



Y.E.S. Forum – Wagenburgstr. 26-28, D-70184 Stuttgart  
Tel: +49-711-116489 27, E-mail: [yes-info@yes-forum.eu](mailto:yes-info@yes-forum.eu)

### **Y.E.S. Forum Position on the EC Communication on “Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society.”**

The Y.E.S. Forum strongly welcomes the European Commission's Communication on Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society [COM(2007)498].

#### **About the Y.E.S. Forum**

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The Y.E.S. Forum can contribute to the policy process as the strength of the organisation is in its day to day involvement of and support for young people through its member organisations and partners. The Y.E.S. Forum is a network of 22 organisations in across 14 countries in the EU. It is bound together by a commitment to the social inclusion and active participation of all children and young people who experience disadvantage and exclusion.

The Y.E.S. Forum aims to foster a sustainable dialogue about the needs and interests of young people with fewer opportunities amongst the various stakeholders including young people themselves, youth and social workers, as well as decision makers. Hence the Y.E.S. Forum seeks:

- To encourage professional networking and exchange of good practice amongst youth workers, social workers and other professionals,
- To support peer-to-peer contact and greater mobility between young people from different European countries,
- To develop and promote new ways of thinking in youth social work and
- To transfer experience and knowledge from the practical field to actively influence European politics on youth and social affairs.

In order to contribute to these goals the Y.E.S. Forum organises training, seminars and conferences that provide space for exchange of good practice and critical thinking. Using web community tools, the Y.E.S. Forum facilitates forums for discussion and consultations. It also strongly encourages the involvement of the members in transnational project cooperation involving young people and practitioners.

#### **The Y.E.S. Forum comments**

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This Communication is a consistent step of the European Commission to support policy coordination in the field of youth. It underpins the earlier initiatives since the launch of the Commission White Paper 'A New Impetus for European Youth' in 2001 and the European Youth Pact in 2005. Young people are the future of Europe. Hence the Communication stresses social cohesion and sustainable development is depending on “*a full contribution and participation by all young people*”.

In this respect, the Y.E.S. Forum appreciates the proposed “*cross-sectoral cooperation between policy fields impacting on youth and a greater focus on youth in such policies*” as well as a EU report on youth every three years involving the young people themselves. Further the Y.E.S. Forum welcomes very much the focus to better address young people with fewer opportunities and those who are not members of an organization. The Y.E.S. Forum sees this as a very important step towards an inclusive approach in the structured dialogue with all young people.

With regard to the Communication and a fruitful policy process, the Y.E.S. Forum decided to put forward the following points:

- Youth participation is about to give young people the means to participate and to ensure that they know about policy developments and programmes. It is crucial for a transparent policy that all young people, specifically young people with fewer opportunities, can understand the EU decisions which have relevance for their lives.
- In order to be part of a structured dialogue young people need to have simple access to information and where and when they can take part in the dialogue. Sharing information is not only a task of the European Commission, it is a main responsibility of the Member States. There is a need to coherent information strategies and a greater variety of methodologies in order to reach young people at regional and local level.
- In order to reach young people with fewer opportunities and those not organised, a wider range of stakeholders need to be addressed. To bring youth policy forward, institutions that work directly with young people with fewer opportunities need to be involved, especially professionals such as youth workers, social workers, street workers etc. They are a key resource and a complement to the European Youth Forum.
- The Y.E.S. Forum regards all young people as a positive driving force in the process of shaping Europe. Due to our specific experience in the work with young people with fewer opportunities, we believe in an inclusive approach in youth work. Programmes as well as events for young people, specifically the regular presidency youth events, the European Youth week need to be open for all young people. It is essential for the European Commission and the EU member states to have a strategy, how to involve young people with fewer opportunities.

The Y.E.S. Forum sincerely hopes that the recommendations will be helpful in the future policy process. Indeed, the Y.E.S. Forum and its members are delighted to provide their expertise and experience to this process in any way possible.

Stuttgart, December 2007