



Erasmus+

Europe-Western Balkans Youth Meeting
"Connecting Youth Work and Youth Policy"
Youth participation – civic engagement – youth mobility
Ljubljana, 25 – 29 September 2016

Call for Participants

Within the framework of the Berlin Process, the Europe-Western Balkans Youth Meeting "Connecting Youth Work and Youth Policy" aims at following-up the recommendations of the Western Balkans Youth Conference "Connecting Youth" (Paris, 4th July 2016), a conference organised in the context of the Positive Agenda for Youth.

45 participants - mainly youth workers and youth leaders with relevant motivation and experience, coming from Erasmus+ Programme countries and Partner countries in the Western Balkan region¹, as well as stakeholders from other relevant organisations, institutions and policy makers are invited to discuss and define an Action Plan promoting in particular youth participation, civic engagement and youth mobility.



CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

A European perspective and the gradual integration into the European Union have been a key element of the political and economic development in all candidate and potential candidate countries for over a decade.

In recent years, however, the economic crisis in Europe has led to decreased support for European enlargement in EU member states, while in the countries of the Balkan region scepticism of Europe has been growing. In the Balkans, peaceful co-existence and tolerance between different ethnic groups as well as acceptance of the existing borders have remained fragile. Moreover, against the background of relative economic stagnation, the refugee situation in Europe has triggered increasing national extremism, right-wing populism and democratic instability in the EU as well as the Balkan region.

As a response, the "Berlin Process", which started with the Berlin conference of 2014, has set out to foster stability and security through stronger links with and support for the Western Balkan region. In the youth field, the process is framed by the "Positive Agenda for Youth", initiated at the Brdo Summit of 2015 and reconfirmed by the Vienna Summit in 2015. The Western Balkans Youth Conference "Connecting Youth" in Paris on 4th July 2016, which preceded the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Western Balkans and some EU Member states on the same day, concluded with further recommendations for youth.

The Erasmus+ Programme (2014 – 2020) has provided support for cooperation in the youth field between partners from Europe and the Western Balkans, for regional cooperation (Western Balkans, Danube region etc.) as well as capacity building for European youth work development on a variety of topics - and including cooperation with other sectors - for over a decade.

AIMS AND CONTENT OF THE EUROPE-WESTERN BALKANS YOUTH MEETING

The Europe-Western Balkans Youth Meeting "Connecting Youth Work and Youth Policy" wants to stimulate discussion among youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders in youth work and youth policy against the background of the current initiatives and discussions related to Europe and

European integration. The Meeting should focus on the contribution of youth work to support European integration and especially to promote youth participation, civic engagement and youth mobility.

As a follow up event to the Western Balkans Youth Conference “Connecting Youth” conference in Paris, the Europe-Western Balkans Youth Meeting aims to encourage in-depth discussion of topics addressed in Paris and to propose a concrete an Action Plan for youth work and youth policy.

The **concrete objectives** of the Meeting are:

- To share how the participants and the young people they work with perceive Europe: What are their expectations, hopes and doubts, and what consequences does this have for youth work;
- To explore the role of youth work and especially international youth work and international youth mobility in promoting youth participation and civic engagement with a perspective of fostering European integration;
- To discuss what youth work and youth policy can do to reach out to young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, to promote social inclusion and employability and to counter marginalisation which could possibly lead to radicalisation and extremism;
- To identify needs for capacity building and policy measures to be initiated and developed in order to better equip youth workers and youth organisations for this role;
- To define how the impact of existing programmes supporting European and regional youth cooperation could be strengthened;
- To develop an Action Plan with concrete steps for follow-up at different levels after the meeting.

The following recommendations from the Western Balkans Youth Conference “Connecting Youth” with a priority for youth work and non-formal learning will be emphasised in the discussion:

- Strengthening civic education in non-formal education settings;
- Fostering youth entrepreneurship in non-formal learning;
- Encouraging active participation of young people in policy design;
- Developing media literacy through youth work;
- Enhancing promotion of and accessibility to existing programmes;
- Establishing closer links between formal and non-formal education.

APPROACH AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES



The meeting wants to create a space for taking stock of and sharing the participants’ expertise, experiences and good practices related to the above-listed topics. Inputs by participants and additionally invited experts are planned to provide “food for thought” and stimulate reflection.

The aim is to draft an Action Plan building on the recommendations of the Western Balkans “Connecting Youth” conference. We want to identify concrete needs as well as steps that should be taken to address them, by policy makers, relevant institutions and programmes (European Commission, Erasmus+ etc.) and by the youth work sector itself. The meeting will also give visibility to already existing initiatives.

The perspective is further to create a platform for Europe-Western Balkans youth dialogue – Connecting youth work and youth policy, e.g. through regular meetings. Those could have different formats and focus on different topics of relevance.





WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Participants should:

-  Come from an Erasmus+ Programme Country or a Partner Country in the Western Balkans
-  Be actively involved in working with young people, promoting non-formal learning, youth participation and civic engagement



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-  Have experience with (some of) the topics of this Meeting to share and discuss with the other participants
-  Have a keen interest to contribute to the development of youth work and youth policy in their country and/or the Balkan region
-  Be motivated and able to stay for the full duration of the Meeting
-  Be able to actively participate in the programme in English.

Participants of the Western Balkans Youth Conference "Connecting Youth" are particularly invited to apply. However, participation in the Paris conference is not a prerequisite for participation in this Meeting.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE & COSTS

Full board and lodging of all selected participants will be covered by the organisers.

Travel costs of participants coming from Programme countries will be covered by the National Agency in the participant's country. Travel costs of participants coming from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia will be covered by the SALTO SEE Resource Centre. Please contact your NA or SALTO SEE to learn more about the financial details i.e. participation fee, and how to arrange the booking of your travel tickets and the reimbursement of your travel expenses.

The Meeting will last for three full working days. Participants are expected to arrange their travel accordingly and should arrive on Sunday, 25th September, and depart on Thursday, 29th September.

ORGANISERS

The Meeting is organised by MOVIT - SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre, together with the Austrian, German and Turkish National Agencies for Erasmus+, youth field, in close communication with the European Commission and with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. The Meeting will be facilitated by three experienced facilitators: Ajša Hadzibegović, Stefan Manevski and Sabrina Apitz.

APPLICATION & RECRUITMENT PROCESS

All candidates must apply by filling in the online application form in the European Training Calendar at <http://trainings.salto-youth.net/5923> at the latest by Wednesday, 24th August. (Filling in the application requires registration in MySALTO, which is quick and free). Candidates will be informed about the selection by 1st September.

For **more information**, please contact:

SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre

MOVIT - Slovenian National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme, youth chapter

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Contact: Sonja Mitter, tel.: +386 1 430 47 47, E-mail: sonja.mitter@mva.si,

web: www.salto-youth.net

ⁱ Erasmus+ Programme Countries include:

1. Member States of the European Union

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

2. Non EU Programme Countries

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey

Erasmus+ Partner Countries in the Western Balkans include:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia





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**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

