

Adopted by
the Board

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Position Paper

EU Youth Dialogue Grants

This document aims to summarise the position of the European Youth Forum on the Grants provided by the European Commission for the implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD). It addresses two facets of EUYD activities: National Working Groups (NWGs) and European Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (ENGYOs), also referred to as INGYOs. The Youth Forum asks the European Commission to introduce these changes as part of the next granting period, which starts in 2025.

I. National Working Groups

According to the Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue — European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, NWGs are responsible for the implementation of the EUYD on a national level. Furthermore, the same document suggests that the National Youth Councils chair or co-chair the NWGs. The composition of the NWGs varies in each member state; however, besides National Youth Councils chairing these groups, it is expected that they include relevant Ministries, National Agencies, and other stakeholders, such as experts, NGOs, that can contribute to the positive development of the EUYD at the national level. Among many other duties, NWGs are responsible for carrying out consultations, disseminating, discussing, and initiating the implementation of the EUYD outcomes, organising dialogue activities with young people and decision-makers, and preparing the delegations to the EU Youth Conference (EUYC).

Current State of Play

Currently, the European Union provides centralised grants through the Executive Agency (EACEA) to NWGs for the implementation of the EUYD. The grant period is three years, which covers 2 cycles of the EUYD, and the sum depends on the size of the Member State. The Member States have the possibility to decide about the beneficiary of the grants, which in most cases is the National Youth Council of the respective Member State. This is so that they can fulfil the role of the National Youth Councils as chairs or co-chairs of the NWGs. However, we observe that even though the Council

Resolution clearly indicates the important role of the National Youth Councils, some Member States are not ensuring the leading role of the National Youth Councils, and in some cases, exclude them from the NWG.

Delays in the process have been observed when National Youth Councils are not the beneficiaries. NWGs where Ministries are the beneficiaries often face high administrative burdens. For example, when the European Commission provided a top-up to increase the amount and visibility of activities around the 2022 European Year of Youth, it caused more difficulties than benefits in several NWGs when Grant Agreements needed to be modified. National Youth Councils, as the main democratic, independent youth representations of the Member States, are expected to have an important role in grant implementation. It is important to involve them as beneficiaries, or at very least, as part of the project management.

We are facing an increasing financial burden on the National Youth Councils of the Trio Presidencies. Unfortunately, in some cases National Youth Councils are expected to cover from their own resources their participation in the European Steering Group meetings, participation in the organisation of the EUYCs or other Presidency related activities without any additional funding. This decreases the capacity of National Youth Councils to actively participate in the work of the European Steering Group and to foster a youth-led EUYD process. Additionally, resources might be drawn from the national activities, weakening the youth participation in the Trio Presidencies.

Since the start of the EUYD, only one cycle started on time, which was the 10th cycle. In all other cases, significant delays in grants hindered the process. This was the case in 2022 when National Youth Councils faced a 6-month-long delay, resulting in either cancelling the consultation as a whole, or pre-financing it, scaling down the outreach and placing financial burdens onto the NYCs in addition to those aforementioned. A similar situation happened during the 2021 granting period; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the delay did not cause as visible harm as in the following year. During the previous cycle, when NWGs experienced delays 22.719 young people were reached, while during the current cycle, when grants were

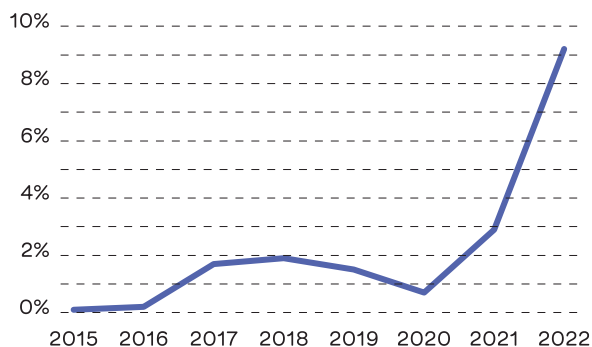
available on time, 28.723 young people took part in the consultation, which is a more than 25% growth in the outreach.

Regarding the level of financing, since the introduction of the Grant for NWGs, there has been no significant increase in the sum. Yet in the last 10 years, the whole EU has faced a sharp increase in inflation, and NWGs have had to face increased administrative burdens due to several factors like the constantly changing structure of the grants, delays, etc. This discrepancy is shown in the figures below.

The NWGs received the following sums for the period in brackets:

- 2015: 1.03 million EUR (12 months)
- 2016: 1.05 million EUR (12 months)
- 2017: 2.2 million EUR (24 months)
 - 1.1 million EUR / 12 months
- 2019: 2.2 million EUR (24 months)
 - 1.1 million EUR / 12 months
- 2021: 1.1 million EUR (12 months)
- 2022: 3.3 million EUR (36 months)
 - 1.1 million EUR / 12 months

After a yearly indexation that follows the inflation, in 2022 the available grants for NWGs should have been at least 1.25 million EUR. This increase would mean more than 5100 EUR additional financial support for each NWGs on average.



EU annual average inflation

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Our demands

In order to ensure that NWGs can work efficiently on the implementation of the EUYD at the national level, it is imperative that they receive sustainable support. Several Council Resolutions, such as the [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue](#) and the [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue](#) call for adequate funding for NWGs to ensure they can carry out meaningful work. To tackle the challenges mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the European Commission should:

1. **Increase Funding for NWGs:** The sum allocated to NWGs has remained the same since 2017, despite significant increases in inflation and administrative burdens. Additional funding is crucial not only to address these challenges but also to increase the outreach and dissemination of outcomes in line with the European Commission's European Youth Strategy (EYS) Communication. Currently NWGs spend most of their funding on staff costs, which is essential but also limits the possibilities of organising events. Further aspects posed additional bureaucratic burdens and costs on the NWGs. Compared to the original situation, the granting period grew from 1 year to 3 years, which means more reporting and operational tasks. Moreover, the application and reporting moved to a platform that is not suitable for this kind of grants, causing huge frustration and uncertainty for most of the beneficiaries. As such the funding should be indexed at least according to the inflation, plus at least an additional 10% increase would be necessary for providing suitable financial support for NWGs to carry out their work.
2. **Specify National Youth Councils as Beneficiaries:** The call for nominations of grant beneficiaries should explicitly suggest National Youth Councils as the preferred beneficiaries to avoid slow administration on the part of Member States. Recognising the pivotal role of National Youth Councils in youth representation and advocacy, their involvement as beneficiaries is crucial

for the effective implementation of the EUYD. This would be also in line with the Council Resolution that puts NYCs in the leading role of the National Working Groups.

3. **Align Grant Structure with EUYD Phases:** It is a positive development that grants for NWGs are provided for three years. To further optimise the workload of the NWGs, the grant provided by EACEA should better follow the EUYD structure. During the application process, NWGs are required to provide information about topics that may not yet be available, such as activities planned for the latter part of the grant period. Additionally, reporting requirements are not aligned with the EUYD reporting periods requested by the European Steering Group. Therefore, it is essential to calibrate the application and reporting structure to better reflect the phases of the EUYD and the activities involved.
4. **Additional funding provided for the Trio Presidencies' National Youth Councils:** This would avoid National Youth Councils funding their contribution to the Presidency duties such as participation in the ESG, EUYC organisation from their own resources or from the EUYD Grants intended for the national implementation of the EUYD, which is currently happening in some cases. The additional funding should be directly

provided to the National Youth Councils for their leading role in the European implementation.

Implementing these measures will contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of NWGs in their crucial role of facilitating meaningful youth participation and dialogue at the national level within the framework of the EUYD.

II. European Non-Governmental Youth Organisations

Since the inception of the EUYD, close to 30 ENGyOs have actively contributed to its realisation, as delineated in the table below. These organisations encompass a diverse array of expertise and backgrounds, including but not limited to rural affairs, religious minorities, or climate policies. This expertise is well presented through their extensive work and collaboration with several European institutions. ENGyOs represent young people from various socio-economic backgrounds and policy areas, affording them nuanced insights into issues such as social inclusion, sustainability, and employment. Central to note is that all of these entities are European networks of youth organisations. Their contributions are indispensable for crafting recommendations that effectively address European-level concerns and transcend traditional youth policy domains.

Association des Etats généraux des étudiants en Europe / European Students' Forum	AEGEE
Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations	Alliance
ATD-Fourth World- All Together in Dignity Fourth World	ATD
European Council of Young Farmers	CEJA
European Confederation of Youth Clubs	ECYC
European Democrat Students	EDS
European Educational Exchanges – Youth for Understanding	EEE-YFU
European Federation for Intercultural Learning	EFIL
European Network on Independent Living Youth Network	ENIL
European Pharmaceutical Students' Associations	EPSA
Erasmus Student Network	ESN

European Students' Union	ESU
European Union of Jewish Students	EUJS / UEEJ
Forum for European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations	FEMYSO
International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Movements	FIMCAP
International Federation of Liberal Youth	IFLRY
Young European Federalists	JEF
European Liberal Youth	LYMEC
International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth	MIJARC
Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions	OBESSU
Rural Youth Europe	RYE
World Esperanto Youth Organisation	TEJO
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts	WAGGGS
World Organisation of the Scout Movement	WOSM
Youth of European Nationalities	YEN
Youth Express Network	Y-E-N
Youth for Exchange and Understanding	YEU

ENGYOs that contributed to the EUYD (Structured Dialogue not included)

Current situation

In each cycle, the European Steering Group (ESG) spearheads the drafting of calls for ENGYOs to participate directly in the EUYD. Comprising representatives from Ministries, National Youth Councils of the TRIO Presidencies, the European Commission, and the European Youth Forum, the ESG holds responsibility for disseminating the call and selecting European networks. The selection process, along with its criteria, is entirely overseen by the ESG.

Following selection, the European Youth Forum typically facilitates an onboarding session to elucidate the cycle's intricacies and the responsibilities of ENGYOs. These organisations contribute to the cycle leveraging their own resources, organising consultation events with European decision-makers, offering a pan-European perspective, and providing expert insights. Notably, the breadth of topics represented by ENGYOs extends beyond conventional

youth policy domains. Their involvement is integral to the EU Youth Strategy (EUYS), contributing to policy mainstreaming by addressing issues beyond the traditional youth agenda. Additionally, ENGYOs play a pivotal role in reaching out to marginalised youth populations, such as rural youth, sexual and ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities, leveraging their extensive networks to ensure their voices are heard. This inclusive approach has significantly enriched the EUYD process.

During the consultation phase, ENGYOs are typically tasked with organising dialogue events, facilitating discussions between young people and European decision-makers in alignment with ESG guidelines. Recordings of these events are subsequently submitted to the ESG and the researchers. Notably, during the 10th cycle, ENGYOs were invited to submit expert statements, harnessing their expertise to address issues of social inclusion.

Moreover, depending on the respective Presidencies, a select number of ENGyOs are invited to participate in EUYCs - in a favourable situation all ENGyOs participating in the cycle are invited to all EUYCs - , amplifying the pan-European perspective and ensuring the representation of underrepresented youth voices. In the 8th and 9th cycles, all selected ENGyOs received invitations to the EUYCs.

ENGyOs also play a pivotal role in monitoring the implementation of the EUYD at the European level, using their access to European institutions and decision-makers to engage a broad spectrum of young people. However, challenges such as unclear roles, reliance on own resources, and diminishing motivation persist. These European networks are supported by the Youth Forum in their contribution to the EU Youth Dialogue by the organisation of onboarding meetings, or providing space for collaboration, however the lack of clarity and framework for cooperation hinder the impactful involvement of the ENGyOs.

Our demands

Improving the efficacy of these European networks of youth organisations has been a focal point of discussions aimed at enhancing the EUYD process. Recommendations outlined in [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue](#) and [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue](#) underscore the imperative of establishing sustainable, structured, and adequate funding mechanisms for ENGyOs. This funding would empower them to meaningfully contribute to the process by diversifying perspectives and ensuring high-quality input on the transnational dimension of the EUYD.

To realise tangible impact, ENGyOs urgently require financial support. While the specifics of this funding mechanism fall within the purview of the European Commission, several options are suggested for consideration:

- Allocating additional funding to the European Youth Forum, earmarked specifically to support

and coordinate ENGyO involvement in the EUYD process, including those beyond the membership of the Forum.

- Empowering the ESG to select a group of European networks of youth organisations in each cycle to receive direct funding from the Commission.
- Establishing a European Working Group comprising a fixed number of ENGyOs, the Chair of the EWG being the grant beneficiary, with membership rotating each cycle.

The proposed grant should be utilised for the following purposes:

- **Expert input:** based on discussions with young people, ENGyOs are enabled to provide nuanced expert input on topics beyond the traditional youth policy field on the topics of each cycle.
- **Coordination and Networking:** Supporting the collaborative efforts of European youth networks to effectively engage in the EUYD process and share best practices.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing training, seminars, and workshops to bolster the capacity of youth organisations in engaging policymakers and monitoring the implementation and outcomes of the EUYD.
- **Advocacy and Policy Dialogue:** Backing advocacy activities aimed at organising dialogue events where young people and decision-makers can co-create solutions, besides effectively reminding European policymakers of the outcomes of the EUYD and contributing to policy reform.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Funding research endeavours to evaluate the impact of the EUYD on European youth policies and identify areas for improvement.
- **Dissemination and Communication:** Supporting activities to widely disseminate the outcomes of the EUYD to diverse stakeholders, including young people, policymakers, and the broader public, through various communication channels such as websites, social media, and events. This

would also contribute to informing young people and decision-makers how their input during the different consultation and dialogue activities has been taken into account.

In conclusion, investing in ENGyOs within the EUyD process is not merely a matter of financial support; it is a strategic imperative for fostering inclusive, informed, and impactful policymaking. By providing structural funding and enhancing collaboration between ENGyOs and European institutions, we can ensure that the voices of diverse youth populations are heard and heeded in shaping the future of Europe.



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