

Based on preliminary findings from literature, the study hypothesises that the EU supports selectively YOs based on their adherence to European standards and values. In order to

¹ Ponchon, C. (2018). Exclusive Interview with Tibor Navracsics. *European Observatoire of Sport and Employment* <http://eose.org/2018/01/exclusive-interview-with-tibor-navracsics/> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

justify this assumption, it reviews a number of Terms of References (ToRs) under Erasmus+ KA3, and uses the three indicators of status, agenda, and capacity to assess the nature of YOs. ToR analysis is complemented by a number of qualitative semi-structure interviews with youth operators.

Overall, the findings of the paper show mixed results. To a large extent, KA3 displays a significant concern for inclusion, and the European Commission does not seem to impose its agenda to those YOs that are willing to apply for funding. As such, projects can also include critical views on EU current policies. Also, at the capacity level it appears that financial requirements are relatively eased in most calls for proposals. While the study seems to nuance literature assumptions, a number of critical assessments are raised, including a lack of opportunities for informal groups and the absence of stricter requirements on the involvement of youth-led organisations in order to avoid top-down actions. Also, some risks are highlighted on insufficient budget coverage and policy-makers' participation, as both issues may give a competitive advantage to those organisations that are more structured and own greater financial and network resources.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, a literature review on the role of YOs at global and European level is presented and the debate over the definition of YOs is provided. Second, the nature of the EU-funded youth sector is discussed by looking at the ToRs under KA3 Erasmus+. Third, key findings and recommendations to relevant policy-makers are presented. Finally, a conclusion follows.

1. Youth organisations in global and European policy-making: a literature review

The past decades have witnessed a growing interest in youth policies at the international level. As a first step, agencies and institutes dealing with youth issues have been created in order to design policies and address global needs. Also, in an attempt to involve young people in the global-level decision-making and make their voices heard, international organisations have set up platforms including youth and policy-makers, and favoured the emergence of both youth-focused and youth-led organisations⁴. It has also been noted that the development of a youth policy field at the international level, and in particular at the European level, has been helped by the rather marginal place occupied by youth issues in national agendas⁵.

At the global level, it should be mentioned that the World Programme of Action for Youth, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1995, led to a rise in importance of youth issues. To tackle work-related questions, the year 2000 witnessed the creation of the Youth Employment Network, an interagency partnership of the International Labour Organization, the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. Within the EU, Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) regulate action on youth. In particular, based on Article 165 the EU is supposed to encourage “the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe”⁶. While the EU has a supporting competence on youth, and can therefore intervene only to complement member states’ action, steps toward the development of a more articulated policy have been taken through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Besides, in 2005 the European Council called for the development of a structured dialogue between young people and policy-makers. Started in 2010, structured

⁴ See Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2008). In the best interests of youth or neoliberalism? The World Bank and the New Global Youth Empowerment Project. *Journal of youth studies*, 11(3), p. 301-312. Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2014). *Youth rising?: The politics of youth in the global economy*. Routledge. Bersaglio, B., Enns, C., & Kepe, T. (2015). Youth under construction: the United Nations’ representations of youth in the global conversation on the post-2015 development agenda. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d’études du développement*, 36(1), p. 57-71. Cammaerts, B., Bruter, M., Banaji, S., Harrison, S., & Anstead, N. (2016). *Youth participation in democratic life: Stories of hope and disillusion*. New York: Springer.

⁵ Wallace, C., & Bendit, R. (2009). Youth policies in Europe: towards a classification of different tendencies in youth policies in the European Union. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 10(3), p. 441-458.

⁶ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, *Article 165*.

dialogues are 18-month work cycles that, while they do not lead to binding legislative measures, make youth policy actions more participatory and less top-down⁷.

1.1. Defining youth and youth organisations: two contested concepts

In spite of an increasing interest in youth issues, the very category of youth remains significantly uncertain. For instance, whereas the EU defines youth population as “the total number of young people in the age-groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29”, the UN target only the 15-24 range, therefore proposing a more restrictive definition⁸. To further complicate the picture, variation can be found if one looks at the national level. In her study, Perovic finds that Council of Europe member states adopt six groups of age definitions, stating that behind such different standards there are various economic, social, and cultural reasons⁹. Also, even within a single national policy a unique definition is often missing.

At the academic level, scholars have progressively contested dogmatic conceptualisations and proposed to treat youth as any other social construction and to look at how this concept has been de-constructed and re-constructed by changes in state policies “so that it is no longer so clear who youth are or how they can be helped”¹⁰. As such, this perspective acknowledges that youth is framed by dominant actors “in a way that promotes a future based on said actors’ ideological visions”¹¹.

If the category of youth appears to be rather problematic, defining a youth organisation (YO) is perhaps even more challenging, especially if one looks at the wide range of existing organisational structures and scopes. For instance, Quintelier differentiates between 6 groups dealing with youth and defines YOs as those groups in which young people aged 16-30 are

⁷ Banjac, M. (2017). Youth, risk and the Structured Dialogue: governing young EU citizens. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20(4), p. 471-486.

⁸ European Commission (2011). *Commission Staff Working Document. On EU indicators in the field of youth*. 25 March. http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October, p. 3.

⁹ Perovic, B. (2016). Defining youth in contemporary national legal and policy frameworks across Europe. *Youth Partnership. Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth*. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668203/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c> Accessed on 7 October 2018.

¹⁰ Wallace, C., & Kovatcheva, S. (1998). *Youth in Europe*. London: McMillan, p. 3.

¹¹ Bersaglio et al. (2015), *op.cit.*, p. 60.

effectively in charge (i.e. scout groups in Belgium)¹². Also, the concept of YOs can change significantly depending on the targeted country. Wallace and Bendit stress that for instance, while in some states there is a long-standing tradition of YOs (for instance in Germany and Austria), in others this is a relatively new phenomenon¹³. This for instance applies to Southern European countries, in which the youth sector has greatly benefited from the emerging European youth policy and funding opportunities. To encompass the different nature of YOs in Europe, a broader definition is proposed by Souto-Otero et al. referring to

“A wide set of social organisations (associations, clubs or movements) that are set up to serve young people and where young people are in charge of the operational structure, of making decisions on the focus of the organisations’ activities and their organisational strategies”¹⁴.

In this view, YOs are providers of non-formal education activities operating at different levels and are usually built around a particular issue or topic – be it political, religious, volunteering and the like. A slightly different approach is proposed by Holtom et al.¹⁵, drawing upon Arnstein’s ladder of participation to interpret youth control in YOs¹⁶. It is therefore proposed to define YOs as all those structures belonging to the following three tiers in Arnstein’s model: complete control by young people, in which adult leading presence is absent; delegated power, where youngsters have a majority of seats in the board; and partnership, with young people engaging in decision-making negotiations with adult members. Therefore, in this broader definition, to the extent that there is a least an agreement in decision-making between adult and young people, youth focus seems to be more relevant than youth unquestioned leadership.

Furthermore, Holtom et al. offer a model of categorisation of YOs based on three dimensions: 1) the organisational structure, reflecting the nature of the organisations (formal/informal; youth-led/youth-controlled); 2) the organisational aim, distinguishing between those YOs

¹² Quintelier, E. (2008). Who is politically active: The athlete, the scout member or the environmental activist? Young people, voluntary engagement and political participation. *Acta sociologica*, 51(4), p. 355-370.

¹³ Wallace, C., & Bendit, R. (2009). *Op.cit.*

¹⁴ Souto-Otero, M. (2016). Young people's views of the outcomes of non-formal education in youth organisations: its effects on human, social and psychological capital, employability and employment. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(7), 938-956, p. 2.

¹⁵ Holtom, D., Watkins, J. & Siladi, S. (2016). Study on the social value of youth organisations. *European Youth Forum*. https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/YFJ_StudyOnTheSocialValueOfYouthOrganisations_1P1.pdf Accessed on 7 October 2018.

¹⁶ Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 35(4), p. 216-224.

pursuing a political agenda and those with a reduced focus on political engagement; and 3) the organisational development and quality, assessing the degree of expertise owned by YOs (level of professionalization, recruitment, service-centred focus). Taken together, this model presents a number of similarities with the categorisation adopted by Valenza and Trobbiani, who assess the nature of civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in culture by using the three indicators of status, agenda, and capacity¹⁷.

1.2. Youth organisations: Issues of exclusion and representativeness

As an emerging sub-sector of civil society, YOs have progressively been welcomed as a tool to address young people's grievances and to aggregate their voices. Scholars have in fact found that through YOs youngsters can develop a greater interest in policy-making, increase their human and social capital, and experience civic engagement¹⁸. Against this background, only a few authors have contended celebratory assessments of YOs and questioned their role as representatives of youth's interests and problems.

If one looks at the broader picture of civil society representation in European politics, some concerns for exclusion can be found in the literature. For instance, in a study on interest group participation in European politics, Saurugger concludes that "the elite characteristics of these actors question their capacity to increase democratic legitimacy"¹⁹. Similar issues of unequal inclusion are raised by Valenza and Trobbiani, noting that in a number of cases the EU tends to support CSOs in the neighbourhood based on their closeness to European standards, norms and values²⁰.

When it comes to the narrower youth sector, a first critical point raised by scholars focuses on the status of YOs. This relates for instance to the conceptualisations of the youth sector as the sphere in which only formalised and legally recognised organisations operate. For instance, Cammaerts et al. find that in the Structured Dialogue the EU seeks to aggregate the voices of highly organised youth, in line with the broader European trend involving CSOs in other

¹⁷ Valenza D., & Trobbiani R. (2018). EU's civil society bias in the Neighbourhood: a case study on culture. *Conference Paper, "The Bordering of Europe: Historical and Comparative Perspectives"*, European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). 31 May 2018. <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/f23e73c0-d178-4c26-8b16-1a33036cd58e.pdf> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

¹⁸ See Souto-Otero, M. (2016). *Op.cit.*; Holtom, D., Watkins, J. & Siladi, S. (2016). *Op.cit.*

¹⁹ Saurugger, S. (2008). Interest groups and democracy in the European Union. *West European Politics*, 31(6), p. 1274.

²⁰ Valenza D., & Trobbiani R. (2018). *Op.cit.*

policy spheres. This can lead in turn to a “problematic divide between national and European youth participation organisations, on the one hand and grassroots and community-based youth organisations, on the other”²¹. Similarly, Dolejsiova finds that groups outside of formalised umbrella organisations may ignore the existence of opportunities for youth involvement²². In some cases, youth forums even fail to expand their membership in spite of their concerns for inclusion. In a study on youth involvement in urban regeneration, Fitzpatrick et al. observe in fact that these forums tend to develop into a “close-knit set of friends” posing “significant, if unintentional, barriers to the involvement of young people”²³. Scholarly concerns on the status of YOs do not only address their formalisation, but also the role that young people intend to play, and whether adults are involved as facilitators or have full management. Matthews and Limb (1998) remark that in adult-dominated gatherings for young people, risks of social control and tokenism may influence successful participation²⁴. This can happen even when adults have a genuine commitment to youth issues. Similar thoughts are shared by Bessant (2004) and Middleton (2006), noting that without effective participatory mechanisms, involvement would be formal but not substantial²⁵. In this regard, it is observed that YOs involving young people in their internal decision-making structures allow them to assume responsibility and produce better organisational outcomes²⁶. At the EU level, Cammaerts et al. (2016) found that flawed participation is a critical issue in the Structured Dialogue, as policy-making remains under the control of an adult political elite²⁷. Furthermore, concerns for exclusion do not only address the status of YOs but also the content of their activity. In other words, it is observed that in some cases public authorities tend to predominantly target those organisations with a closer agenda as this could serve better their policy purposes. At the global level, a number of studies have found that

²¹ Cammaerts et al. (2016). *Op.cit.*, p. 202-203.

²² Dolejsiova, D. (2005). European youth policies and their effects in the Czech and Slovak republics. In *Revisiting youth political participation: Challenges for research and democratic practice in Europe*, J. Forbrig. Strasbourg: Council of Europe publishing, p. 111-120.

²³ Fitzpatrick, S., Hastings, A., & Kintrea, K. (2000). Youth involvement in urban regeneration: Hard lessons, future directions. *Policy & Politics*, 28(4), p. 502.

²⁴ Matthews, H., & Limb, M. (1998). The right to say: the development of youth councils/forums within the UK. *Area*, 30(1), p. 66-78.

²⁵ Bessant, J. (2004). Mixed messages: Youth participation and democratic practice. *Australian journal of political science*, 39(2), p. 387-404; Middleton, E. (2010). Youth participation in the UK: bureaucratic disaster or triumph of child rights?. In *Equality, Participation and Inclusion 1*. Rix, J., Nind, M., Sheehy, K., Simmons, K., Walsh, C. London: Routledge. p. 118-130.

²⁶ Middleton, E. (2010). *Op.cit.*

²⁷ Cammaerts et al. (2016). *Op.cit.*

development actors use youth involvement in order to foster dominant ideologies²⁸. For instance, Bersaglio et al. (2015) note that by reconstructing youth as a social category, the UN seek to involve them as an ideal subject of neoliberalism. This would translate into the engagement of those young people “who participate in the spaces of formal politics and mainstream development, rather than alternative movements or protests”²⁹. At the EU level, similar concerns are raised by Cammaerts et al., particularly on the Structured Dialogue, as “the distinction between formal and informal politics ceases to just be about form, but also becomes about content”³⁰. In other words, highly formalised opportunities create a divide between those youth that participate in and are satisfied of the status quo, and those with more critical views engaging “in other venues and spaces removed from formal politics”³¹. Finally, barriers to participation could also be erected when YOs are required to demonstrate proven expertise in policy-making, project management or other related fields. According to a British umbrella charity association limited resources, including “staff, funding, and appropriate expertise”³² are a major issue affecting youth councils. At the EU level, drawing on a study on funding to CSOs³³, Cammaerts et al. remark that the allocation of resources is a “double-edged sword”, as it generates complacency and “create distance from the concerns of many young people in wider society”³⁴. In the long term, a risk of path dependency is also identified as YOs would follow donors’ agenda in order to secure their financial survival. While critical literature on YOs’ representativeness is growing, the nature of the EU-funded youth sector has been so far poorly observed. In particular, while some attention has been devoted to those youth groups involved in the Structured Dialogue, the nature of YOs funded by the Erasmus+ programme remains unexplored. Thus, the next section of this paper attempts to go beyond existing literature and comprehend the nature of YOs in Europe.

²⁸ See Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2008 and 2014). *Op.cit.*

²⁹ Bersaglio et al. (2015). *Op.cit.*, p. 68.

³⁰ Cammaerts et al. (2016). *Op.cit.*, p. 104.

³¹ *Ibidem.*

³² Cited in Middleton, E. (2010). *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

³³ Mahoney, C., & Beckstrand, M. J. (2011). Following the money: European Union funding of civil society organizations. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(6), p. 1339-1361.

³⁴ Cammaerts et al. (2016). *Op.cit.*, p. 87.

2. Assessing the nature of the EU-funded youth sector under KA3

To review the features of YOIs advancing policy initiatives, it is proposed to look at EU-funded projects under Key Action 3 (KA3), providing a wide range of opportunities and aiming at promoting policy development and policy dialogue in the fields of education, training, and youth. KA3 builds upon Action 5.1 of the Youth in Action programme ‘Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy’, which supported youth structured dialogue with policy-makers between 2007 and 2013. With the exception of the action ‘Structured Dialogue’, which is implemented by Erasmus+ national authorities, KA3 initiatives are mostly managed by the Education, Culture and Audiovisual Executive Agency (EACEA).

Given the variety of objectives and funding opportunities under KA3, three criteria have been applied to narrow down our selection. The first criterion is thematic, as the study analyses only those calls with an explicit youth dimension and whose budget is fully or partly (in a designated lot) allocated for youth initiatives. The second criterion is temporal, as in order to construct a manageable dataset the study looks at the ToRs for the timespan between January 2016 and June 2018. Finally, the study excludes those funds allocated through calls for tender and restricted calls. As a result of these criteria, this paper reviews 9 ToRs (see table 1) together with all relevant information on KA3 included in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide³⁵. A brief description of the initiatives is provided below.

Civil society cooperation is a main instrument of Erasmus+ under KA3 and is managed by EACEA through annual calls. The objective of the instrument is to provide structural support to CSOs in the field of education, training, and youth. Contrary to the 2016 call³⁶, focusing only on youth, in 2017 the new call provided funding on education and training (lot 1), and on youth (lot 2)³⁷. Under 26/2017, organisations could apply either for an annual operating grant or for a framework partnership agreement (FPA), formalising a 3 year partnership.

³⁵ European Commission (2018). *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/erasmus-plus-programme-guide3_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018, p. 318.

³⁶ Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2016). *Call For Proposals – EACEA/37/2016. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform – Civil Society Cooperation In The Field Of Youth. Applicants' Guidelines*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eacea-37-2016_applicants_guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

³⁷ Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2017). *Call For Proposals – EACEA/26/2017. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform - Civil Society*

Table 1: KA3 ToRs reviewed in this study.

Code of the call for proposals	Name of the initiative	Available grant
EAC/A04/2015	Structured Dialogue (2016)	x < EUR 50.000
EACEA/05/2016	Social inclusion through education, training and youth (lot 2)	x < EUR 500.000
EACEA/37/2016	Civil society cooperation	x > EUR 35.000
EAC/A05/2017	Structured Dialogue (2017)	x < EUR 50.000
EACEA 07/2017	Social inclusion through education, training and youth (lot 2)	x < EUR 500.000
EACEA/26/2017	Civil society cooperation (Lot 2)	x > EUR 35.000
EAC/A05/2017	Structured Dialogue (2018)	x < EUR 50.000
EACEA/10/2018	Social inclusion through education, training and youth (lot 2)	x < EUR 500.000
EACEA/16/2018	European Youth Together	EUR 100.000 < x < EUR 500.000

Similarly as civil society cooperation, social inclusion through education, training and youth is also funded under KA3 through annual calls. The general objective is to support projects in the fields of education, training, and youth, and in doing so to enhance the Union’s social dimension and to reach out to disadvantaged people. Under lot 2, calls include a specific youth dimension. Between January 2016 and June 2018, EACEA published three calls addressing social inclusion. While the call 5/2016³⁸ supported three project strands, addressing respectively transnational cooperation projects, large-scale volunteering projects, and National Agencies networking, in 2017 and 2018 only the first strand was funded³⁹. Furthermore, European Youth Together is a new centralised initiative under KA3 with an explicit youth focus. Published in April 2018, the call builds on the outcomes of the project ‘New Narrative for Europe’, gathering the views of young people on the future of the EU.

Cooperation. *Applicant* *Guidelines.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/applicant_guidelines_call_eacea-26-2017.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

³⁸ Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2016). *Guidelines For Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA No 05/2016 – Key Action 3: Support for policy reform – Social inclusion through education, training and youth.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

³⁹ Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2017). *Guidelines For Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA/07/2017 – Key Action 3: Support for policy reform – Social inclusion through education, training and youth.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_social_inclusion_en_0.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018; Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2018). *Guidelines for Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA/10/2018 – Key Action 3: Support for policy reform – Social inclusion and common values: the contribution in the field of education, training and youth.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_for_applicants_0.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Youth Together supports the creation of networks promoting exchanges, trainings (i.e. for youth workers), and youth's project entrepreneurship⁴⁰.

Finally, this paper also reviews the ToRs of the Structured dialogue, an action managed by National Agencies and promoting young people's active democratic participation and interaction with policy-makers⁴¹. By formulating proposals or recommendations in meetings, consultations or other forums on the priorities set by the EU Structured Dialogue, through the action young people are able to contribute to the policy debate and make their voices heard. Three rounds for applications are set for funding every year.

Besides the analysis of the ToRs and the Programme Guide, this section also builds upon 5 qualitative semi-structured interviews with project managers and youth operators that have worked on KA3 initiatives.

2.1. Status of entities

With the exception of Civil Society Cooperation, the initiatives reviewed in this study are opened to a wide range of public and private actors. A non-exhaustive list is provided in the ToR, including CSOs, educational institutions, public authorities at local, regional or national level, private companies, chambers of commerce and the like. To participate, applicants and their partner organisations must be based in an Erasmus+ programme country, while only Structured Dialogue initiatives allow applicants to include entities from a Partner country. When it comes to National Erasmus+ agencies, they are entitled to participate only in one strand of a call for proposals.

Stricter rules eligibility are proposed under Civil Society Cooperation, as only two categories of actors are allowed to apply: European non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) and EU-wide networks. ENGOS have to operate through a formal structure, including a

⁴⁰ Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2018). *Call for proposals EACEA/16/2018. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform – European Youth Together*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eyt_application_guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

⁴¹ European Commission (2015). *Call for proposals 2016 — EAC/A04/2015. Erasmus+ programme (2015/C 347/06)*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2015/347/06&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018; European Commission (2016). *Call for proposals 2017 — EAC/A03/2016. Erasmus+ programme (2016/C 386/09)*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2016/386/09&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018; European Commission (2017). *Call for proposals 2018 — EAC/A05/2017. Erasmus+ Programme (2017/C 361/04)*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2017/361/04&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

body/secretariat applying for funding and at least 12 legally-linked branches operating in Programme Countries. 70 per cent of the total funding of the call is allocated to youth-focused organisations, while 10 per cent is provided to ENGOs with a broader scope. While the same requirements also apply to EU-wide networks, the main difference between the two actors lies in their different status. In other words, EU-wide networks are supposed to operate through an “informal governance setting”, in which the applicant of the proposal has responsibility of coordination and support to the network⁴². To justify the links between the different organisations EU-wide networks, to which is allocated 20 per cent of the budget of each call, are requested to prepare and sign a memorandum of understanding involving all participating members. As such, under Civil Society Cooperation eligibility rules open up opportunities for a bottom up formalisation process of youth networks.

If formalising informal networks under KA3 is possible albeit limited to one specific initiative, the same opportunity is not provided to informal groups, that are non-eligible. This is especially striking as Erasmus+ does allow participation of informal groups within a number of actions under KA1 and KA2 (for instance youth exchanges and transnational youth initiatives). The Erasmus+ Programme Guide defines informal groups as a “group of at least four young people which does not have legal personality under the applicable national law”⁴³. When asked, youth operators’ view on informal groups was mixed. On the one hand, it was observed that young people with no formal recognition would have a hard time making their organisational steps in the framework of a European project. Bureaucratic procedures and no previous experience in management were notably mentioned as obstacles. On the other hand, it was noted that informal groups with genuine involvement on youth issues could contribute to extend opportunities and ultimately foster social inclusion. In this regard, a project office manager of an Italian organisation suggested the inclusion of informal groups as partners of KA3 projects, allowing them to participate without management responsibilities⁴⁴.

Furthermore, in an attempt to categorise it could be argued that three typologies of actors are eligible for funding under the analysed KA3, regardless of their private or public status: non-youth focused entities, that are, private or public entities that work on youth issues but have a broader scope; youth-focused entities, which serve the interests and needs of young people

⁴² EACEA (2017). *EACEA/26/2017, op.cit.*, p. 14.

⁴³ European Commission (2018). *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/erasmus-plus-programme-guide3_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018, p. 318.

⁴⁴ Interview 3 with a project office manager of an Italian non youth-focused organisation (2018).

but are under adult control; and youth-led entities, where young people enjoy equal partnership or full management. In a few cases, organisations must “involve young people in the management and governance of the network”⁴⁵. However, the Programme Guide, the ToR, and the Evaluation Grid do not provide additional information on how this factor is assessed by reviewers. Also, a number of youth operators from non youth-focused organisations have stressed the importance to involve youth-led organisations at least in every partnership and also in all stages of the project life cycle, including the drafting of the proposal as an opportunity to receive constructive feedbacks and design an intervention closer to youngsters’ needs⁴⁶. In some cases, the presence of at least a youth-led organisation in a partnership should also be considered to give the project an added value and avoid top-down actions⁴⁷.

2.2. Agenda of entities

The review of the ToRs seems to confirm that organisations can apply for funding regardless of the agenda they pursue. Besides an attention to youth issues, which is emphasised as a key aspect of the projects, eligibility rules do not exclude organisations that do not share part or the whole EU youth policy agenda, or with narrow political, religious or social affiliations. Interestingly enough, in Civil Society Cooperation eligibility rules prevent organisations with links to public authorities, political parties and commercial organisations from applying under Lot 1, focusing on education and training, while youth-related projects are exempt from such a rule. All this may suggest that, contrary to expectations of this paper and literature observations, a concern for inclusion has guided EU institutions when it comes to the youth sector. This is also confirmed to a large extent by the focus of some initiatives. For instance, the European Youth Together supports specifically “the participation of under-represented groups of young people in politics, youth organisations and other civil society organisations by engaging vulnerable and socio-economic disadvantaged youth”⁴⁸. Similarly, social inclusion initiatives target as a general objective the inclusion of disadvantaged learners,

⁴⁵ EACEA (2017). *EACEA/26/2017, op.cit.*, p. 14.

⁴⁶ Interview 1 with a project manager of an Italian non youth-focused organisation (2018).

⁴⁷ Interview 4 with a project manager of a French youth-focused organisation (2018) and Interview 5 with a project manager of an Italian youth-led organisation (2018).

⁴⁸ EACEA (2018). *EACEA/16/2018, op.cit.* p.4.

including people with a migrant background and aims specifically at promoting intercultural dialogue between different ethnic or religious backgrounds⁴⁹.

This is not to say that, at least on the level of the agenda, a risk of tracing some boundaries in the youth sector is absent. Drawing also on the example of national youth forums, an Italian project manager noted that opportunities for cooperation also arise from networking and socialisation opportunities in which participants tend to have a similar agenda⁵⁰. Another project manager observed that, to foster inclusiveness, National Agencies should provide opportunities for exchange and networking, targeting in particular under-represented groups in the youth sector⁵¹. However, concerns on exclusionary approaches should not be overemphasised. A youth operator stressed the example of their KA3-funded project, displaying a critical assessment on current EU asylum policy and involving youth and policy-makers into a debate over a policy change⁵².

2.3. Capacity of entities

Under the Erasmus+ Programme, the National or Executive Agency assess two selection criteria of applicants organisations. The first criterion is the financial capacity, meaning that the applicant has to demonstrate “stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out”⁵³. Assessments of financial capacity do not apply to international organisations and public bodies. Similarly, applications are also assessed against entities’ operational capacity to complete the project, proving their “necessary professional competencies and qualifications”⁵⁴. However, selection criteria are eased for grant requests not exceeding EUR 60.000, as organisations have to provide only a declaration of honour. For higher grants, a number of additional documents are requested, depending on the managing authority and the specificities of the call for proposals. This can include, for instance, a list of previous projects related to the policy field of the action, a Financial Capacity Form including statutory accounting figures, and/or a detailed record of resources owned by the organisation and involved in the project to match co-funding needs. While the presence of easing requirements seems to confirm a certain

⁴⁹ EACEA (2018). *EACEA/10/2018, op.cit.*

⁵⁰ Interview 1 (2018), *op.cit.*

⁵¹ Interview 4 (2018), *op.cit.*

⁵² Interview 3 (2018), *op.cit.*

⁵³ European Commission (2018). *Erasmus+ Programme Guide, op.cit.*, p. 248.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem.*

concern for inclusion of less professionalised YOs, one should note that in all the initiatives on social inclusions no projects under EUR 60.000 were funded.

Interestingly enough, and contrary to other European funding opportunities, under Erasmus+ selection criteria are used as a checklist by Managing Authorities, and applicants' capacity is not directly assessed under the award criteria. Rather, in some cases award criteria review the quality of the partnership and cooperation arrangements, accounting for 25 per cent of the total score and reviewing the features of the organisations involved and the presence of effective tools for coordination and communication in the partnership⁵⁵.

Furthermore, as another example of expertise the use of a language other than the national one could challenge YOs' ability to apply for European calls, especially if they lack trained staff or funding for translation. While language expertise has been raised as an issue in a number of studies addressing CSOs in EU-funded projects⁵⁶, under Erasmus+ in general and KA3 in particular, YOs are allowed to use any of Programme Countries' official languages for centralised actions, and the official language(s) of the Programme Country in case of actions managed by National Authorities.

On capacity issues, the assessment of youth operators from different organisations was mixed. On the one hand, even though some minimal level of expertise is unescapable to participate in EU-funded actions, there was a large agreement on the fact that project reporting is relatively easier under Erasmus+ when compared to other European or national funding opportunities. However, while organisational capacity should not be seen as an entry barrier, some issues were mentioned. For instance, a project manager emphasised that the National Authority's requests to make all project-related payments before granting the final balance were uneasy to answer and complicate the financial management even in the case of more professionalised YOs⁵⁷. Similarly, the justification of exceptional costs under structured dialogue projects was highlighted as a critical issue by a number of operators⁵⁸.

Perhaps most importantly, risks of path dependency were found on two levels. First, youth operators agreed that KA3 does not cover a number of key project-related costs, including coordination and facilitation fees, while daily rates for travel or accommodation are often not

⁵⁵ This applies to the Social inclusion and European Youth Together calls.

⁵⁶ See Aliyev, H. (2016). Assessing the European Union's assistance to civil society in its eastern neighbourhood: Lessons from the South Caucasus. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 24(1), p. 42-60; Valenza D., & Trobbiani R. (2018). *Op.cit.*

⁵⁷ Interview 1 (2018), *op.cit.*

⁵⁸ Interview 2 with a project manager of a Belgian non youth-focused organisation (2018), Interview 3 and 5. *op.cit.*

sufficient, especially in case of actions involving people with special needs⁵⁹. As such, it was remarked that to be implemented projects often rely on volunteers, funding from other non KA3 actions or contributions from participants. Taken together, this would lead to a competitive advantage for more structured organisations, using KA3 as a collateral action while relying on their own resources for some costs, and building on it to improve their network and reputation for future funding opportunities. This springboard effect may therefore undermine junior or less qualified organisations.

Furthermore, a common agreement was also observed when it comes to policy-makers' participation. Youth operators noted that as under KA3 policy-makers are a key target, the capacity to effectively reach out to them can affect the final outcome of the project. As clearly put by an Italian project office manager, "youth involvement dies as soon as policy-makers do not listen to young people's recommendations. It becomes a failure"⁶⁰. As such, it was noted that organisations with a strong local network have better chances to involve policy-makers and secure their participation⁶¹. To counter this trend, a project manager of a Belgian network stressed that there should be structured incentives for policy-makers⁶². This could include, for instance, a Youthpass for Policy-Makers, certifying learning outcomes, or using testimonials and dissemination materials portraying success stories related to policy-makers' involvement. In this last task, a more active role by National Agencies was proposed.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ Interview 3 (2018), *op.cit*.

⁶¹ Interviews 2, 3 and 5 (2018), *op.cit*.

⁶² Interview 2 (2018), *op.cit*.

3. Key findings and policy recommendations

Based on literature observations, this paper started from the hypothesis that the EU tends to support selectively European YOs based on their status, agenda and capacity. Overall, the review of the ToR under KA3, coupled with interviews with a number of youth operators nuance our initial assumptions. Regarding the status of organisations, a certain concern for inclusion has in fact guided EU institutions, given that in some cases youth-led organisations are privileged applicants and opportunities to formalise informal networks are offered. However, as the involvement of youth-led actors within the project remains a responsibility of the applicant and of the partnership that it has designed the risk of top-down project is not excluded. Perhaps more importantly, under KA3 informal groups are not eligible actors and, while their involvement as applicants is met with scepticism by some youth operators, allowing them to participate without management tasks should at least be considered to foster inclusiveness.

On the level of agenda, this section identified the lowest risks related to representativeness. Taken together, the ToRs do not exclude organisations sharing controversial views on the EU or with narrow political, social, or religious affiliations. Also, a focus on inclusiveness could be clearly identified in a significant number of calls for proposals, targeting among others refugees, people with a migrant background and under-represented groups of youth. Interviews also confirmed that National Authorities have been willing to fund actions with critical views on EU policies.

Finally, it is perhaps on the level of capacity that major concerns on the representativeness of the EU-funded youth sector could be observed. While the level of requirements on financial and operational capacities is quite low, and project reporting remains relatively easier when compared to other EU actions, two major obstacles were found: on the one hand, a springboard effect for more experienced organisations, which would be able to apply for KA3 actions and sustain its meagre funding through their structure. As such, the absence of resources for a number of key project-related costs menaces the long-term financial survival of smaller organisations. Also, a second and even more critical obstacle relates to the access to policy-makers, as organisations with a stronger political network may end up with better project outcomes. Given that KA3 key objective is fostering political dialogue between youth and policy-makers, one could say that this issue seems to affect the very essence of the key action.

Based on the findings of the research, and drawing on the interviews with youth operators, a number of policy recommendations are proposed.

Recommendation 1 – Status: To open up opportunities for informal groups under KA3, similarly to what it is already done under other actions of Erasmus+, and create formalisation opportunities. In particular:

- To allow informal groups to participate as applicants in smaller projects with little management responsibilities (i.e. actions under EUR 60.000);
- To include informal groups as ‘junior’ partners of experienced applicants in the framework of more complex actions (i.e. actions over EUR 60.000).

Recommendation 2 – Status: To secure youth-led organisations’ participation under KA3 projects in all stages of the project life cycle, including the composition of the partnership in order to design interventions closer to youngsters’ needs and to avoid top-down approaches.

Recommendation 3 – Agenda: To create opportunities at the national level for networking and exchange between organisations and to involve under-represented groups in the youth sector.

Recommendation 4 – Capacity: To simplify reporting of exceptional costs under structured dialogue projects.

Recommendation 5 – Capacity: To cover key project costs and avoid smaller organisations’ over-reliance on volunteers, funding from non KA3 actions or participants’ contributions. This would avoid a springboard effect for more structured organisations, which tend to use KA3 as a collateral action in order to improve their reputation for future opportunities. In particular:

- To cover coordination and facilitation costs as a new budget category under KA3;
- To design a more flexible system covering daily rates for travel or accommodation, especially in case of actions involving people with special needs.

Recommendation 6 – Capacity: To create structured incentives for the participation of policy-makers in KA3 actions across Europe. In particular:

- To create a Youth Pass for Policy-Makers, certifying learning outcomes in the framework of KA3 activities; and
- To design a dissemination strategy led by National Agencies, using policy-makers as testimonials of success stories related to their participation in KA3 projects; and
- To create a national public database including those policy-makers with previous experience in KA3 projects. YOs could use the database to reach out to responsive and sensitised policy-makers on youth issues.

Conclusion

This study sought to provide a qualitative assessment of the EU-funded youth sector engaging in policy dialogue and policy involvement. Based on a review of the scholarly debate, we hypothesised that the EU traces the boundaries of the youth sector by engaging with those actors that adhere to EU standards, norms, and values. This assessment was conducted by using the three indicators of status, agenda and capacity, based on previous studies on civil society's engagement.

Overall, the review of the ToRs under KA3 together with a number of interviews with youth operators nuanced our initial assumptions. A certain concern for inclusion has in fact guided the European Commission in targeting the youth sector, and organisations with critical views on EU policies (i.e. asylum) have been eligible for funding. Also, financial and operational requirements for YOs remain relatively eased when compared to other EU programmes or actions. Nonetheless, a number of critical reviews were provided in the study, including a lack of opportunities for informal groups and the absence of stricter requirements for the involvement of youth-led organisations. Also, interviews with youth operators highlighted a risk of competitive advantage for more structured organisations when it comes to budget coverage and policy-makers' participation. Policy lessons of this study were drawn in the third section and offered as recommendations for relevant policy-makers. Finally, to advance research future studies should further review the selection process under KA3 and analyse awarded and non-awarded YOs as well as their status, priorities and expertise prior to submission.

Bibliography

Aliyev, H. (2016). Assessing the European Union's assistance to civil society in its eastern neighbourhood: Lessons from the South Caucasus. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 24(1), p. 42-60.

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, 35(4), p. 216-224.

Banjac, M. (2017). Youth, risk and the Structured Dialogue: governing young EU citizens. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20(4), p. 471-486.

Bessant, J. (2004). Mixed messages: Youth participation and democratic practice. *Australian journal of political science*, 39(2), p. 387-404.

Dolejsiova, D. (2005). European youth policies and their effects in the Czech and Slovak republics. In *Revisiting youth political participation: Challenges for research and democratic practice in Europe*, J. Forbrig. Strasbourg: Council of Europe publishing, p. 111-120.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2016). *Call For Proposals – EACEA/37/2016. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform – Civil Society Cooperation In The Field Of Youth. Applicants' Guidelines*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eacea-37-2016_applicants_guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2016). *Guidelines For Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA No 05/2016 – Key Action 3: Support for policy reform – Social inclusion through education, training and youth*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2017). *Call For Proposals – EACEA/26/2017. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform - Civil Society Cooperation. Applicant Guidelines*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/applicant_guidelines_call_eacea-26-2017.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2017). *Guidelines For Applicants. Call for proposals EACEA/07/2017 – Key Action 3: Support for policy reform – Social inclusion through education, training and youth*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_social_inclusion_en_0.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2018). *Call For Proposals EACEA/16/2018 - Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform - European Youth Together – Applicant Guidelines*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eyt_application_guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018, p.4.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2018). *Guidelines for Applicants - Call for proposals EACEA/10/2018 Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Social inclusion and*

common values: the contribution in the field of education, training and youth.
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_for_applicants_0.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency – EACEA (2018). *Call for proposals EACEA/16/2018. Erasmus+ Programme KA3 – Support For Policy Reform – European Youth Together.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/eyt_application_guidelines_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Commission (2011). *Commission Staff Working Document. On EU indicators in the field of youth.* 25 March. http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Commission (2015). *Call for proposals 2016 — EAC/A04/2015. Erasmus+ programme (2015/C 347/06).* <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2015/347/06&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Commission (2016). *Call for proposals 2017 — EAC/A03/2016. Erasmus+ programme (2016/C 386/09).* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2016/386/09&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Commission (2017). *Call for proposals 2018 — EAC/A05/2017. Erasmus+ Programme (2017/C 361/04).* <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2017/361/04&from=EN> Accessed on 22 October 2018.

European Commission (2018). *Erasmus+ Programme Guide.* https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/erasmus-plus-programme-guide3_en.pdf Accessed on 22 October 2018.

Fitzpatrick, S., Hastings, A., & Kintrea, K. (2000). Youth involvement in urban regeneration: Hard lessons, future directions. *Policy & Politics*, 28(4), p. 493-509.

Holtom, D., Watkins, J. & Siladi, S. (2016). Study on the social value of youth organisations. *European Youth Forum.* https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/YFJ_StudyOnTheSocialValueOfYouthOrganisations_1P1.pdf Accessed on 7 October 2018.

Interview 1 with a project manager of an Italian non youth-focused organisation. (2018).

Interview 2 with a project manager of a Belgian non youth-focused organisation (2018).

Interview 3 with a project office manager of an Italian non youth-focused organisation. (2018).

Interview 4 with a project manager of a French youth-focused organisation (2018)

Interview 5 with a project manager of an Italian youth-led organisation (2018).

Mahoney, C., & Beckstrand, M. J. (2011). Following the money: European Union funding of civil society organizations. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(6), p. 1339-1361.

Matthews, H., & Limb, M. (1998). The right to say: the development of youth councils/forums within the UK. *Area*, 30(1), p. 66-78.

- Middleton, E. (2010). Youth participation in the UK: bureaucratic disaster or triumph of child rights?. In *Equality, Participation and Inclusion 1*. Rix, J., Nind, M., Sheehy, K., Simmons, K., Walsh, C. London: Routledge. p. 118-130.
- Perovic, B. (2016). Defining youth in contemporary national legal and policy frameworks across Europe. *Youth Partnership. Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth.* <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668203/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c> Accessed on 7 October 2018.
- Ponchon, C. (2018). Exclusive Interview with Tibor Navracsics. *European Observatoire of Sport and Employment* <http://eose.org/2018/01/exclusive-interview-with-tibor-navracsics/> Accessed on 22 October 2018.
- Quintelier, E. (2008). Who is politically active: The athlete, the scout member or the environmental activist? Young people, voluntary engagement and political participation. *Acta sociologica*, 51(4), p. 355-370.
- Saurugger, S. (2008). Interest groups and democracy in the European Union. *West European Politics*, 31(6), p. 1274-1291.
- Souto-Otero, M. (2016). Young people's views of the outcomes of non-formal education in youth organisations: its effects on human, social and psychological capital, employability and employment. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(7), p. 938-956.
- Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2008). In the best interests of youth or neoliberalism? The World Bank and the New Global Youth Empowerment Project. *Journal of youth studies*, 11(3), p. 301-312.
- Sukarieh, M., & Tannock, S. (2014). *Youth rising?: The politics of youth in the global economy*. Routledge.
- Bersaglio, B., Enns, C., & Kepe, T. (2015). Youth under construction: the United Nations' representations of youth in the global conversation on the post-2015 development agenda. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement*, 36(1), p. 57-71.
- Cammaerts, B., Bruter, M., Banaji, S., Harrison, S., & Anstead, N. (2016). *Youth participation in democratic life: Stories of hope and disillusion*. New York: Springer.
- Valenza D., & Trobbiani R. (2018). EU's civil society bias in the Neighbourhood: a case study on culture. *Conference Paper, "The Bordering of Europe: Historical and Comparative Perspectives"*, *European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)*. 31 May 2018. <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/f23e73c0-d178-4c26-8b16-1a33036cd58e.pdf> Accessed on 22 October 2018.
- Wallace, C., & Bendit, R. (2009). Youth policies in Europe: towards a classification of different tendencies in youth policies in the European Union. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 10(3), p. 441-458.
- Wallace, C., & Kovatcheva, S. (1998). *Youth in Europe*. London: McMillan.