IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

COUNCIL

Council conclusions on smart youth work

(2017/C 418/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

TAKES NOTE OF:

1. The political background to this issue as set out in Annex to these conclusions.

2. The current European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 that contributes to addressing the challenges and opportunities of the digital era for youth policy, youth work and young people.

3. The policy recommendations by the expert group on 'Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy'.

RECOGNISING THAT:

4. Digital media and technologies are increasingly part of everyday life and one of the supporting pillars for innovation and development in society. It is evident that young people are one of the catalyst for societal change, and this is due, inter alia, to their active embracing of digital media and technologies.

5. Technological developments open great potential for empowerment of youth by providing access to information and by enriching opportunities for enhancing one's personal capabilities and competences; providing opportunities for connectivity and interaction with others but also for voicing one's opinions, for creativity, for self-realisation of one's rights and active citizenship.

6. Better integration of technological developments when empowering youth is also important for the perspective of future job market and career perspectives of youth.

7. The development of technologies enables smart solutions, data-rich analyses and brings innovation to youth work methods and approaches, thus supporting the planning, implementation, evaluation, visibility and transparency of youth work and youth policy.

8. The realisation of the positive potential of digital media and technologies depends on a number of preconditions and competences. For example, limited access to technologies, digital environments and respective support and training deepens the digital gap in society even further. As for competences, information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving in digital environments are important both for youth and for those working with young people.

9. Smart, informed and well-targeted actions are important to develop relevant competences and safe tools to prevent and manage the risks of digital era, like negative effects of excessive screen-time, internet addiction, cyberbullying, sexting, spread of fake news, propaganda, hate speech, online violence and violent radicalisation, threats to privacy, including unauthorised use and misuse of data and other forms of potential harm. Youth work and youth policies can play a crucial role in raising the awareness and competences of young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, their families, youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth.

10. The digital era brings along a complex set of different challenges and opportunities. It is a societal phenomenon that still needs discovery and development of appropriate responses. In order to support and bring added value to the activities in the field of youth work of the Member States from local to national level, the cooperation in the youth field in the European Union and in particular the exchange of best practices is important.

UNDERSTANDING:

11. 'Smart youth work' as the innovative development of youth work encompassing digital youth work ([1]) practice, and including a research, quality and policy component.

UNDERLINES THAT:

12. Smart youth work aims to explore the interactions of young people and youth work with digital media and technologies in order to support and enhance the positive opportunities these interactions create.

13. Smart youth work builds upon the ethics, existing principles, knowledge, practices, methods and other assets of youth work and harnesses the full potential of technological developments in the digital society.

14. Smart youth work means making use of and addressing digital media and technologies in order to:

   a) enrich the opportunities of all young people for information, for access to youth work, for participation, for non-formal and informal learning, by exploiting new spaces and formats for youth work in meaningful ways;

   b) support the motivation, capacity and competence building of youth workers and youth leaders to be able to develop and implement smart youth work;

   c) create better understanding of youth and youth work and support the quality of youth work and youth policy through more efficient use of data-driven developments and technologies for analysing data.

15. Smart youth work builds upon the needs of young people, youth workers, youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth. It also takes into account the wider societal context, including globalization, networking, e-solutions etc., providing opportunities for experimentation, reflection and learning from these experiences.

16. Development of smart youth work should be built upon the active engagement of young people themselves, allowing them to best contribute their already existing digital competences as well as to develop additional ones, while also benefiting from respective peer support.

17. Smart youth work shall respect the privacy and safety of all young people, and safeguard their rights.

INVITES, WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCES, THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

18. Create conditions for smart youth work, where and as appropriate, including:

   a) developing and implementing smart youth work in youth work and youth policy goals, strategic and financial instruments;

   b) mapping and addressing the digital gap and inequalities to access the technological developments from the viewpoint of young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, youth workers and youth leaders and other stakeholders supporting youth;

([1]) Expert group on 'Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy': Digital youth work means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work. Digital youth work is not a youth work method — digital youth work can be included in any youth work setting (open youth work, youth information and counselling, youth clubs, detached youth work, etc.). Digital youth work has the same goals as youth work in general, and using digital media and technology in youth work should always support these goals. Digital youth work can happen in face-to-face situations as well as in online environments — or in a mixture of these two. Digital media and technology can be either a tool, an activity or a content in youth work.

c) supporting the development of competences relevant for smart youth work of young people, youth workers and youth leaders as well as other stakeholders supporting youth, including:

— on issues such as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration through digital media and technologies, safety in digital environments etc.;

— through diverse approaches to teaching and learning in all possible formats and levels, for example by incorporating smart youth work into relevant training programmes, youth work occupational standards and guidelines etc.;

d) exchanging of examples of best practice in the use of digital media and technology.

19. digital infrastructure enhancing connectivity and cross-sectoral partnerships, including with the education, innovation, research and development field, start-up companies and the business sector at large. While doing so, synergies with the Digital Single Market Strategy, Research and Innovation strategies for Smart Specialisation, existing structures, public and private services and programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, should be sought.

20. Continue to work together to ensure that these conclusions are acted upon in the context of ongoing work on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018.

21. Organise an international event for further exploration of perspectives of smart youth work between interested Member States during the years 2017-2018.

———

ANNEX

In adopting these conclusions, the Council recalls in particular the following:

1. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe (2015)

2. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled A New Skills Agenda for Europe — Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (2016)

3. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — European Strategy for a Better internet for Children (2012)

4. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people (2016/C 467/03)

5. Council conclusions on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy (2013/C 224/02)

6. Council conclusions on strategic perspectives for European cooperation in the youth field post 2018 (8035/17)

7. Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education (2015). Paris, 17.3

8. Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention 'Making a world of difference', 27-30.4.2015 in Brussels

9. EU-CoE youth partnership, Symposium on youth participation in a digitalised world, Budapest, Hungary 14-16 September 2015, Key messages of participants

10. EU Kids Online. Multinational research network

11. European Commission (2017). DigComp 2.1: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels and examples of use

12. European Commission (2016). The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

13. European Commission (2017). Europe's Digital Progress Report

14. European Commission (2017). White Paper on the Future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU-27 by 2025. 1 March 2017. COM(2017) 2025 final

15. Expert group on 'Risks, opportunities and implications of digitalisation for youth, youth work and youth policy' (2017). Mandate and policy recommendations on the development of digital youth work

16. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning — 2006/962/EC

17. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work (2010/C 327/01)

18. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 (2015/C 417/01)

19. Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on youth work

20. Smart Specialisation Platform (European Commission)