



# Gender and youth



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# 1. Relevance of gender in the policy area

Young people are a priority of the European Union's social vision. Youth policy arises from the recognition that young people are an important resource to society, who can be mobilised to achieve higher social goals<sup>(1)</sup>. The EU approach acknowledges that youth policy — being cross-sectoral — cannot advance without effective coordination with other sectors, such as education or health. In turn, youth policies can contribute to delivering results in other areas, such as gender equality<sup>(2)</sup>. The integration of gender concerns in youth policy is increasing, yet most research and policy documents are rarely concerned with gender differences and an explicit and clear gender perspective is still lacking<sup>(3)</sup>.

Youth is the period between childhood and adulthood when young people undergo multiple transitions, establishing themselves as adults. The situation of young people is shaped by specific life events that occur during the transitional period of youth. For instance, it may be that a young person moves from being financially dependent to being in control of their own budget, from living in the family home to setting up their own household — maybe with a partner — from being in education to having a job, and from being a child to being responsible for their own children.

Across the EU, young people have been increasingly using more time for the transition to adulthood, as the pathways to the next phase of their lives become less standardised and more complex. There is a link between gender and the shift to adulthood — across all youth-to-adulthood transition events, women usually move to adulthood earlier than men<sup>(4)</sup>.

Youth is typically defined as an age group, although the definition of 'youth' varies across EU Member States, with many of them overlapping and vaguely differentiating between children and youth<sup>(5)</sup>. This diversity and lack of a concrete defini-

tion explains why the EU Youth Strategy for 2010-2018 operates without an official definition for the specific period in life when a person is considered to be 'young'<sup>(6)</sup>. For statistical purposes, the EU considers young people to be aged 15-29 years of age, while children are categorised as being aged 0-14 years<sup>(7)</sup>.

In 2014 there were 89 million young people between 15 and 29 years of age in the EU, and they accounted for 17.7 % of the EU-28's overall population. Against the background of an ageing society, the population of young people shrank by 15 million in the decade between 1994 and 2014. In 2014 there were slightly more young men (aged 15-29) than there were young women (50.9 % against 49.1 % respectively)<sup>(8)</sup>.

Many young people in Europe experience challenges which prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights and accessing equal opportunities. In some cases, difficult experiences or situations are gender specific. In some areas, young women are disadvantaged, whereas in other areas young men experience higher risks and adverse effects. Indeed, girls and young women face several challenges. Although different performances in the labour market (employability, transition from education to work, unemployment) are the main issues of concern, many others are also present.

*Young women are, for example, more likely to be affected by low pay and precarious employment as young mothers and lack adequate work-life balance measures.*

Furthermore, some young women are at a particular disadvantage or at risk of discrimination in the labour market<sup>(9)</sup>.

The youth sector as an area thus remains influenced by a set of gender inequalities:

- Gender differences in education and transition to employment;
- Gender inequalities in access to the labour market;
- Young families and care responsibilities.

(1) European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, 'An EU strategy for youth — investing and empowering: a renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities', COM(2009) 200 final, 2009 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:ef0015>).

(2) European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, 'An EU strategy for youth — investing and empowering: a renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities', COM(2009) 200 final, 2009, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:ef0015>, p. 12.

(3) Plantenga, J., Remery, C. and Lodovici, M. S., *Starting fragile: gender differences in the youth labour market*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902\\_starting\\_fragile\\_report\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902_starting_fragile_report_2013_en.pdf)).

(4) Eurofound, *Mapping youth transitions in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2014.

(5) European Commission, *EU youth report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2012 ([http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012_en.pdf)).

(6) European Commission, Commission staff working document on EU indicators in the field of youth, Brussels, 2011, 25.03.2011 SEC(2011) 401 final ([http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/publications/indicator-dashboard_en.pdf)).

(7) Eurostat, *Being young in Europe today*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2015, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-05-14-031>

(8) Eurostat, *Being young in Europe today*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2015, available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-05-14-031>

(9) Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a youth guarantee (2013/C 120/01) ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01)&from=EN)).

## 2. Issues of gender inequality in the policy area

### Gender differences in education and transition to employment

Young women are more likely than young men to graduate from upper secondary programmes. Young women are also graduating from vocational programmes more often than in the past; consequently, their graduation rates from these programmes are catching up with those of young men. Similarly, young women complete education with a tertiary qualification in larger numbers than men<sup>(10)</sup>. The proportion of women among 20-24 year olds who had at least completed upper secondary education in 2011 was 82.4 %, compared to 76.7 % for men, and the proportion of women with tertiary education reaches 39.7 % for the 25-34 age group, relative to 30.4 % for the equivalent group of men. Young women are also less likely than young men to drop out from education and training. On average in the EU-27, the early school leaving rate is 15.3 % for young men and 11.6 % for young women, with wide differences among EU countries<sup>(11)</sup>.

The high number of women participating in education is a positive change compared to periods when — even only 40 years ago — there were fewer women in education. In 2012 in the EU, 24 % of women held a tertiary education degree in comparison with 23 % of men. The gender gap has reversed in this domain since in 2005, 18 % of women and 19 % of men held a tertiary education degree. However, education fields at the tertiary level remain strongly gender-segregated with 45 % of women students concentrated in the fields of Education, Health and Welfare, Humanities and Arts (while only 22 % of men students are concentrated in these fields) in 2012<sup>(12)</sup>. Young women often choose fields of studies that may translate into lower employment rates. 'Vertical skills mismatch'<sup>(13)</sup> or 'overqualification' are widespread, especially among young women

with tertiary education, because they tend to choose more general or academic educational paths<sup>(14)</sup>. Young men are instead more likely to have completed vocational education<sup>(15)</sup>, which leads to better labour market outcomes than general education. At the same time the decrease in men's participation in and success at higher levels of education is worrying. The reasons for this decrease is insufficiently researched<sup>(16)</sup>.

Horizontal segregation in education leads to occupational segregation in the labour market and impacts future career options of both women and men. This is all the more relevant when considering that the labour market is also currently strongly gender-segregated. In 2012, 30 % of women were employed in education, human health and social work activities against only 8 % of men<sup>(17)</sup>.

Young women choose fields of study (mostly in the humanities) that are generally considered to provide few opportunities to find a job. In the 2011 Youth on the move Flash Eurobarometer, Eurobarometer<sup>(18)</sup> asked interviewees about the main concerns they had when seeking a job on completion of their education. A higher proportion of young women than men (24.3 % versus 20.4 %) declared that there were no job opportunities in their fields of study, while fewer thought they did not have the right knowledge or skills (11.5 % of young women relative to 13.7 % of young men).

<sup>(10)</sup> Stark, A., 'Effects of educational attainments on employability: Do young women have an advantage compared to young men?', The advantages of a gender-sensitive approach to tackle youth unemployment, proceedings of the workshop held on 23 April 2013 in Brussels, European Parliament — Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Brussels, 2013.

<sup>(11)</sup> European Commission, *EU Youth Report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2012, p. 1987 ([http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/eu-youth-report-2012_en.pdf)).

<sup>(12)</sup> EIGE, *Gender Equality Index 2015 — Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0215616enn.pdf>).

<sup>(13)</sup> Vertical skill mismatch refers to a situation where the level of skills a worker possesses is higher or lower than is required in the job. See Cedefop Working Paper No 3, 'Skill mismatch: identifying priorities for future research', Cedefop, 2009 ([http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/6103\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/6103_en.pdf)).

<sup>(14)</sup> Flabbi, L. (2011), 'Gender differentials in education, career choices and labour market outcomes on a sample of OECD countries', background paper for the *World Development Report 2012*, World Bank, 2011 (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/flabi-educ-segregation-and-labor-market-outcomes-REFLEX-march12-2011.pdf>).

<sup>(15)</sup> Cedefop, 'From education to working life: the labour market outcomes of vocational education and training', 2012 ([http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3063\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3063_en.pdf)).

<sup>(16)</sup> Stark, A., 'Effects of educational attainments on employability: do young women have an advantage compared to young men?', The advantages of a gender-sensitive approach to tackle youth unemployment, proceedings of the workshop held on 23 April 2013 in Brussels, European Parliament — Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Brussels, 2013.

<sup>(17)</sup> EIGE, *Gender Equality Index 2015 — Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0215616enn.pdf>).

<sup>(18)</sup> European Commission, *Youth on the move: analytical report*, Flash Eurobarometer, 2011 ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_319b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf)).

Moreover, young women are less involved in on-the-job training. Men are more likely than women to have participated in training over the last 12 months (by a margin of 24 % to 21 %); they are also more likely to receive funding from their current employer (60 % as opposed to 50 % of women) and to have completed a traineeship (37 % versus 32 %). Conversely, young women take part in non-formal learning activities more often than men <sup>(19)</sup>.

## Gender inequalities in labour conditions

Young people lack work experience and the financial and social resources to find employment. As a result, they are far more likely than other groups to be employed in non-standard <sup>(20)</sup> and insecure jobs, regardless of their education and skills. The economic crisis in the EU since 2008 has worsened the labour market conditions more for young men (particularly those aged 15-24) than for young women, thus reducing the existing gender gaps. This is due to the recession strongly affecting the manufacturing and construction sectors, which traditionally employ mainly men <sup>(21)</sup>.

Among young people aged 15-24, between 2008 and 2014, the employment rate for men declined by around 5.9 %, while that for women declined by 3.8 % (in 2014, the rate was 30.5 % for women and 34.2 % for men). Similar trends were also registered for the 25-29 age group (– 4.4 % for men and – 5.8 % for women, and the employment rate was 66.4 % for women and 75.9 % for men in 2014). The relatively larger decline in male employment rates has resulted in convergence among young people in this indicator, but in 2014 the gender gap was still present, particularly among those aged 25-29 (9.5 %, compared to 3.7 % among the youngest group, aged 15-24).

Youth unemployment rates are more than twice as high as they are for the total EU population. Following the financial crisis of 2008, the unemployment rate of young people (aged 15-24) in the EU-28 has sharply risen, by a little over 7 % (from 15.6 % to 22.2 %), and remains high, particularly for men (+ 7 % among men aged 15-24, compared to + 5.8 % for the equivalent group of women). Since 2008, the unemployment rate for young women aged 15-24 has been lower than the rate for young men (21.4 % and 22.8 % respectively in 2014). The rate is practically the same for young women and men aged 25-29 (13.7 % and 13.65 % respectively).

Young women are at high risk of unemployment and inactivity and are one of the especially vulnerable social groups, alongside the low-skilled, early education leavers, people with an immigrant background, and the disabled. The vulnerability of young women results from discrimination based on gender stereotypes, skills mismatch and the lack of family–work reconciliation measures <sup>(22)</sup>.

Another important issue is related to the fact that NEET <sup>(23)</sup> rates (15-29 years old) have been increasing more for men than for women over the period 2008-2014 (+ 3.3 % and + 1.1 % respectively). Across the EU-28, the average NEET rate for young women aged 15 to 29 was 17.1 % in 2014, while the rate for young men in the same age group was 13.5 %.

The NEET rate is a more complete indicator of gender differences than the unemployment rate because it also takes into account those young people who are inactive but do not participate in education or training. In fact, young women are more likely than young men to be NEETs, mainly because they are more likely to be out of the labour force (or inactive) <sup>(24)</sup>.

The inactivity component for women aged 15-24, even though it has declined in recent years, still accounts for 57.1 % of women NEETs, whereas among men it accounts for only 40.2 %. The incidence of inactivity among women NEETs further increases for women aged 25-29, reaching 65.5 %.

<sup>(19)</sup> EIGE, *Gender Equality Index 2015 — Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0215616enn.pdf>).

<sup>(20)</sup> According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), non-standard work refers to jobs that fall outside of the realm of standard work arrangements, including temporary or fixed-term contracts, temporary agency or dispatched work, dependent self-employment, as well as part-time work, including marginal part-time work, which is characterised by short, variable and often unpredictable hours. Over the past several decades, in both developed and developing countries, there has been a significant increase in the number of persons who are employed under alternative contractual arrangements. In some instances, these new forms of contractual arrangement have led to a blurring of the employment relationship, making it difficult for workers to exercise their rights at work, or gain access to social security benefits. See <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-security/non-standard-employment/lang-en/index.htm>

<sup>(21)</sup> Plantenga, J., Remery C. and Lodovici, M. S., *Starting fragile: gender differences in the youth labour market*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902\\_starting\\_fragile\\_report\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902_starting_fragile_report_2013_en.pdf)).

<sup>(22)</sup> Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS), 'The conditions of unemployed young women and men in the European Union', prepared by Lodovici, M. S. and Patrizio, M., The advantages of a gender-sensitive approach to tackle youth unemployment, proceedings of the workshop held on 23 April 2013 in Brussels, European Parliament — Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Brussels 2013.

<sup>(23)</sup> NEET stands for 'not (engaged) in education, employment or training'.

<sup>(24)</sup> European Commission, *Report on progress on equality between women and men in 2012*, p. 9, 2013 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530\\_annual\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530_annual_report_en.pdf).

## Young families and care responsibilities

Starting a family may be another milestone in the life of a young person <sup>(25)</sup>. Being married and having children is related to opposite NEET outcomes for young women and men, especially with reference to their (non-)participation in employment. Generally, in most EU Member States, being married and having children implies a much higher NEET rate for women (in terms of inactivity), while for men the opposite is usually the case. Country differences in women's NEET rates mainly concern young married women, and are probably related to the availability of care services and the prevalent social values. Similarly, the presence of children increases the gender gap in employment and part-time employment.

Net childcare costs are a critical factor in parents' employment decisions <sup>(26)</sup>. The cost of childcare can consume a third or more of family budgets and can become unaffordable, especially for young low-income families and lone parents. It has been observed that improving childcare services increases employment opportunities for (young) mothers, who are more likely to be the main carers in the absence of such family support. Family responsibilities are also used to explain gender differences in the willingness of young people to set up their own business (38.5 % for young women relative to 47.1 % for young men) or to work in another country (49.4 % for young women relative to 56.3 % for young men) <sup>(27)</sup>. Education seems to partly counterbalance the 'married parent' effect, since women with advanced degrees — even when married with children — have shorter out-of-work spells than other women.

<sup>(25)</sup> Plantenga, J., Remery, C. and Lodovici, M. S., *Starting fragile: gender differences in the youth labour market*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902\\_starting\\_fragile\\_report\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902_starting_fragile_report_2013_en.pdf)).

<sup>(26)</sup> OECD, *OECD Employment Outlook 2011* ([http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/oecd-employment-outlook-2011\\_empl\\_outlook-2011-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/oecd-employment-outlook-2011_empl_outlook-2011-en)).

<sup>(27)</sup> European Commission, *Youth on the move: analytical report*, Flash Eurobarometer, 2011 ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_319b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf)).



### 3. Gender equality policy objectives at EU and international level

#### EU level

Gender equality as a core value of the EU is enshrined in European youth policy documents. However, even if youth policies are a central feature of policymaking both at EU and national level, the gender dimension is lacking in a large number of the recommendations, resolutions and studies that have been enacted and carried out on this issue. Apart from general considerations, most research and policy documents very rarely tackle gender differences, even if attention to this issue has been increasing in recent years <sup>(28)</sup>.

#### European Commission

The White Paper *A new impetus for European youth* <sup>(29)</sup> was launched in 2001 by the European Commission. It established the objective of improving the participation of young people in European public life and encouraging young people to become active citizens. Gender issues are integrated into the section entitled Family and gender issues need more attention, in which it is emphasised that reconciling family and work is one of the main challenges for the future, for example in relation to the provision of parental leave and improved childcare facilities. Attention has to be given to the specific needs of girls and young women, particularly regarding their health and safety <sup>(30)</sup>.

In 2005, the European Commission proposed the European Youth Pact, with the aim of improving the education, training, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young Europeans. Gender inequalities among young people were recognised as one of the key factors inhibiting Europe's goals of boosting jobs and growth and creating sustainable development. As mentioned above, the Youth Pact aimed to improve the education, training, mobility, vocational integration and social inclusion of young people, while facilitating the reconciliation of working life and family life, which was presented as key to promoting gender

equality for young women and men <sup>(31)</sup>. This document underlined the necessity to promote 'the reconciliation of working life and family life by sharing the responsibility between partners, particularly by expanding the childcare network and developing innovative forms of work organisation, as well as promoting child-friendly policies' <sup>(32)</sup>.

While respecting Member States' overall responsibility for youth policy, the EU Youth Strategy 'Investing and Empowering' <sup>(33)</sup>, agreed by EU ministers, renews the framework for an open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities covering the years 2010-2018. Promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination are key objectives of the strategy, which calls for Member States and the Commission to launch initiatives within their respective areas of competence to address gender and other stereotypes via formal education and non-formal learning. No other targeted initiatives are described, apart from mentioning the important fact that the promotion of opportunities to reconcile work and family life is considered a priority for both young women and young men. The EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 has two main objectives:

- to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market;
- to encourage young people to actively participate in society.

A gender perspective is explicitly applied only once under Field of Action 1 — Education: Address gender stereotypes via formal and non-formal education systems <sup>(34)</sup>. The strategy also recognises that effective youth policies can deliver results to various areas of social and human development, including gender equality.

<sup>(28)</sup> Plantenga, J., Remery, C. and Lodovici, M. S., *Starting fragile: gender differences in the youth labour market*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2013 ([http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902\\_starting\\_fragile\\_report\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902_starting_fragile_report_2013_en.pdf)).

<sup>(29)</sup> European Commission, *White paper: a new impetus for European youth*, 2001 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52001DC0681&from=EN>).

<sup>(30)</sup> European Commission, *White Paper: impetus for European youth*, (COM(2001) 681 final, 2002

<sup>(31)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council on European policies concerning youth — addressing the concerns of young people in Europe — implementing the European youth pact and promoting active citizenship, SEC (2005) 693 /\* COM/2005/0206 final \*/ (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52005DC0206>).

<sup>(32)</sup> Council of the European Union, *European pact for youth and promoting active citizenship* (2005/C 292/03) ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42005X1124\(03\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42005X1124(03)&from=EN)).

<sup>(33)</sup> European Commission, *An EU strategy for youth – investing and empowering* (COM(2009) 200 final), 2009 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>).

<sup>(34)</sup> European Commission, *An EU strategy for youth — investing and empowering* (COM(2009) 200 Final), 2009 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>).



## European Parliament

In June 2015, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men Post-2015<sup>(35)</sup>, in which it considered that policies and instruments aimed at tackling youth unemployment, such as the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative, should meet the specific needs of young women and men in order to enable them to access the labour market. It notes that the proportion of young women who are NEETs is higher than the proportion among young men; it calls for the collection of gender-disaggregated data in the area of youth unemployment in order that tailored, evidence-based policies may be developed. In this resolution, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to tailor both the investment package adopted in 2014 and the Youth Guarantee more closely to the specific situation and needs of girls and women.

## International level

### Council of Europe

In 2008, the Council of Europe adopted a new political framework for the youth sector, in a declaration entitled *The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020*<sup>(36)</sup>. This declaration aims to reinforce activities for young people and also to maintain a strong partnership with the European Commission in this area. Agenda 2020 underlines the necessity of implementing youth activities in three dimensions: 'human rights and democracy', 'living together in diverse society' and 'the social inclusion of young people'<sup>(37)</sup>. In the background paper, '[i]mplementing gender equality and preventing all forms of gender-based violence' is included as one of the topics that the Council of Europe's youth sector should especially focus on<sup>(38)</sup>.

## United Nations

The Beijing Platform for Action Area L — 'The Girl Child'<sup>(39)</sup> defines particular policy objectives. For each of these, it also specifies actions to be taken by governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child. All strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action are relevant to the promotion of gender equality among young people<sup>(40)</sup>. Gender inequality starts at home, where girls may experience gender discrimination which could impact on their performance at school and in their professional life. Therefore, particular attention needs to be paid to enhancing self-esteem and developing the talents and skills of young girls.

In 2013, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 68/130 'Policies and programmes involving youth'<sup>(41)</sup>, which reasserts that Member States need 'to promote equal opportunities for all and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against young people'. The resolution encourages Member States to tackle the challenges faced by girls and women and to eliminate gender stereotypes, discrimination or gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering all women. In particular, references are made to:

- eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation;
- ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere and supporting their empowerment<sup>(42)</sup>.

<sup>(35)</sup> European Parliament Resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU strategy for equality between women and men Post-2015 (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0218+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>).

<sup>(36)</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG\\_Coop/Min\\_Conferences/2008\\_Kyiv\\_CEMRY\\_Declaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Min_Conferences/2008_Kyiv_CEMRY_Declaration_en.pdf)

<sup>(37)</sup> Council of Europe, *The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020*, Eighth Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Kiev, Ukraine, 10-11 October 2008 ([https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG\\_Coop/Min\\_Conferences/2008\\_Kyiv\\_CEMRY\\_Declaration\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Min_Conferences/2008_Kyiv_CEMRY_Declaration_en.pdf)).

<sup>(38)</sup> Council of Europe, *Background document: the future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020*, Eighth Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Kiev, Ukraine, 10-11 October 2008 ([https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG\\_Coop/Agenda\\_2020\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/Agenda_2020_en.asp)).

<sup>(39)</sup> United Nations, *BPfA Platform — Area L — The Girl Child*, 1995 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/girl.htm>).

<sup>(40)</sup> United Nations, *BPfA Platform*, 1995 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).

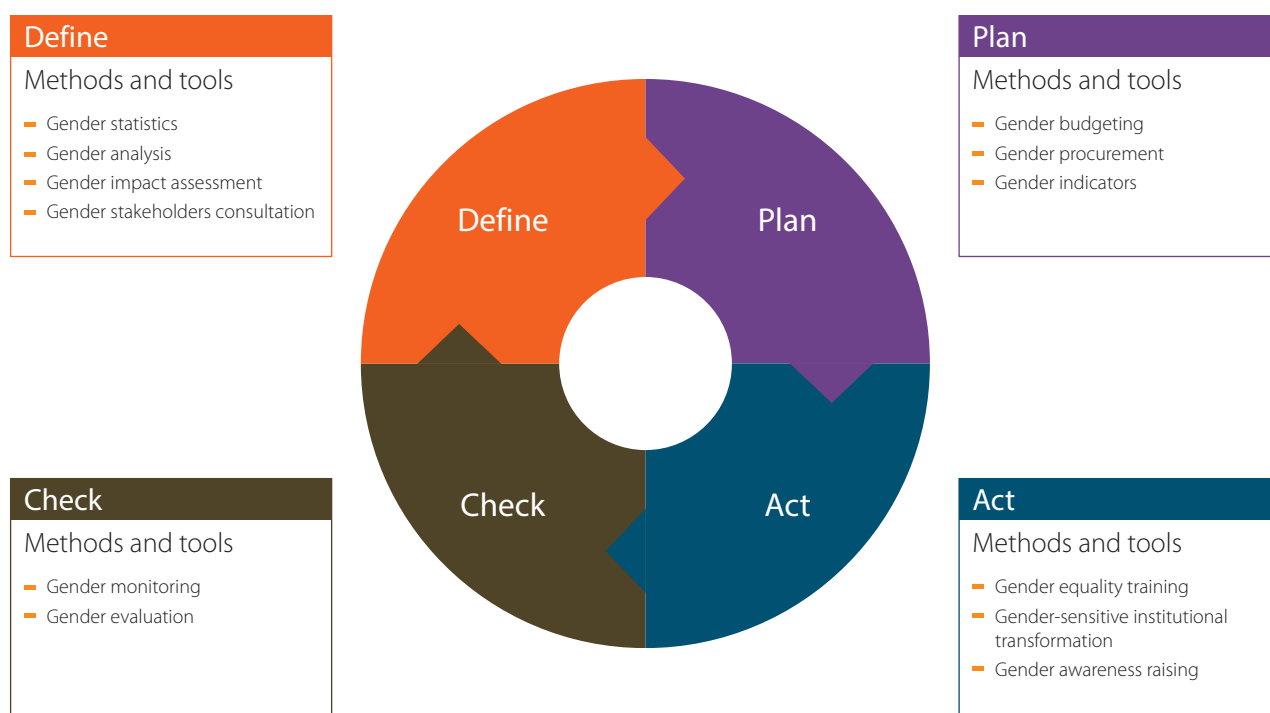
<sup>(41)</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations Resolution 68/130 — *Policies and programmes involving youth* ([http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/130&referer=http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/resolutions.shtml&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/130&referer=http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/resolutions.shtml&Lang=E)).

<sup>(42)</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

## 4. How and when? Youth and the integration of the gender dimension into the policy cycle?

The gender dimension can be integrated in all phases of the policy cycle.

Below, you can find useful resources and practical examples for mainstreaming gender into youth policies. They are organised according to the most relevant phase of the policy cycle they may serve.



### Define

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

In this phase, it's recommended to gather information on the situation of women and men in a particular area. This means looking for sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, as well as checking for the existence of studies, programme or project reports, and/or evaluations from previous periods.

### Examples of gender and youth statistics

At the EU level, relevant databases and indexes have been developed to address the dimension of gender in youth. Do not forget to check databases that may also exist at the level of the Member States.

The Eurostat section of youth statistics

This database covers the fields of action identified in the EU Youth Strategy <sup>(43)</sup>, as well as providing demographical contextual information. All data is disaggregated by sex and includes the following areas:

- Demography — gives some background indications on the main trends affecting the populations of young women and men.
- Education and training — informs about the participation of young women and men in formal and non-formal education and training.

<sup>(43)</sup> The EU Youth Strategy, agreed by EU ministers, sets out a framework for cooperation covering the years 2010-2018. It has two main objectives: to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market, and to encourage young people to actively participate in society.



- Employment and entrepreneurship — informs about young women and men's integration into the labour market, either as employees or as entrepreneurs.
- Health and well-being — includes indicators on health and well-being of young women and men with a focus on life styles, health status as well as mental health.
- Social inclusion — includes indicators on the populations of young women and men at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- Culture and creativity — includes an indicator on the frequency of participating in cultural activities.
- Participation — includes indicators on the participation of young women and men in the whole society.
- Volunteering — includes an indicator on the participation in informal voluntary activities.
- Youth and the World — should measure the mobilisation of young women and men in global policymaking at all levels using existing youth networks and tools. However, there is currently no identified data in European statistics for this objective.

## Examples of studies, research and reports

Eurostat, *Being young in Europe today*, 2015

This Eurostat publication presents recent statistics on the situation of children and young women and men in the European Union with sex-disaggregated data and information. There is also an interactive view of the data on the webpage.

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being\\_young\\_in\\_Europe\\_today](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today)

European Commission, *2015 EU Youth Report*

The *2015 EU Youth Report* is the first joint report by the Council and the Commission in the youth field and presents what EU Member States and the Commission have done to implement the EU Youth Strategy during the first 6 years of implementation, with in-depth analysis of gender-related issues, such as the promotion of sharing of responsibilities between young partners.

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

'The situation of girls and young women', in *World Youth Report*, 2003

In this report there is a chapter that explores some of the challenges and opportunities girls and young women face, taking into consideration factors such as access to health, education and employment as well as values, attitudes and behaviour (including violence) towards young women and girls.

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/worldyouthreport.pdf>

Gender differentials in education, career choices and labour market outcomes on a sample of OECD countries

Background paper for the World Development Report 2012, the World Bank

The paper describes and analyses gender asymmetries in the interactions between labour market outcomes and education choices for a sample of OECD countries. It describes the main asymmetries by gender in education choices, measures which factors may explain these asymmetries and examines the relationship with gender differentials in the labour market; finally it studies the correlation between education and occupation choices.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/flabi-educ-segregation-and-labor-market-outcomes-REFLEX-march12-2011.pdf>

Cedefop, *From education to working life*, 2012

The labour market outcomes of vocational education and training

The report presents the labour market outcomes for young people in Europe and across countries, and examines how the various levels and orientations of education affect employment prospects, the transition to work, job quality and wages. The findings of the report take into consideration the gender perspective.

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3063\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3063_en.pdf)

European Commission, Youth on the move, 2011

Analytical report: Flash Eurobarometer

The report presents the results of a survey conducted through phone interviews with nationally representative samples of young people (aged between 15 and 35) living in the 27 EU Member States, as well as in Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey. It looks at how mobile young people (aged 15 to 35) are for the purposes of education and work and how they view the attractiveness of different educational settings. The study offers an overview of the main concerns when seeking employment and the willingness to set up a business, or move to another country for employment from a gender perspective.

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_319b\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_319b_en.pdf)

European Parliament, 2013

The advantages of a gender-sensitive approach to tackle youth unemployment

The study contains the contents of a workshop on the advantages of a gender-sensitive approach to tackle youth unemployment, organised by the European Parliament in Brussels in 2013. The themes of the discussion focused on the conditions of unemployed young women and men in the European Union, the effects of educational attainments on employability, the effects of childcare and care for other dependents on career choices, gender differences in the willingness to compete, the youth employment package as an effective assistance for both young men and women to integrate into the labour market and finally the advantages of an integrated and gender-sensitive approach to youth unemployment.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/workshop/join/2013/474437/IPOL-FEMM\\_AT\(2013\)474437\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/workshop/join/2013/474437/IPOL-FEMM_AT(2013)474437_EN.pdf)

Plantenga, J., Remery C. and Lodovici, M. S., 2013

Starting fragile: Gender differences in the youth labour market

The report presents the way young people have been severely affected by the economic crisis. Their socioeconomic position is fragile. The main assumption is that while there are significant variations between Member States, the position of young women is more fragile than that of young men, and it is particularly negative in southern and eastern European countries. The study presents the significant and persistent gender differences in the labour market conditions for young people.

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902\\_starting\\_fragile\\_report\\_2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130902_starting_fragile_report_2013_en.pdf)

One of the first steps to take when defining your policy/project/programme is to gather information and analyse the situation of women and men in the respective policy domain. The information and data you collect will allow for an understanding of the reality and assist you in designing your policy, programme or project. Specific methods that can be used in this phase are gender analysis and gender impact assessment.

## Examples of gender analysis

UNFPA, 2002

Methodological guidelines for the gender analysis of national population and housing census data

One of the main pillars of UNFPA's technical support for national population and housing censuses is to make certain that the information collected informs policy and programming, particularly in areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, adolescents and youth, population dynamics and gender. To this end, gender analysis is viewed as a tool to assess, analyse and reveal the processes of different social roles, variances in social treatment and outright discrimination that explain the observed results.

<http://www.unfpa.org/publications/methodological-guidelines-gender-analysis-national-population-and-housing-census-data#sthash.thPz16lG.dpuf>

Children/Youth as Peacebuilders (CAP) and Save the Children, 2011

Gender maps, a resource manual: gender analysis with youth

The purpose of this manual is to support children's rights organisations in their work on gender analysis and gender-sensitive programming. The tools, based on the results of a joint project between CAP and Save the Children in 2010-2011, are aimed at engaging youth in a gender analysis of their life circumstances and developing gender-sensitive tools to support child-centred programme development.

<http://www.childrenyouthaspeacebuilders.ca/pdfs/Gender%20Maps/Final%20Combined%20Gender%20Maps.pdf>





## Examples of a gender impact assessment

Crawley, M. and O'Meara, L., 2004

Gender impact assessment handbook

This handbook has been produced and funded by the UK Gender Equality Unit within the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Although not specifically addressing youth policies, several examples specifically focused on young women are provided.

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/gender-impact-assessment-handbook.pdf>

Consider consulting stakeholders (e.g. gender experts, civil society organisations) on the topic at hand, to share and validate your findings and improve your policy or programme proposal. This will enhance the learning process on the subject for all those involved and will improve the quality of the work done at the EU level. The stakeholders consultation process will start in this phase, but could also be considered as an important method to be applied throughout each phase of the policy cycle.

## Examples of stakeholders that can be consulted

European Women's Lobby

One of the key working areas of the European Women's Lobby is young women in Europe, which is aimed at reconnecting and reinforcing young European women's activism and setting up a creative space for young feminist change agents.

<http://womenlobby.org>

Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)

This is a unique initiative at the European level which represents a contribution of both the Council of Europe and the European Commission to evidence-based policymaking in the field of youth. It consists of 25 researchers and experts from across Europe who possess a wide range of expertise in different policy areas connected to youth.

<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/peyr>

European Youth Forum

This is the platform of 99 youth organisations, both national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations, in Europe. Although not specifically gender related, the Youth Forum actively works against the discrimination of young people based on age or on any other grounds including sex, and strives to ensure the full inclusion of youth in society.

<http://www.youthforum.org>

### Plan

DEFINE PLAN ACT CHECK

In this phase, it is relevant to analyse budgets from a gender perspective. Gender budgeting is used to identify how budget allocations contribute to promoting gender equality. Gender budgeting shows how much public money is spent for women and men respectively and therefore it aims to ensure that public funds are fairly distributed between women and men. It also contributes to accountability and transparency about how public funds are being spent.

## Example of gender budgeting in youth

Institute for Youth Development, KULT, 2003

Manual for monitoring and evaluating youth policies and strategies by applying the principles and methods of gender-responsive budgeting, 2013

This manual for monitoring and evaluating youth policies and strategies applies the principles and methods of gender-responsive budgeting as an educational, practical and informative resource. This could be used primarily by young women and men included in the process of creating, monitoring and analysing youth strategies by monitoring and analysing allocated budget funds, but also by all who wish to improve their knowledge and skills for starting and implementing a gender-responsive budgeting initiative.

<http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/gender-responsive-budgeting-for-youth>

When planning, do not forget to establish monitoring and evaluation systems and indicators that will make it possible to measure and compare the impact of the policy or programme on women and men over the timeframe of its implementation. Remember to define the appropriate moments to monitor and evaluate your policy.

## Examples of indicators for monitoring gender and youth

### Youth employment rate by sex

The youth employment rate is the percentage of employed persons calculated for a particular age group. Generally, the youth employment rate refers to 15-24 year olds, but is also available for the age range 25-29, and could be calculated for the 15-29 age bracket. An employed person is considered someone aged 15 and over, who during the reference week performed work — even if just for 1 hour a week — for pay, profit or family gain. Among young people aged 15-24, the employment rate for women in 2014 was 30.5 %, while for men it was 34.2 %. Figures for ages 25-29 were 66.4 % for women and 75.9 % for men. The indicator is available from Eurostat LFS survey data (online data code: lfs\_ergan).

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node\\_code=lfsa\\_ergan](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=lfsa_ergan)

### Youth unemployment rate by sex

Youth unemployment includes all youth (i.e. people between the ages of 15 and 24, inclusive) who are unemployed. The youth unemployment rate is the percentage of the unemployed in the age group 15 to 24 years old, compared to the total labour force (both employed and unemployed) in that age bracket. Generally, the youth unemployment rate refers to 15-24 year olds, but is also available for ages 25-29, and could be calculated for the 15-29 age bracket. The indicator is one of the most relevant indicators at the EU-28 level for measuring the situation of young people on the labour market. Youth unemployment rates are more than twice as high as for the total EU population. They reached 21.4 % for young women and 22.8 % for men in 2014. Young women and men aged 25-29 have almost the same rate (13.7 % and 13.65 % respectively). The indicator is available from Eurostat LFS Survey data (online data code: lfs\_urgan).

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node\\_code=lfsa\\_urgan](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=lfsa_urgan)

### Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) rate by sex

The indicator measuring young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) provides information on young people aged 15 to 24 who meet the following two conditions:

- They are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the International Labour Organisation definition);
- They have not received any education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey.

The NEET rate is a more complete indicator of gender differences than the unemployment rate because it also takes into account those young people who are inactive but do not participate in education or training. The indicator is also available for the 24-29 and 15-29 age groups. Data is expressed as a percentage of the total population in the same age group.

The indicator is one of the most relevant indicators at the EU-28 level for measuring the situation of young people on the labour market. The EU-28 NEET rate of young women aged 15-29 was 17.1 % in 2014, while the rate for young men in the same age group was 13.5 %. For ages 15-24, figures for women and men are respectively 12.6 % and 12.2 %, while in the age group 24-29 they are 24.9 % and 15.8 % respectively. The indicator is available from Eurostat LFS Survey, included in the Eurostat education and training data (online data code: edat\_lfs\_20).

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node\\_code=edat\\_lfse\\_20](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=edat_lfse_20)

### Early leavers from education and training

Early leavers from education and training refer to those aged 18 to 24, fulfilling the following two conditions:

- The highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short;
- Respondents declare not to have received any education or training in the 4 weeks preceding the survey (numerator).

The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding 'no' answers to the questions highest level of education or training attained and participation in education and training. It is an indicator measuring the proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 who are early leavers from education and training, with at most a lower secondary education. In 2014, female early leavers represented 9.5 % of the total population of the same age group, compared to 12.7 % of males. The indicator is particularly used at the EU level as it is included in the employment performance indicator under the table in the EU policy section of the Eurostat database, as well as in the Education and Training Statistics (online data code: edat\_lfse\_14).

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node\\_code=edat\\_lfse\\_14](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=edat_lfse_14)

When preparing calls for proposals in the framework of funding programmes, or terms of reference in the context of public procurement procedures (notably for contractors to be hired for policy support services), do not forget to formalise gender-related requirements. This will ensure that the projects and services which the European Commission will fund are not gender-blind or gender-biased.



## Act

DEFINE PLAN **ACT** CHECK

In the implementation phase of a policy or programme, ensure that all who are involved are sufficiently aware about the relevant gender objectives and plans. If not, set up briefings and capacity-building initiatives according to staff needs. Think about researchers, proposal evaluators, monitoring and evaluation experts, scientific officers and programme committee members.

### Example of capacity-building initiatives about gender and youth

Anna Lindh Foundation (Barcelona)

Peace bag for EuroMed youth: The PeaceBag toolkit

The Peace Bag Toolkit features working tools, methods, case studies, key concepts and information, as well as practical activities that youth workers can use and adapt according to their own needs. This training guide aims to help youth understand how peace and intercultural dialogue is related to the day-to-day work of young people. It is a practical guide for youth organisations, with the objective of presenting different ways to incorporate peace and intercultural dimension in youth work. Among the contents of the online toolkit, there is a specific tool (part 4) related to gender mainstreaming.

<http://cesie.org/media/Peace-Bag-for-Euromed-Youth-Toolkit.pdf>

During the implementation of your policy or programme, publications, communications and press releases might be issued. Do not forget to give visibility to gender issues and pay attention to the language and visuals as these can convey gender stereotypes and gendered concepts, but they can also contribute to deconstructing stereotypes.

### Example of gendered language in youth

Grzywnowicz, M., 2013

Language (evolution): gendered, gender-less, gender-neutral, gender-free

The article reflects on the importance of gendered language use through stakeholders involved in the European youth field such as trainers, researchers, consultants, counsellors and activists.

[http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667877/COYOTE\\_19\\_Language.pdf/317d5563-5162-4a9a-be0e-dee9c22a41e5](http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667877/COYOTE_19_Language.pdf/317d5563-5162-4a9a-be0e-dee9c22a41e5)

## Check

DEFINE PLAN ACT **CHECK**

*A policy cycle or programme should be checked both during monitoring — and at the end — evaluation, of its implementation.*

Monitoring the ongoing work allows for the follow-up of progress and remedying possibly unforeseen difficulties. This exercise should take into account the indicators delineated in the planning phase and data collection based on those indicators.

At the end of a policy cycle or programme, a gender-sensitive evaluation should take place. Make your evaluation publicly accessible and strategically disseminate the results to promote its learning potential.

### Example of monitoring and evaluation on gender and youth

Webinar: Youth Economic Opportunities

Beyond disaggregated indicators: applying gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation to enhance learning

The importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to enhance learning is by now well established. At the same time, practitioners are increasingly aware of the need to take into account gender issues to improve programme effectiveness. This webinar provides practical examples of how gender-sensitive M&E can be achieved and what difference it makes for youth development programmes. Webinar tools are provided and practical examples of how to conduct M&E, such as a sample list of questions and examples of M&E forms are presented.

<http://www.youtheconomicopportunities.org/event/2149/beyond-disaggregated-indicators-applying-gender-sensitive-monitoring-and-evaluation>

## Practical examples of gender mainstreaming in youth

### Austria

Financial support of youth organisations and clubs, youth initiatives and projects is an essential youth policy in Austria. In light of outcome-oriented budget planning, the relevant outcome objectives were defined as gender equality objectives, which state that a gender balance shall be strived for within the supported organisations and initiatives. Furthermore, career orientation was defined as a priority for support for the years 2012 to 2014. In this regard, youth work in a non-school environment is an essential way to promote the skills of young people, giving them a broader spectrum of career choices. STEM professions — science, technology, engineering, mathematics — can be mentioned in this context.

Gender perspectives are also mainstreamed in practical work with children and youth. The *5th Youth Report (2007)* evaluated the specific measures children's and youth organisations take related to gender mainstreaming. Moreover, a concept was developed to support the organisations in the development, testing and realisation of gender mainstreaming strategies and processes. In the course of ongoing implementation, incentives for the application of gender mainstreaming were created.

[http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/Austria\\_Beijing\\_20\\_Austrian\\_Report\\_May\\_2014.PDF](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/Austria_Beijing_20_Austrian_Report_May_2014.PDF)

### Ireland

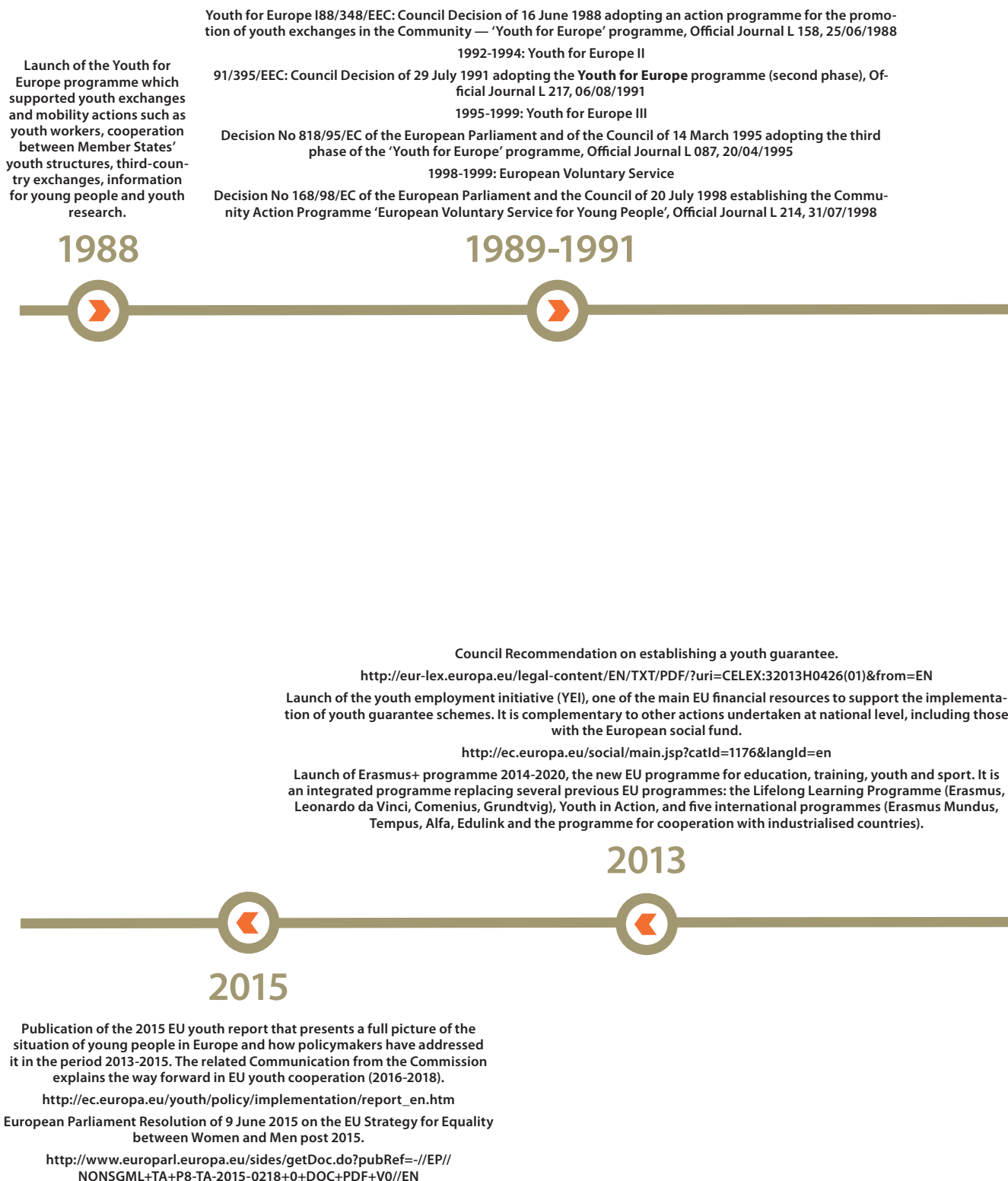
In June 2011, the Irish government established the Department (Ministry) for Children and Youth Affairs, a new government department with responsibility for a range of issues including child welfare and protection, youth justice, the National Children's Strategy, family support and early childhood care and education. The Department focuses equally on the needs of both young women and men. A new national policy framework for children and young people was launched in mid-2014.

[http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/Ireland\\_REPORT\\_OF\\_IRELAND\\_TO\\_UNECE\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/Ireland_REPORT_OF_IRELAND_TO_UNECE_FINAL.pdf)

## 5. Want to know more?

### Timeline

The key milestones of the EU youth policy are presented below.





Launch of the youth programme which offers young people opportunities for mobility and active participation in the construction of the Europe and contributes to the development of youth policy, based on non-formal education. It aims to promote exchanges and discussion meetings between young people, voluntary work, participation and active citizenship, and the innovation and improvement of international training and cooperation skills in the youth field.

Decision No 1031/2000/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 drawing up the 'YOUTH' community action programme, Official Journal L 117, 18/05/2000

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000D1031&from=EN>

2000

European Commission White Paper — a new impetus for European youth.

[http://eryica.org/files/EC\\_White%20Paper%20on%20Youth\\_2001\\_EN.pdf](http://eryica.org/files/EC_White%20Paper%20on%20Youth_2001_EN.pdf)

2001

Resolution of the Council and of the Representative of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, Framework of European cooperation in the youth field.

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002G0713\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002G0713(01)&from=EN)

2002

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on addressing the concerns of young people in Europe — implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship.

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42005X1124\(03\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42005X1124(03)&from=EN)

2005

EU's **Youth in action** programme, with the goals of increasing a sense of European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans, by promoting mobility within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encouraging the employability and inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

Decision No 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing the 'Youth in action' programme for the period 2007 to 2013, Official Journal L 327, 24/11/2006.

2007

An EU Strategy for Youth — investing and empowering: A renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>

2009

2012

Youth employment package, the follow-up to the actions for young people laid out in the wider employment package and includes, among other things, a proposal that EU countries establish a youth guarantee to ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a quality job offer, continued education or training, or an apprenticeship or traineeship, within 4 months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1036&newsId=1731&furtherNews=yes>

2010

Europe 2020 introduces seven flagship initiatives, one of which is Youth on the move, which aims to enhance the performance of education systems and facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market.

[http://europa.eu/youthonthe-move/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move\\_EN.pdf](http://europa.eu/youthonthe-move/docs/communication/youth-on-the-move_EN.pdf)

## 6. Current policy priorities at EU level

There are three main references for current policy priorities at EU level in relation to youth and gender:

- An EU strategy for youth — Investing and empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities <sup>(44)</sup>;
- Europe 2020;
- EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <sup>(45)</sup>.

These instruments provide a framework to tackle increased youth unemployment and raise awareness of the many difficulties young people face.

Specific programmes to help young people develop and contribute to building a sustainable society include:

- Youth on the move
- Erasmus+
- Marie Curie

The Commission also encourages Member States and youth organisations to access European funds to create opportunities for young people. The overall aim of these programmes is to further develop formal education and traineeships and build entrepreneurial and apprenticeship skills. Furthermore, the majority of projects funded by the EU through the European social funds, the European regional development funds and PROGRESS focus on labour-market integration for young people by recognising non-formal learning, supporting youth work, stimulating entrepreneurship, improving information services and developing information and communications technology (ICT) skills. Groups of young people at risk of social exclusion and poverty or with special needs, such as immigrants, early school leavers and those with disabilities, are often targeted.

Youth on the move, the package of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe was launched in 2010 as part of the Europe 2020 strategy

for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <sup>(46)</sup>. It aims to improve young people's education and employability, reduce high youth unemployment and increase the youth employment rate by:

- making education and training more relevant to young people's needs;
- encouraging more youth to take advantage of EU grants to study or train in another country;
- encouraging EU countries to take measures simplifying the transition from education to work.

In 2010, the European Commission published a new political framework for youth in Europe, with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of European cooperation by establishing a strategy for 2010–2018. The objectives of this strategy are to create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market and to promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people <sup>(47)</sup>.

To achieve these objectives, the EU proposed a dual approach, focusing on specific activities targeting young people in areas such as non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility and information, as well as on mainstreaming initiatives aimed at enabling a cross-cultural approach found in other policy frameworks relative to youth. The work is primarily carried out by the Youth in action/Erasmus+ programme, through the development of a framework for political cooperation and by increasing the visibility of youth and their organisations.

<sup>(44)</sup> European Commission, *An EU strategy for youth — investing and empowering* (COM(2009) 200 final), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2009, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0200&from=EN>

<sup>(45)</sup> European Commission, Europe 2020, *The EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* (COM(2010) 2020), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2010 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>).

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<sup>(47)</sup> Council of the European Union, Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–2018), 2009 ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01)&from=EN)).

The EU's strategy for youth 2010-2018 <sup>(48)</sup> has three goals, each with their own field of action:

1. Creating more opportunities for youth in education and employment
  - education
  - employment
  - creativity and entrepreneurship
2. Improving access and full participation of all young people in society
  - health and sport
  - participation
  - social inclusion
3. Fostering mutual solidarity between society and young people
  - volunteering
  - youth and the world

The strategy for youth underlines that youth policy cannot advance without effective coordination with other sectors, and as a consequence, youth policies can contribute to delivering results in other areas.

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