



## CHALLENGING TIMES

## A new chapter

by Ilenia Ventroni

At the General Assembly, I had the great opportunity to meet so many of you, and to learn a great deal of information about most of our movements. This was an important step in the life of the Brussels office, and I hope that many more of you will now follow more closely the work done here.

Many things are brand new in YMCA Europe now after the GA (a new Executive Committee, President, Strategy, etc.), and new possibilities are open to improve our work and our opportunities.

### A focus on advocacy

In Madrid we had the opportunity to discuss the new area where YMCA Europe is working now: advocacy. Many of you seemed interested in this new realm of activities, and participated enthusiastically to the workshops organized on advocacy and representation. We hope to see a series of initiatives in your movements to empower young people to discuss the issues you are most concerned about, and to build an opinion on them. These opinions can be brought to decision makers, and YMCA Europe will make sure to bring them to European and international decision makers, shaping policy with them. In the next months

we will start a process to create our advocacy positions, but we invite you to **participate** as much as possible to this. You can do so by supporting your candidates for the Youth Policy Group and creating advocacy groups in your movements. Every big thing starts from small steps, and YMCA will rise to the challenge!

In the meantime, the advocacy actions we have started have progressed, and you will be able to read about them **page 4** of this newsletter.

### Projects and Programmes

As usual, we publish here all the new funding opportunities you might be interested in. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you want to know more about any of them: we will be glad to give you more information and to help you apply, also finding the project partners you may need. Read about the latest funding opportunities at **page 4**.

# Live from Brussels - A YMCA Europe Brussels Newsletter



## THIS MONTH



### Youth in Europe Today

During the GA many of you have expressed their wish to create advocacy units in your movements, and to start creating manifestos related to the themes closest to your hearts. To be able to produce solid manifestos able to be convincing with decision makers, we need to present data justifying our plight. To help you in this, we will publish in this newsletter a summary of the most important issues related to European young people, according to the studies available today. Please have a look at **page 2** of this issue of the newsletter, and if you wish to integrate those data with information available to you at a national level, please contact the Brussels office: we will be glad to receive your contribution to the advocacy YMCA Europe will implement on your behalf!

# Youth in Europe today

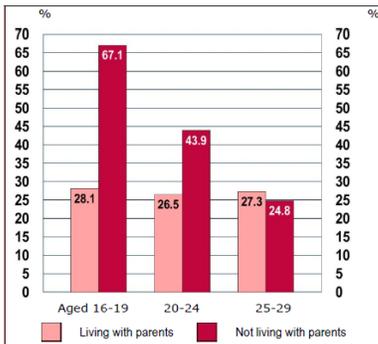
**At a Glance:** The first thing to note about young people in Europe is that they are now a minority. In 2014, only 169 million, 33.3% of the EU population were children or young people (under 30). On the other hand, non EU European countries see a younger population comparatively, in particular the countries with a lower income, where we find over 85 percent of the young population at large.



More and more young people in Europe face similar challenges, like a delayed entrance into adulthood, with young Europeans who take longer to leave the parental home and start families of their own. Poverty, social exclusion and discrimination are affecting too many children and young people, having repercussion on levels of education and employment in later life. Nevertheless, youth proves still to be resilient: despite all challenges, life satisfaction was the highest in 2013, with an average score of 7.6 on 10 at EU level, while it was 7.1 for the whole EU population.

## Inclusion

EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people (aged 16-29), EU-28 average, by living arrangements and by age, 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth\_incl\_030]

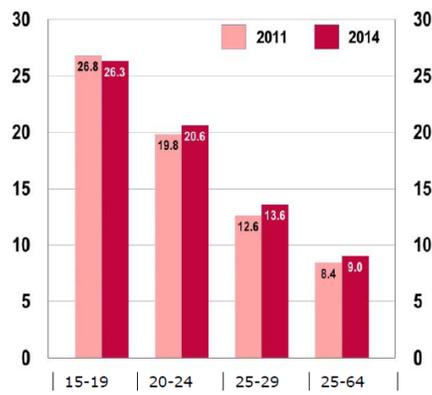
3 out of every 10 children in Europe were deemed at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2013. Monetary poverty was the most common for children especially since the global financial and economic crisis. According to Eurostat there is also a clear link between the level of education of the parents and the risk of poverty or social exclusion of their children: the higher the level of education, the smaller the risk of exposure to poverty.

However, there is a difference between the situation of children and young people. In the EU, the risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people (29.0 %) is higher than that for children under the age of 16 (27.3 %) or for the total population (24.5 %). These rates in 2013 did not increase for the total population and children, but they rise for young people, widening the poverty gap between young people and the total population. Considering the whole Central and Eastern European region, more than 22 million young people live on less than 2 USD a day and 5.8 million are undernourished. Sometimes we can observe countries with a relative widespread wealth faring quite badly in terms of youth poverty, as we can observe from the graph below, from which it is clear that even in "rich" countries like Norway or Denmark the poverty risk for young people is high compared to the rest of the population:

## Employment

The most delicate moment for young people begins when they leave the parental home, and they start

Unemployment rates among young people (aged 15-29) compared to the 25-64 age group, EU-28 average, by age group, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa\_urgan]

to work. In December 2015, 4.454 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU-28, a rate of 19.7 %. The youth unemployment rate in the EU-28 was more than double the overall unemployment rate in 2014. At 22.2 %, more than one out of every five young persons in the labor force was not employed, but looking and available for a job. In the euro area, the youth unemployment rate was even higher at 23.8 %.

The unemployment rate among young persons was higher than the rate for those aged between 25 and 74 in all Member States. In Spain (53.2 %), Greece (52.4 %), Croatia (45.5 %), Italy (42.7 %), Cyprus (35.9 %) and Portugal (34.7 %) youth unemployment rates were particularly high. Germany (7.7 %) was the only Member State with a youth unemployment rate below 10 %. The situation is grim also outside the EU: while unemployment in the region as a whole remains around 24% in 2013, unemployment among youth

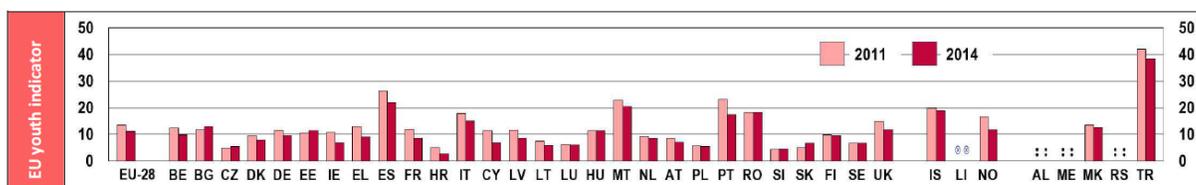
scored an average of 49% - going as high as 55.3% in Kosovo and 62.8% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As we can see from the table above, also in non EU European countries there are high levels of youth unemployment, and youth unemployment is generally higher than unemployment among adults.

Country	Rate of Youth Unemployment	Youth unemployment as a % of total labour force unemployment
Bosnia and Herzegovina	57.5%	203.9%
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	53.8%	173.5%
Serbia	45.9%	234.2%
Armenia	38.3%	207.0%
Georgia	35.5%	236.7%
Bulgaria	28.2%	229.3%
Albania	26.3%	178.9%
Romania	22.8%	325.7%
Tajikistan	21.2%	184.3%
Turkmenistan	21.1%	186.7%
Uzbekistan	21.1%	186.7%
Belarus	20.8%	214.4%
Ukraine	17.3%	224.7%
Turkey	17.0%	184.8%
Kyrgyzstan	15.4%	183.3%
Russia	14.9%	270.9%
Azerbaijan	14.2%	263.0%
Moldova	13.1%	233.9%
Kazakhstan	4.2%	79.2%

## Education:

The years spent in formal education for young people vary across Europe, but there are a few silver linings. Young people are more qualified than older generations. In 2013 in the EU-28, 81.1 % of young people (20-24) had completed upper secondary education; only 66 % of people aged 55 to 64 had similar levels. Obtaining tertiary education degrees remains the most important factor securing a job. According to recent skills forecasts, the demand for high-skilled labor will continue to grow until 2020: about 31 % of jobs in Europe will require high-level qualifications.

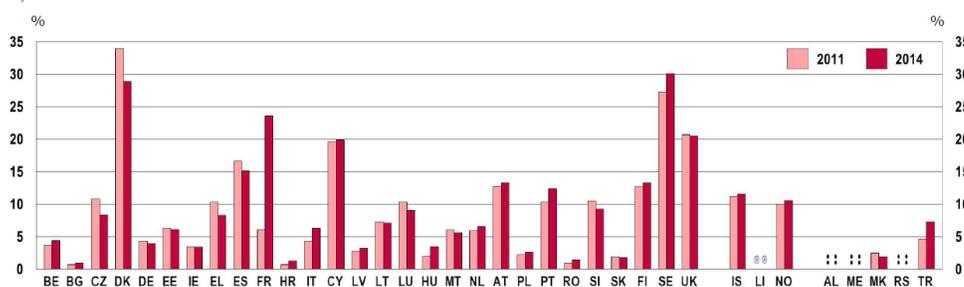
This causes concerns for early leave from education and training: being 18-24, with at most lower secondary education without further education or training. Amongst the factors contributing to early leave, the socio-economic status of the children and their families has significant weight, or belonging to vulnerable social groups such as migrants. On average, 11 % of Europeans aged 18-24 in 2014 left education having completed lower secondary education. Several countries report much higher percentages (especially Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Iceland and Turkey), while the lowest shares are registered in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, and Slovenia.



Regarding informal education, the data is also interesting. Countries differ greatly in terms of the share of young people involved in non-formal education (Figure 3-F). While at least 1 in 5 young individuals participate in non-formal education activities in Denmark, France, Cyprus, Sweden and the United Kingdom, other countries register much lower percentages; in particular, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Share of young people (aged 15-29) participating in non-formal education and training, by country, 2011 and 2014

a) 2011 and 2014



## Minorities

Reports from 2015 show that young people belonging to sexual (28% of respondents) or ethnic minorities (27% of respondents) are more likely to experience discrimination than the rest of the population. Young people belonging to specific minority groups are particularly vulnerable, facing discrimination on the ground of their young age on the one hand, and a personal characteristic like ethnicity, on the other. According to the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), migrant children and other ethnic minority children are often placed in different schools, in special needs schools, or in separate classrooms. In some Member States certain schools have pupils from a predominantly migrant or non-national background (linked to housing segregation or discrimination in admission), leading to a "ghettoization". National reports also show difficulties in providing education in the language of minority groups.

Between 16% and 32% of Roma, persons of African origin and Jewish people have been victims of racially motivated assaults, threats or serious harassment. For the other groups surveyed (North African, Turkish, CEE, Russian, and Ex-Yugoslav), the average rates ranged from 3-9%.

## Advocacy: what's up in Brussels?

by Ilenia Ventroni



Last month we mentioned our cooperation with FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, and their action calling for a European Commission Plan to fight **homelessness**. We have been asking MEPs to vote positively on a European Parliament **written declaration** to make this request to the Commission, and we are now waiting for the results: we will use this also as a platform to meet the MEPs and start a cooperation.

You may remember about the meeting organized by the Youth Intergroup of the European Parliament with the YFJ on the **Multi Annual Financial Framework** of the EU

(MFF). The MFF sets the priorities for EU spending over the 7 years' period of programming of the EU, and we were able to give our priorities to both the Commission and the Parliament on that. Those priorities have been used to feed the amendment process of the European Parliament BUDG Committee own-initiative report. A very good outcome of our coordinated action with the YFJ has been that most points have been taken on-board for the amendments. However, this is just the start: we need to make sure that the amendments that have been submitted are widely supported by the BUDG Committee during the vote of the report in the Committee. To do so, we will be

reaching out to MEPs sitting in the BUDG Committee. The vote on the report is scheduled on 27th June in the BUDGET Committee and we will make sure to reach out to those MEPs before then.

We are also planning to meet a number of MEPs and EU officials during the month of July: this is integral part of a dialogue with EU institutions, working towards acquiring more visibility and more direct channels to dialogue with European Institutions.

Here you will be able to find all relevant calls for proposals open at the moment. If you have any question on them, **feel free to contact us** and we will help you out!

## Funding Opportunities

	What is it?	Deadline	Link
<i>Erasmus+ - Key Action 2 - Capacity Building in the field of youth</i>	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices for youth NGOs in the Western Balkans	01 July 2016 - 12:00 CET	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-in-field-youth-2016-round-2_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-in-field-youth-2016-round-2_en</a>
<i>VP/2016/008 Information sharing and outreach activities to young people about the Youth Guarantee</i>	To better inform/engage Youth Guarantee Stakeholders in implementing partnerships for Youth Guarantee delivery;  To better inform young people about the Youth Guarantee, engage with and reach out to them, with the aim of bringing them into the Youth Guarantee service	30 June 2016	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&amp;langId=en&amp;callId=481&amp;furtherCalls=yes">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&amp;langId=en&amp;callId=481&amp;furtherCalls=yes</a>
<i>EUROPE FOR CITIZENS Programme - Measure Civil Society Projects</i>	Capacity Building activities and Mobility Activities: Trainings, Development of Tools, Youth Exchanges, Volunteer Programmes, etc.	1 July 2016 at 12pm (CET - midday Brussels time)	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/erasmus-plus-key-action-2-capacity-building-in-field-youth_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-2-cooperation-for-innovation-and-exchange-good-practices/erasmus-plus-key-action-2-capacity-building-in-field-youth_en</a>
<i>EU Aid Volunteers - Technical Assistance and Capacity Building</i>	Strengthen the capacities of sending and hosting organisations intending to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative to apply for certification	04 July 2016 - 12:00 CET	<a href="https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_-_call_for_proposals_27-2016_o.pdf">https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/guidelines_-_call_for_proposals_27-2016_o.pdf</a>

<i>Open call for Visegrad Fund's Small grants</i>	The International Visegrad Fund is an international organization, founded by the governments of the Visegrad Group (V4) countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic). Grant support is given to original projects in the areas of culture, science and research, youth exchanges, crossborder cooperation and tourism promotion.	September 1 and December 1 2016	<a href="http://visegradfund.org/grants/standard-grants/">http://visegradfund.org/grants/standard-grants/</a>
<i>International Activity – Council of Europe</i>	International meeting of young people or youth leaders in Europe which contribute to the work of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in topic, methodology and with a clear European dimension.	October 1 <sup>st</sup> 2016	<a href="http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/international-activity">http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/international-activity</a>