

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

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Cooperation with European countries

Council of Europe With the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Fund, the youth sector has important tools to achieve its goals. The structure of the youth sector is unique in its kind thanks to co-management. Representatives of governments and youth organisations are jointly represented in the decision-making bodies. The Flemish Government gives a yearly contribution to the European Youth Foundation. The representative of the Flemish Government is active in the CDEJ and in different expert groups. The Flemish Government supports 'Perspectives on youth: European Partnership Series'. This series aims to function as an information, discussion, reflection and dialogue forum on European developments in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work. The Flemish Government supports the further exploration and development of the serie 'history on youth work and youth policy in Europe'.

Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) on the national level The Flemish Youth Policy Plan has a European perspective. It was closely connected to the endeavours of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council and to the 'European Youth Strategy 2010-2018'. After extensive consultations with young people and a series of youth policy stakeholders in the EU member states, eight priority themes were put forward. These themes provided an important framework for the development of the Youth Policy Plan. The Flemish Government will use its international cultural cooperation agreements to collect expertise and exchange approaches on these topics. The Division Knowledge and Policy is represented in the National Working Group of the Structured Dialogue. The Division Knowledge and Policy foresees representation in most of the expert groups and peer-learning exercises set up in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy.

International cooperation

Bilateral cooperation

The Division Knowledge and Policy has a direct bilateral cooperation with Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Catalunya. Seminars and study visits on specific youth topics are organised in the framework of a two- or three year work programme. For example, a study visit

to Latvia on increasing participation of all young people in different decision making processes on national level. This study visit is part of the bilateral cooperation with Latvia.

Youth has mostly also a chapter in the cultural agreements the Flemish Government has with different countries.

International cooperation beyond the EU

Since 1996 the Division Knowledge and Policy has a direct bilateral cooperation with South-Africa. South Africa and the Flemish Government cooperated in the areas of culture, art, sport and youth. The basis of this cooperation are the three year work programmes. Up to 2006 these programmes have focused on two aspects:

- Capacity building of libraries and non-formal adult education
- Capacity building of young South Africans who were designated to elaborate a strong youth policy

Since 2006, a renewed approach is chosen. A transversal approach is promoted whereby special attention is given to the coordination of the policy areas youth, socio-cultural work, arts, heritage and sport. This new vision is reflected in the 'adoption' of four local community centres whereby attention is given to youth, culture and sport. The underlying idea is that those local community centres have to develop the capacities needed to operate. At the end of the collaboration, the four local community centres have to be an example of an integrated community centre. In addition, the educated South Africans can pass their knowledge on to actors who are involved in the community centres. In this way, they can inform and sensibilise the youth policy actors through activities and a course around capacity building. The selected community centres also have to be important actors in setting up the local cultural- and youth policy. After all, this stimulates the competences and the involvement of the local actors.