Mapping the progress of Youth, Peace and Security in the EU
Contents

List of acronyms 4

Executive summary 5

1. Introduction 7
   Context 7
   Process and methodology 9
   The journey of Youth, Peace and Security 10

2. Assessing the dedication to Youth, Peace and Security in the EU 12
   Perceptions of youth 12
   Emergence of Youth, Peace and Security 14
   Member State led change 16

3. Implementation of Youth, Peace and Security agenda 18
   Locating the Youth, Peace and Security portfolio in the EU administration 18
   Implementation by the EU 21
   Implementation by Member States 24

4. Engagement with youth stakeholders 26
   EU platforms for changing policy 26
   Outside influences on Youth, Peace and Security 28

5. Conclusions 30

Policy recommendations 31
   Mainstream Youth, Peace and Security 31
   Meaningful youth engagement 31
   Develop relevant programmes 31
   Provide with funding opportunities 32
   Ensure transparency & monitoring 32

Acknowledgements 33

References 34
## List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/PVE</td>
<td>Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSDN</td>
<td>Civil Society Dialogue Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG DEVCO</td>
<td>Directorate-General for International Development and Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG EAC</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Education and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEAS</td>
<td>European External Action Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPLO</td>
<td>European Peacebuilding Liaison Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-YAT</td>
<td>European Youth Advocacy Team of UNOY Peacebuilders</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYCS</td>
<td>Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYPB</td>
<td>European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBA</td>
<td>Folke Bernadotte Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPI</td>
<td>Foreign Policy Instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR/VP</td>
<td>High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IcSP</td>
<td>Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sida</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAOC</td>
<td>United Nations Alliance of Civilizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOY</td>
<td>United Network of Young Peacebuilders</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSCR 2250</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSCR 2419</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution 2419</td>
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<td>YPS</td>
<td>Youth, Peace and Security</td>
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Executive summary

This study maps and assesses the support of the European Union (EU) to youth participation in peacebuilding. It answers the question posed by both the United Nations (UN) Security Council, in relation to UNSCR 2250, and the UN Secretary General, through The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. What is the current support to youth-focused peacebuilding work and where are the gaps to supporting youth participation in peacebuilding?

Civil society platforms such as the European Youth Advocacy Team of UNOY Peacebuilders (E-YAT) and the European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB) provide specialist insights to shape the findings. Their expertise combined with a document analysis of political commitments, policy developments and interviews with key stakeholders within and outside of EU institutions create this baseline analysis.

EU institutions have recognised the importance of Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). This is evident through their changes to programming, introduction of relevant events and commitments to develop the support for YPS. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) Ms Mogherini, has pushed for the implementation of UNSCR 2250, announcing for the first time the EU’s firm backing UNSCR 2250, in the inaugural dialogue event of the Young Med Voices Plus initiative in 2017.

The EU has committed to:

- recognise the positive role of young people in the construction of more peaceful and secure societies;
- to support youth and youth organisations in their capacity of peacebuilders;
- to make a prominent space for young people in policy making and programming.

Member States have equally committed to encourage and drive the EU to further support the implementation of UNSCR 2250 and to significantly translate these commitments into tangible actions in their own national agendas.

1. Simpson, G. The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, 2018
3. In global forums, such as the Open debate on Youth, Peace and Security at the UN Security Council in 2018 or the First International Symposium on Youth inclusion in Peace Processes and Peacebuilding, 2019
The EU has begun to act, as well as commit to change. One example of this is through the adoption of the Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society⁴ and the organisation of the EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding⁵.

These are not isolated examples. In the three years following the adoption of UNSCR 2250 the number of events and programmes dedicated to tackling YPS topics have multiplied, particularly related to countering and preventing violent extremism (C/PVE). The dominance of this thematic thread can be problematic however, due to it reinforcing the perception of young people only as victims or perpetrators. This leaves little space for viewing young people as contributing to peace, or leading the charge for change.

Most of these programmes have been developed in collaboration with organisations working with and for youth. Programmes by youth, i.e. in which youth are at the core of the design, implementation and evaluation, are more limited. Funding has also been directed towards increasing the support to youth as agents of change across policy areas. The EU’s Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) supports around 60 programmes that include youth in peacebuilding, crisis management and violent conflict situations.⁶

The EU is also trying to mainstream YPS through various engagement platforms for young people aimed at including them in policy making processes and dialogues. The AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub should inspire and motivate the proliferation of similar initiatives in various geographical areas and contexts.

Despite this there is not yet substantial funding dedicated solely to YPS or the resulting programming to enable a systemic change of perception about youth and its role in peace and political processes. This would require a coordinated approach to implementing relevant programming. Furthermore, young people do not yet play a meaningful role in policy making.

The engagement mechanisms in place do not enable substantial participation of all youth. In particular, young people that face multiple forms of marginalisation are still excluded from these processes and the young people included in them are not always able to significantly contribute to or influence policy change and programming. These people often do not fit the mould for EU institutional perimeters.

Similarly, although funding mechanisms appear to be taking into account the need to support youth working on peace and security, there is no dedicated funding window for this aim and most relevant funding instruments still lack a youth lens. The administrative and financial eligibility criteria of the current opportunities are not always relevant and / or accessible to young people.

This study has recognised the significant progress made by the EU in a short space of time. It has also formulated a set of policy recommendations to guide the EU’s successful implementation of UNSCR 2250 and guarantee the meaningful participation of youth in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes facilitated by the EU.

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⁴ Council Conclusions of 7 June 2018 on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe, 7103/18 JUN 28 EDUC 96 CULT 27 RELEX 225
⁵ EEAS, Summary report of the EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: promoting youth in peacebuilding, implementing UNSCR 2250, 2018
⁶ The IcSP Map
1. Introduction

Context

In a time of rising violence and widening community divides some of society’s strongest advocates for peace, young people, find themselves blocked from achieving change. They are ignored or incorrectly perceived only as victims or perpetrators. The reality is very different. Despite limited entry points to policy making and limited funding opportunities young people are weaving together the fabric of our societies to ensure lasting peace. They are the ones reaching out in divided communities. They are the ones open to alternative futures and seismic change. They are the ones maintaining peace. They not only deserve the recognition for this, but the walls blocking them from making significant changes must come down.

In 2015, following years of campaigning, the United Nations Security Council took the first blow to the wall blocking meaningful participation of young people. It adopted resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2250). The resolution is the first document of its kind to recognise the positive role young people play in the field of peace and security by engaging in conflict prevention and transformation, and building peace in their communities. UNSCR 2250 outlines the responsibility of Member States and other actors at regional and international levels to increase their political, financial, technical and logistical support to promote the needs and participation of youth in peace efforts, in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The Secretary General commissioned a progress study on the positive contributions that youth make to international peace and security, collecting the perceptions and needs of young people around the world. The resulting study, The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security strongly recommended that regional bodies and mechanisms support the development of policy frameworks that address youth, peace and security issues. Something previously never undertaken systematically.

Three years later the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2419 (UNSCR 2419), reaffirmed the UN Security Council’s commitment to the comprehensive implementation of UNSCR 2250. It called once more on all relevant regional and sub-regional bodies to consider developing and implementing policies and programmes for youth and to facilitate their constructive engagement.

On the basis of this the EU has committed itself to the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda, particularly positioning itself as a key actor on YPS.

8. Simpson, G. The Missing Peace, 2018
A number of key events have shown the EU’s dedication to the topic, especially the:

- EU youth consultation to contribute to The Missing Peace in 2017\(^\text{10}\),
- adoption of the Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe\(^\text{11}\) in 2018,

### Objectives

Taking into account the context of the YPS development at a global and European level, this study maps the EU’s support to YPS through its external outreach, funding and programming. The aim of this study is to:

- develop a base of knowledge about the European Union’s support to young people building peace and preventing violence;
- identify possible gaps on EU’s implementation of YPS agenda;
- to set a path to continue the support of youth civil society organisations (CSOs) efforts’ towards their inclusion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding;
- focus on the activity of the EU externally to progress peace, security and cooperation;
- examine the ways the EU meaningfully engages with young people working on YPS and the tools it uses to do this.

To this aim, the study has attempted to respond to the following research questions:

- What are the typical ways young people are portrayed in relation to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the EU?
- How is the YPS agenda set within the EU institutions? And how is it implemented and turned into action?
- What are the gaps in the EU support to youth in peace and security?
- How could the EU’s support to youth-led peacebuilding be strengthened?

### Definition(s) of youth

The European Union states that the “period when a person is considered to be ‘young’ differs across Europe according to national context, the socio-economic development of society and time. Common to all countries is that the period of youth – the transition from being a child to being an adult – is marked by important life changes: from being in education to having a full-time job, from living in the parental home to setting up one’s own household, and from being financially dependent to managing one’s own money.” For purpose of understanding and for statistical clarity, young people are defined by the EU as people between 15 and 29 years of age.\(^\text{13}\)

While recognising the importance of early intervention models in peace and security with children, especially to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict, this study focuses on young people aged 15 to 29 in line with EU’s understanding of youth.

It is worth highlighting that youth is diverse and shall not be regarded as a homogeneous block. It is also noteworthy that young people may face multiple forms of marginalisation, including young women, refugees, IDPS, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities, the LGBTQI community, young people living in rural communities, among others.

The terms youth, young people and youth groups are used interchangeably in this document.

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10. Led by the European External Action Service (EEAS)
11. Council Conclusions of 7 June 2018
12. EEAS, Summary report, 2018
In order to answer the above mentioned questions, the study examines the main stakeholders within and outside the EU institutions in this field and their interaction mechanisms. It maps existing policies, programmes and projects in place to support youth in peace processes, conflict prevention and transformation, and peacebuilding. The mapping of the EU support has identified some capacity gaps and formulated key policy recommendations.

Process and methodology

To accurately map the EU support to YPS, the researcher has carried out the data collection process from January to April 2019.

Building from expertise

It is important to highlight that this study builds on the extensive experience and knowledge of civil society organisations at the global and European level and more specifically on the work undertaken by the European Youth Advocacy Team of UNOY Peacebuilders (E-YAT) and the European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB). These two civil society platforms have been operating since 2016 to support the meaningful participation of youth at the European level and have been actively involved in the key events surrounding the implementation of the YPS agenda in the EU, i.e. supporting the European consultation for *The Missing Peace*\(^{14}\) and the EU conference on *Youth, Peace and Security: Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding*\(^{15}\). Due to their expertise and contribution to the implementation of UNSCR 2250, this study has progressed and analysed their key policy recommendations and conclusions. It also utilises member interviews.

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15. EEAS, Summary report, 2018

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**European Youth Advocacy Team of UNOY Peacebuilders (E-YAT)** is a group of young peacebuilders working together to strengthen youth participation in European policy and practice. The group was set up to advocate for the creation of a deeper understanding of the roles young people play in peace and security at the European level.

**The European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB)** is a coalition of international peacebuilding and development organisations and independent experts. The founding members are: Save the Children, Search for Common Ground, United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), World Vision and Peace Matters. EYPB works towards achieving the meaningful participation of young people at EU level, and ensuring that their needs, capabilities and challenges are being taken into account in the EU’s security and development policies.
Data collection

Building on the expertise of the E-YAT and EYPB, the first phase of the data collection has been a review of:

- the EU programmes and policies,
- the political statements made by High-level European representatives,
- policy documents and conclusions by key stakeholders and civil society organisations on the subject.

The aim has been to identify cross-cutting issues and have a clear understanding of the degree of inclusion of youth in peace and security issues, in particular in the foreign actions of the European Union.

In the second phase of the data collection, the researcher has conducted a total of 17 interviews with stakeholders within and outside of EU institutions. The selection of consulted stakeholders has been done on the basis of their participation and contribution to main milestones and events in regard to YPS at EU level and using a snowball sampling. The table below summarises the interviewees organisation to reflect expertise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organisations</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU officials (including in DG DEVCO, DG EAC, IcSP, EEAS)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of civil society organisations working for YPS (including EYPB, E-YAT, Search for Common Ground, World Vision, European Youth Forum, EPLO, Interpeace)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Member State representatives</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the interviews, the researcher has carried out observational research in EU events related to YPS. The observation in such events facilitated the understanding and complemented the analysis of the data collected in the two phases.

**Limitations and ethical considerations**

It is important to mention that the findings of the interviews do not aim to be representative of all of the voices of youth or/stakeholders in the field. Instead they map the emerging YPS agenda at EU level and facilitate the identification of key stakeholders and areas of interest. It is equally important to highlight that a number of the interviews initially planned could not take place due to difficulties of access and limitation in the timeline of the potential interviewees.

In order to ensure the validity and accountability of the present study and the subsequent policy recommendations, members of the E-YAT and EYPB and other key stakeholders have been consulted in the drafting process of this study for triangulation.

**The journey of Youth, Peace and Security**

The journey of YPS timeline on the following page highlights some of the key events led by youth civil society, international bodies or/the European Union’s bodies related to YPS. This timeline demonstrates the process of development and implementation of the YPS agenda in the EU, and its relation to other events and policy developments outside of the EU.

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16. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission
18. Adopted in the Africa Europe Youth Summit, 2017
19. EEAS Deputy Secretary-General
20. EEAS, Summary report, 2018
THE JOURNEY OF YPS

DECEMBER 2015
UN Security Council adopts resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security

MARCH 2016
World Vision, Search for Common Ground, UNOY Peacebuilders and Save the Children co-founded the European Partnership for Children & Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB).
UNOY Peacebuilders form European Youth Advocacy Team (E-YAT) to push for implementation of resolution 2250 at the European level.

NOVEMBER 2016
UNOY Peacebuilders’ first E-YAT mission to the EU in Brussels, in collaboration with World Vision.

JANUARY 2017
UNOY Peacebuilders give a briefing on YPS to the EU’s informal Task Force on UNSCR 1325.

SEPTEMBER 2017
The EU holds a youth consultation as a contribution to the Progress Study.

MARCH 2017
HR/VP Federica Mogherini’s expresses the EU’s commitment to YPS17 in launch event of Young Med Voices Plus Initiative.

OCTOBER 2017
Adoption of EU-AU Youth Agenda and Abidjan Youth Declaration18

JANUARY 2018
EEAS & UNOY Peacebuilders brief the EU’s Youth Working Party on the importance of adopting Council Conclusions on YPS.

MAY 2018
Adoption of EU Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe.
EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding20 is hosted in the European Parliament, organised by the EEAS.

APRIL 2018
Mr Christian Leffler19 welcomes the development of a progress study at UN SC Open Debate on YPS, as well as the envisaged adoption of a new UN Security Council Resolution on YPS.

JUNE 2018
Adoption of UNSCR 2419, highlighting the role of regional bodies in the implementation of YPS agenda.

SEPTEMBER 2018
Release of The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security21

NOVEMBER 2018
Adoption of the new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and EU Youth Goals.

JANUARY 2019
HR/VP Federica Mogherini reiterates EU support to Youth in Mediation during AU-EU Ministerial breakfast.
EU-AU Joint Communiqué, the representative of the EU and the AU underline their commitment to the implementation of UNSCR 2250 at regional level.

MARCH 2019
First International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes in Helsinki.

APRIL 2019
Publication of call for proposals by the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub.

See previous page for footnote references.
2. Assessing the dedication to Youth, Peace and Security in the EU

This section aims to set the scene of the implementation of YPS by firstly examining the perceptions and discourses that have emerged at EU level in relation to youth and YPS. Secondly, this section outlines some of the commitments and engagements made by EU officials to the implementation of the YPS agenda. Thirdly it outlines some of the key commitments taken by Member States.

Perceptions of youth

In order to examine the current situation it is pertinent to first understand the position, perceptions and policy documents surrounding youth at this level. To this aim, it is crucial to analyse the recent developments in the area of youth more widely beyond the topic of YPS. In particular the new 2019-2027 Youth Strategy⁴² and Youth Goals.

EU Youth Strategy and Goals 2019-2027

Adopted in 2018, the Youth Strategy and Youth Goals provide new ideas and perceptions about youth. They attempt to move away from the traditional association of youth policy with education, employment or voluntarism. They stress the need to mainstream the support for young people across areas and acknowledge the importance to include youth in all fields. This is done under a dual approach to youth, which aims to “tackle youth-relevant issues on the one hand by mainstreaming initiatives across policy areas and on the other hand by specific initiatives in the youth sector”⁴³. In this sense, the strategy clearly sets a change on the perception of youth, acknowledging its diversity and their active place in society. The strategy invites Member States and the European Commission to meaningfully engage youth in all stages of the policy-making (development, implementation and evaluation).

The policy framework is not always reflected in programming or the actions and understanding of policy officers. In the interviews carried out in this study, several EU officials portrayed different perceptions about youth. They stressed for instance, the need to educate, support, and work for youth, omitting the crucial role they already play in society and at EU level. Furthermore, youth is defined in the EU policy framework and by EU officials during the interviews as “people in transition” in need of support to become autonomous. This definition, is not per se a harmful perception of youth, however, it implies a limited capacity to fully participate as active members in society.

It is equally important to highlight the absence of peace and security in both the Youth Strategy and Youth Goals, which clearly represents a major gap in the recognition and support of young people working in this field.

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⁴³ Guiding principle “E” of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
New European Consensus on Development

“Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future,” reflects the evolving EU perceptions of youth. This document aims to align EU development policy with Agenda 2030. Youth is located at the centre, emphasising their role as agents of change and development, and as essential contributors to the Agenda 2030. The EU and its Member States commit under the New Consensus on Development to focus on concrete actions to meet the needs of young people, in particular of girls and women, by increasing employment opportunities, quality education and participation in the local community.

However, the Consensus has a narrow definition of youth needs. It limits them to participation within local communities and issues in education or employment. This reinforces stereotypical assumptions that improvements to education and employment are the solution to young people’s involvement in violent extremism and other forms of violence, despite the lack of supporting evidence.

Summary

Introducing opportunities for young people to influence EU policy making has started to gain momentum. This can be seen through the outlined new policy documents. It is further evidenced by the climate inside of the EU institutions. For example, the prioritisation of the youth agenda and the Solidarity Corps by President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. Indeed, in a number of interviews, youth has been defined as a “hot topic”, a “rising point of interest” or a cross-cutting issue. Some people have also referred to it as the new social group to be included in programming and policies and often compared to the gender and women’s agenda. This last perception remains problematic, as youth (and gender) should not be uniquely perceived as a social group to be included in the manner of a tick-box for inclusiveness. Instead, their role should be acknowledged as crucial for a sustainable impact.

Furthermore these policy frameworks fail to explicitly acknowledge the role of youth in peace and security. Indeed, no recommendations, objectives or goals are put forward for the support of youth in the maintenance of peaceful and secure societies. This omission, allows us to question the real perception of YPS agenda at EU level.

Emergence of Youth, Peace and Security

Recently, the YPS agenda has gained traction within EU High-level leadership and in EU policy making. The EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding and the Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society adopted in 2018, are key milestones in the recognition of the role of youth in peace and security. Since then EU events and programmes relating to YPS have significantly expanded and reached different areas of policy making.

EU representatives have also increased their commitments in this regard. For instance High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) Ms Mogherini, has pushed for the implementation of UNSCR 2250, announcing for the first time the EU’s firm backing UNSCR 2250, in the inaugural dialogue event of the Young Med Voices Plus initiative in 2017. In this event Mogherini also committed through this initiative to “open all channels for youth engagement” in this realm.

In 2018 Mogherini committed to:

- “continue to create open spaces for young people to come together, build long-term relationships and directly engage the EU;”
- expand this community with youth from Asia and Latin-America;
- work on translating some of the proposals put forward by young people into projects by the EU, or by partners’ governments or local authorities;
- and promote funding for youth work at all levels and pilot a youth consultation on thematic and country-specific EU policies”.

Mogherini also underlined the important role of youth participation in mediation and conflict prevention in Africa at a ministerial breakfast in 2019, focusing on foreign affairs and the partnership. In the same ministerial meeting, the EU and the AU further committed to the implementation of UNSCR 2250; “both sides confirmed their mutual commitment to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, as well as compliance with International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law throughout this cooperation”.

26. EEAS, Summary report, 2018
27. Council Conclusions of 7 June 2018
28. Anna Lindh Foundation, Press release on the launch event Young Med Voices, 201727
30. during the closing session of the EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: promoting youth in peacebuilding
31. The Young Med Voices Initiative originally focused on young people from North Africa and the Middle East. In 2016, it also included young people from Europe and in 2018 the ambition was to expand to Asia and Latin-America.
32. EU-AU ministers of foreign affairs Joint Communiqué, 2019
Other EU policy representatives have also made commitments related to the implementation of YPS. In 2018, Mr Christian Leffler from EU External Action Service (EEAS) applauded; “this open debate and the envisaged adoption of a new UN Security Council Resolution on youth, peace and security” during the UN Security Council Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security33. In the same event, Mr Leffler also committed “to prioritize and invest in youth-based and youth-led peacebuilding”.

More recently, the EEAS also reaffirmed its commitment to YPS during the First International Symposium on Youth participation in Peace Processes and Peacebuilding, in Helsinki, 2019. The EEAS committed to enhance negotiation skills of actors of all ages in mediation, and to develop a framework for mediators to support youth inclusion in these processes.

There are no formal EU guidelines or frameworks to support youth in peace processes and/or conflict settings. This includes in delegations and in the headquarters. In addition, no task force or working groups have yet been set up in the EEAS or DG DEVCO.

In small scale events, such as the One Young World – European Commission “Peace Ambassadors” presentation in 2019, other EU officials have stressed the importance of youth inclusion in Peace and Security issues. In this case, Ms Henriette Geiger34, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation of the European Commission (DG DEVCO), underlined the importance to include young people in conflict prevention and transformation, particularly in relation to countering and preventing violent extremism.

Summary

References and commitments like the above are still very much a rarity and only happen on an ad hoc basis. They are often the result of individual priorities as opposed to a real systemic change and inclusion in the Peace and Security field. Despite momentum no concrete and detailed commitments have been put forward to lead to a successful implementation, and this remains problematic.

There are no formal EU guidelines or frameworks to support youth in peace processes and/or conflict settings. This includes in delegations and in the headquarters. In addition, no task force or working groups have yet been set up in the EEAS or DG DEVCO, in which YPS expert organisations are allocated a permanent seat, to guide the implementation of YPS agenda.

Systematic mainstreaming of the YPS agenda at EU level is only possible with these key actions. They would ensure the meaningful participation of youth in EU facilitated peace processes, as well as create a formal and dedicated space to support fruitful participation of young people and youth organisations in policy making and programming. Furthermore, a more systemic participation of young people in policy making would help to reverse the persisting dichotomous perception of youth in Peace and Security as “victims” or “perpetrators”, reinforced by some policy officers at EU level.

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33. UN Security Council 8241st Meeting S/PV.8241
34. Head of the Directorate B “People and Peace”
Member State led change

Taking into account the role of EU Member States helps us to understand the emergence and development of the YPS agenda at EU level within and outside the institutions.

Member States as drivers in the European Union

Members states have played a prominent role in the development of YPS at EU level, particularly in the Council of the European Union. It is the upper house of the EU legislature, which negotiates and adopts new EU legislation. The presidency of the Council of the European Union rotates every 6 months among Member States. During a number of interviews, EU officials and civil society stakeholders highlighted the important role played by the presidency and their priorities in driving policymaking in the field of YPS.

Council Conclusions

The Bulgarian presidency (January - June 2018) strongly supported the implementation of the YPS agenda, driving the adoption of Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe (Council Conclusions) in May 2018. These conclusions are the result of the national priorities set by the Bulgarian Government and work already undertaken nationally. The Bulgarian presidency centralised the importance of youth, security and stability in the EU priorities.

The fact that these were adopted by the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council (EYCS), problematically landlocks youth policy. However, the EEAS has also strongly supported the adoption of these Council Conclusions. The mention of the EEAS in the Council Conclusions underlines this support and stresses the importance to bring the youth agenda to other sectors of the European Union, especially to its foreign activities.

The Council Conclusions call for:

- Cross-sectoral cooperation based on innovative methods of communication, sharing of good practices and effective dialogue, through increased coherence, coordination and collaboration between EU institutions;
- building on the evidence-based approach, to strive for cohesive and harmonious societies;
- active and meaningful youth participation in building peaceful and inclusive societies;
- intercultural dialogue between youth in and beyond Europe;
- building resilience and critical thinking through non-formal and informal learning.

Follow-up on the Council Conclusions

Momentum stalled during the next two presidencies. The Austrian and Romanian presidencies have not provided concrete continuation to the Council Conclusions. This is despite the fact that both presidencies claimed to strongly prioritise youth related issues and security was equally highly rated in their agendas. Instead they responded to their national priorities during their mandate.

For that reason, great hopes are put on the programme of the next presidency of Finland, a champion country in the support of YPS. This new presidency starts in July 2019.

EU institutions following the Council Conclusions have created more opportunities for young people to actively participate in peace and security policy making. However, the degree of the equal participation of young people still remains an area for improvement.

35. Council Conclusions of 7 June 2018
The change in perceptions and narratives surrounding young people is slowly making headway too. Sharing more examples of positive work and participation of youth, in particular using the YouthWiki platform for the dissemination of good practices by Member States, could further reinforce this shift.

The YPS agenda will only ensure its sustainability and successful implementation if it can secure ongoing space within the permanent bodies of the EU. That will help to move away from its dependence on the priorities of the regularly changing presidencies.

Member State commitments

Member States are also drivers of the agenda via their commitments made beyond the EU. If fulfilled, these commitments can lay the groundwork for widespread and sustainable development of YPS. Member States will be needed to ensure this at EU level.

In 2017 several Member States committed to progress the YPS agenda:

- **Belgium** committed, to support the development of tools to bolster the resilience of youth.
- **Finland**, in addition to their drive for the adoption of the UNSCR 2250, has proposed to replicate their intention to include young people in formal mediation processes.
- **Sweden** agreed to ensure the implementation of the YPS agenda in all Security Council and high-level documents.

In 2018:

- **Croatia** committed to reduce youth stereotypes, and to promote the positive role of young people by developing adequate policies and legislative framework to empower youth and promote peace.
- **Italy** expressed its alignment with the need to support local NGO youth networks and to strengthen the role of youth globally.
- **Poland** recognised the role of young people in the 1980s solidarity movement and urged other states to support employment and education of youth.
- **Sweden** also committed to help reduce problematic youth stereotypes by disseminating and supporting the work carried out by young people in peacebuilding and to continue investing in youth, leaving no youth behind; “we must all engage and invest in youth. That means enhancing the quality of dialogue with youth. Increased financing for youth, peace and security is needed, including through more aid in fragile settings, in conflict and post-conflict situations, and for youth participation and empowerment”.
- **The Netherlands** strive for the structural inclusion of youth in the UN Security Council and other high-level decision making platforms.

**Summary**

EU commitments are limited to references in policy, events and processes. Furthermore, the increased interest in the agenda, seems to result from the personal commitment and expertise of individuals within the institutions, instead of a systemic appropriation of the agenda. This poses a serious threat to the sustainability of these commitments and their potential application.

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37. During the ministerial meeting reaffirming the commitment to the YPS agenda in the UN headquarters
38. During the UN Security Council Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security S/PV.8241
3. Implementation of Youth, Peace and Security agenda

This section analyses the degree of implementation of the YPS agenda and the translation of the political commitments of EU officials into programmes and action. To this aim, it firstly provides a map of the different EU bodies and their programmes to understand the location of YPS in the EU. It then identifies how commitments become a reality in EU institutional bodies. This is done in two ways. Firstly by looking at the youth-focused and accessible programmes related to peace and security. Secondly it explores funding dedicated to crisis affected, conflict and post-conflict settings and determines the degree of accessibility of these programmes for young people. The latter part of this section assesses the implementation and actions carried out by EU Member States in the field of YPS.

Locating the Youth, Peace and Security portfolio in the EU administration

In order to further understand the development of YPS in the EU, it is important to locate within the institutions the specific departments which are covering the YPS portfolio. This mapping allows us to identify the main actors and the relevant areas. It also enables us to rate the degree of support that these programmes, policies and activities provide to the progress of YPS in the EU. That is, to measure:

- the capacity these programmes and activities have to support young people working in peace and security;
- the capacity of policy frameworks providing space for new programming in this direction;
- and the capacity of platforms to generate space for young people’s voices in policy making and programming.

The following table outlines some of the key activities of each.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional bodies</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Nature and scope of the activity</th>
<th>Useful for the progress of YPS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The European Commission</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)</td>
<td>EU Youth Strategy &amp; Goals</td>
<td>Policy documents setting the Youth strategy and priorities</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU Dialogue</td>
<td>Engagement platform for young people on youth related policies</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erasmus+</td>
<td>Programme that supports young people, through diverse activities such as Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange.</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creative Europe</td>
<td>Programme that supports audio-visual, cultural and creative sector, accessible to young people.</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Europe for Citizens</td>
<td>Programme which aims is to contribute to citizens’ understanding of the EU, its history and diversity and to encourage the democratic participation of citizens at EU level</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)</strong></td>
<td>New Development Consensus</td>
<td>Policy framework for development cooperation, which aligns the Union’s development policy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development Cooperation Instrument</td>
<td>Funding instrument with the prime objective to reduce poverty, however tackles variety of areas, including security and stability. EU-AU cooperation Hub folds into this funding mechanism (details on Hub below).</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)</td>
<td>Funding instrument to support stabilisation initiatives and peacebuilding activities in partner countries. It is co-managed between the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and DG DEVCO</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership Instrument</td>
<td>Funding instrument to advance and promote EU interests and partnerships.</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II</td>
<td>Funding instrument by which the EU supports reforms in the ‘enlargement countries’ with financial and technical help.</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Development Fund (EDF)</td>
<td>The EU’s main instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries as well as overseas countries and territories (OCTs)</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39. Here + represents low capacity to support YPS and ++++ high capacity.
**European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)**

**Funding mechanism** to improve relations with neighbouring countries. For example, CSOs in Israel and Palestine are funded through the EU Peacebuilding Initiative, and facilitated by the EU delegation in Israel. This initiative especially targets CSOs and has supported a number of youth organisations in activities for conflict transformation.

### The European External Action Service (EEAS) is the diplomatic service and foreign and defence ministry of the European Union (EU)

| EU conference on Youth, Peace and Security: Promoting Youth in Peacebuilding | First EU conference on YPS. | ++++
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---
| Regional consultation for the *The Missing Peace.* | Initiative carried out by the EEAS | ++++

### The European Parliament

| Young Political Leaders Programme | Platform for youth engagement at the European Parliament | ++

### The Council of the European Union

| Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS) | Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe (supported by the EEAS) | +++

In addition to the above outlined activities different EU institutions and DGs including DG DEVCO, the EEAS, the FPI and the IcSP, each appointed a *youth focal point*. They aim to reinforce and communicate the activities involving youth in the different areas and monitor the development of the various programmes. In areas focusing on peace and security (such as DG DEVCO’s directorate for people and peace, ICSP and FPI) the focal point helps their institution to mainstream the programmes that support the implementation of the YPS agenda.

For instance, the DG DEVCO *youth focal point* is mapping all youth actions managed and facilitated by this DG. This will hopefully result in a clearer understanding of the degree of implementation of YPS in DG DEVCO’s programming and activities, and to identify possible capacity gaps. The results and progress of this mapping exercise are therefore promising and awaited. At the time of publishing they have not been released, raising concerns about the transparency and efficacy of the *youth focal point*. The initiative is nevertheless, applauded as it could bring a youth lens to all policy areas, if adequately communicated to the outside world and monitored regularly.
Implementation by the EU

Programmes supporting young people in peace and security

The EU is the world’s largest donor. It provides a plethora of funding opportunities and programmes for young people across various thematic areas. However, young people who have benefited from any source of EU funding often claim that this was made possible through the support of referees already familiar with the EU funding mechanisms. The following section, therefore, looks at these established mechanisms to understand how they can best support young people working in the field of peace and security.

Erasmus+ Programme

The programme gives young people and youth organisations several funding opportunities to support and reinforce their capacity as actors of change in EU Member States and some neighbouring countries. It provides them with the skills needed to help to prevent conflict and construct more peaceful societies. The programme does not specifically relate to youth working in conflict settings or peacebuilding.

Erasmus+ offers flexible funding opportunities specifically developed to reach and support a wide range of young people

In particular Erasmus+ supports youth through four areas:

- the mobility project for youth workers,
- the transnational youth initiatives,
- the capacity building projects in the field of youth,
- the youth dialogues projects.

These funding opportunities especially developed to support young people are flexible and enable all types of youth organisations to apply, including informal groups of youth. The eligibility criteria are significantly aware of youth needs and characteristics. As a result it is designed to enable a wide range of young people to benefit from them and to reach all youth groups.

One example, EVE (Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange), engages young people aged 18-30 residing in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region. The programme offers a safe online community for young people to participate in facilitated discussions by youth for youth, to promote intercultural dialogue, employability, and citizenship, strengthening the youth dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy. This programme acknowledges the importance of young people in society and the positive role they are able to play in the construction of secure and peaceful societies.

Programmes countering and preventing violent extremism

A number of YPS initiatives focus on countering and preventing violent extremism (C/PVE).

Extremely Together

The programme led by the Kofi Annan Foundation, Amersi Foundation, One Young World and the European Commission works with 10 young leaders, all active in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities and beyond. Together they have produced a guide by young people for young people on how to counter violent extremism. This initiative built on the expertise of young people, and support their role in C/PVE.

One Young World Peace Ambassadors

Another example highlighting the positive role of young people in C/PVE and constructing peaceful societies, is the “Peace Ambassadors” network, created in collaboration with One Young World and the European Commission.

40. It is managed by a consortium composed of Search for Common Ground, Anna Lindh Foundation, UNIMED, Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Soliya, UNICollaboration, Kiron Open Higher Education, and Migration Matters.
41. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia
42. Specifically, DG DEVCO and CT MORSE. CT-MORSE is an EU project providing policy monitoring and support for the IcSP focusing on countering terrorism and violent extremism in third countries managed by the Institute for Security Studies.
The 2018 conference saw Peace Ambassadors from One Young World with specific expertise on C/PVE invited to discuss the theme with EU policy officials, representatives from civil society and Member States. Although this initiative supports the inclusion of youth in policy making, no direct action points were created resulting in no future potential of youth engagement in C/PVE programmes through this avenue.

These initiatives fall into the trap of extracting the expertise of young people, instead of meaningfully engaging them in policies and programmes. Furthermore, over-emphasising youth participation to this thematic area, where there is a problematic tendency to frame youth first and foremost as passive actors being ‘pushed and pulled’ towards radicalisation, is problematic. Efforts and resources should be allocated to the support of youth in all conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes, avoiding an over-emphasised relation made between youth and C/PVE.

Programmes in conflict affected areas, crisis and post-conflict settings

The above-mentioned programmes although relevant and accessible to young people, do not support young people working in crisis, conflict and post-conflict processes, for instance supporting their participation in formal peace processes. The EU provides other dedicated funding opportunities to support stability and peacebuilding efforts and this section determines the degree of inclusion of young people in these mechanisms.

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)

One of the main financing mechanisms for Peace and Security is the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), which supports stabilisation initiatives and peacebuilding actions in conflict zones, in post-conflict environments and in emerging crisis settings. These activities focus on a wide range of areas, such as mediation, dialogue and confidence building, security sector reform, counter terrorism, preventing violent extremism as well as strengthening the capacities of civilian stabilisation mission. Some of these programmes fold under the management of the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) while others are managed by DG DEVCO. The FPI collaborates closely with the EEAS and the EU delegations for the elaboration of programmes. The IcSP projects are implemented through negotiated procedures, direct awards, administrative arrangements or joint/contribution agreements with international organisations. Calls for proposals and calls for tenders are used only in rare circumstances. The eligibility criteria varies from call to call.

IcSP is mainstreaming YPS, with around 60 programmes that include youth in peacebuilding, crisis management and violent conflict situations

Similarly to other Commission bodies, IcSP has also appointed a youth focal point who tracks all youth related actions within the Instrument. IcSP is mainstreaming YPS, with around 60 programmes that include youth in peacebuilding, crisis management and violent conflict situations. Although, the nature and focus of the programmes supported by IcSP differs considerably from one programme to another, the trend is clear with a significant increase in the number of programmes related to youth and the changing role of youth in it. Youth is beginning to be perceived as an active driver of peace, a key actor in contributing to secure and peaceful societies. Despite this considerable increase of programming related to young people, the programmatic and administrative requirements of the IcSP compromises the participation of young people and youth organisations.

Development Cooperation Instrument

The Development Cooperation Instrument funds programming in security, including conflict prevention. The instrument also aims to reduce poverty and to contribute to the achievement of other goals. In particular, it fosters sustainable economic, social and environmental development as well as promotes democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights. Although generally the fund does not integrate a youth lens, it has now creating funding streams for youth programmes.

43. The IcSP Map tool helps to monitor the programmes carried out by the IcSP.
Call for Proposals shaped by the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub

The AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub is a platform supporting 42 youth experts which aims to turn ideas into action. The experts were selected from 1700 applications under an open process on the basis of their expertise. The work carried out by these young experts is based on the Abidjan Youth Declaration and the AU-EU Youth Agenda, organised in six thematic clusters, including a peace and security cluster. These experts were invited to shape calls of proposals for projects worth €10 million across these six thematic areas that were released by the EU in April 2019.

This level of youth participation in programming design at EU level is still a rarity. There are no other examples that can boast a similar remit with such significant resources. That must change. This type of programme should not constitute a one-off initiative, instead it should inspire and motivate the proliferation of similar initiatives in various geographical areas and contexts, for instance within the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme.

Meaningful participation of youth in the policy making and programme design does not guarantee the accessibility and relevance to youth. For that reason, it is crucial to examine in detail the eligibility criteria of these calls for proposals.

The call for proposals for the thematic area of peace and security aims to support the stabilisation efforts in Lake Chad Basin. This opportunity originally intended to youth-led efforts and organisations, grants successful applicants with a grant between EUR 1.2 million and EUR 1.4 million, with a co-funding of 10-25% of the total eligible costs. This means that organisations applying for this grant must have the capacity to find 10-25% co-funding to be eligible. The Missing Peace, found that most youth-led organisations work under a budget of EUR 5000 per year. Therefore, the criteria hinders the participation of most of these organisations. In addition, one of the criteria of eligibility is that civil society organisations must be legal entities and must prove they have carried out a minimum of 3 projects to a total value of at least €1 million in the past 5 years. Youth led organisations often operate on an informal basis and therefore will be excluded from this opportunity, originally designed for youth-led organisations to ensure youth inclusion and participation.

The call explicitly requested that either the lead applicant or one of the co-applicants must be a youth organisation, however the eligibility criteria will certainly generate barriers for numerous youth-led organisations to apply and therefore may fail to include a cross section of young people. In addition, applicants are very limited in the scope of their project design with approach and methodologies already prescriptive in the call. Indeed, these calls are largely pre-defined on the expected outcome and methodologies, limiting significantly the contribution and input of applicants in the enactment of the actions designed for each of the thematic areas.

The AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub and resulting call of proposals demonstrates the EU’s, and in particular DG DEVCO’s commitment to sustainably support youth in peace and security issues. However, the eligibility conditions can constitute obstacles to youth-led organisations and therefore, marginalise a large portion of youth in these efforts.

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44. defined in the 5th AU-EU Summit in November 2017 by the youth fellows of the Plug-in Initiative. The thematic clusters are: Business, Culture, Sports and Arts, Education, Environment, Governance and Peace and Security.

45. A call for proposals is a public procedure addressed to clearly identified categories of applicants, to promote actions falling within the framework of a specific EU programme.

46. Simpson, G. The Missing Peace, 2018
Summary

There is a growing number of EU funding mechanisms for young people working on peace and security. This trend must be maintained. However, dedicated funding for peace and security, in conflict and post-conflict settings does not integrate a youth lens and is not always accessible and adapted to youth groups and organisations. EU funding mechanisms, including the most youth friendly programmes, are disjointed from the needs and realities of young people. As a result impact can be limited and implementation can be tricky. When young people are marginalised in a number of ways they are excluded from these opportunities and consequently their capacity to meaningfully participate in peace and security issues, is endangered. The programmatic and administrative flexibility of Erasmus+ could help to formulate other youth focused mechanisms in the IcSP or other peace targeted funds.

Implementation by Member States

The mainstreaming and implementation of YPS at EU level should also lead to the implementation at Member State level. For that reason, this section examines the major steps made by Member States in the implementation of the YPS agenda in their national planning, in relation to the commitments made in various forums.

The table on the following page illustrates key steps taken by different Member States in the implementation of the YPS agenda.

Keeping track of the national policy developments of YPS is not always easy. To aid this the Council Conclusions invited the European Commission to include in YouthWiki a policy area on peace and security. This should help the monitoring of developments in Member States. Indeed, it is crucial to generate a space within the EU to monitor and disseminate the good practices and policy developments at national level related to the YPS agenda. At date of publication, YouthWiki still does not include a policy area on peace and security.

Summary

Although some Member States are at the forefront of the implementation of the YPS agenda, this is not due to a push from the EU or mirroring EU actions. Most champion countries, like Finland, were already prioritising YPS before momentum at EU level. This does however, not underestimate the capacity of the EU to encourage and support Member States in the implementation of the YPS agenda. It also paints a positive picture for the future if the EU momentum can grow or be sustained and gradually fed through to Member States.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member States that have implemented key youth, peace and security actions at a national level</th>
<th>Key milestones</th>
<th>Useful for the progress of YPS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Became the first country to start formulating a National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security in collaboration with civil society and with the support of the OECD. Led the way in evolving the inclusion of youth in formal peace processes, with the support of Ms Jutta Urpilainen who decided in 2017 as Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative on mediation, to especially focus on youth and women in mediation processes, leading the way in the inclusion of youth in formal peace processes. Helped to create the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations’ Youth Solidarity Fund (UNAOC-YSF). In 2019, hosted the First International Symposium on Youth, Peace and Security. Has created a 2250 network, a platform to support YPS advocates’ work nationally and internationally.</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Made reference to UNSCR 2250 in their guidelines on “Preventing crises, resolving conflicts, building Peace” to support international programming.</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Hosted the OSCE Youth conference in Malaga, 2017, resulting in the release of a decalogue on C/PVE by youth.</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) programmes have supported the implementation of YPS agenda. Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) (Swedish governmental agency for peace, security and development) supporting YPS. For instance in the recent development of a UN-wide handbook on YPS supported by FBA and result of the UN-FBA joint learning forum on Youth, Peace and Security or FBA efforts in the policy document on Sweden’s implementation of UNSCR 2250.</td>
<td>++++</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Here + represents low capacity to support YPS and ++++ high capacity.
4. Engagement with youth stakeholders

EU platforms for changing policy

Within the EU institutions there are several mechanisms and spaces to engage with young people, youth organisations and organisations working for and with youth. This section examines some of these spaces and their capacity to make that engagement meaningful and sustainable. These vary in approach. Some have a strong youth led focus but little detail on YPS, whereas others take a strong YPS lens. For clarity the study includes all examples and labels them accordingly.

EU Youth Dialogue

- Youth led
- No youth, peace and security focus

The EU Youth Dialogue is organised in 18 month-long thematic cycles. This initiative engages young people on the design, implementation and evaluation of relevant EU funding programmes. It draws on consolidated evidence of the real needs and situations of young people. Therefore, youth are included based on their expertise and not exclusively on their age.

National working groups coordinate participants through representatives of youth ministries, national youth councils, youth organisations, youth workers, researchers and young people from all backgrounds. The current thematic cycle focuses on Creating opportunities for Youth and will last until mid-2020.

Although the EU Youth Dialogue generates a space for young people’s participation in policy making processes, some fellows have raised concerns about representation, as there are barriers to young people who face multiple forms of marginalisation taking part. Another area of concern is the level of engagement by Member State and EU staff. The rate of participation by government officials across all Member States is significantly low, particularly when compared to other thematic dialogues. This low participation rate endangers the efficacy of the process and reveals the lack of commitment of governments to the youth agenda. Only EU staff charged with the youth portfolio attend, which landlocks youth policy development to this field, instead of promoting a transversal and cross-cutting development of youth policy into all policy areas. It is also of crucial importance to communicate and engage with youth in the follow-up steps to the dialogues, which at the moment lack of transparency and in which youth are not engaged, detracting the value and legitimacy of the process.
European Parliament Young Political Leaders

- Youth-led
- Youth, peace and security focus

The European Parliament Young Political Leaders Programme aims to support the inclusion of youth and promote dialogue with policy makers. This programme started in 2008. Its inaugural event brought young leaders from Palestine, Israel and the EU to the European Parliament. In the years since young leaders are annually invited to discuss geographical and thematic topics. Peace and Security has always played a role. In 2018 and 2019, the implementation of UNSCR 2250 and the mainstreaming of the YPS agenda has been prioritised. Although its relevance seems considerable and the interest demonstrated in the YPS agenda is present, limited information was available to determine the degree of their YPS integration.

EU delegations in third countries

- No coordinated youth-led action
- No coordinated youth, peace and security focus

There are no concrete guidelines or frameworks to include youth in peace and mediation processes in the delegations (and the EU headquarters). EU delegations are under-represented in the events and documents related to YPS.

This is despite the fact that delegations understand the context and identification of needs in third countries where EU programmes are carried out. Therefore, in order to ensure the implementation of the YPS Agenda and UNSCR 2250, it is crucial to include these bodies as key actors for a successful implementation of the YPS Agenda in the EU policies and programmes. For that reason, the EU should develop solid frameworks to sustainably and systematically engage with youth in these processes in the delegations.

Summary

There are numerous spaces for youth engagement within the EU institutions. However, the capacity to support a meaningful participation of youth in EU processes, including policy making and programming, is less evident. These spaces have not integrated YPS participation in a systematic and continuous manner despite sometimes focusing on the YPS agenda and issues on specific cases and within particular programmes. Therefore, it is important to strive for the strengthening of a formal and continuous platform for youth participation in policy making to ensure that any type of EU engagement is youth-sensitive. This should occur not exclusively in the frame of specific programmes.

48. In line with the commitments made by the EEAS representatives during the First International Symposium on Youth inclusion in Peace Processes and Peacebuilding, 2019
Outside influences on Youth, Peace and Security

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a central role in the policy-shaping within the institutions, and do engage on a regular basis with the EU institutions. However, the CSOs interviewed for this study have reported to have encountered some difficulties to meaningfully engage with the EU. The need to secure the inclusive participation of diverse and numerous youth, was repeatedly underlined as a pressing issue to be addressed. The lack of expertise in participatory and inclusive methodologies was equally identified by a number of civil society members as an obstacle for this meaningful participation. The difficulty also lies in the identification of legitimate youth representatives and expert interlocutors, in order to secure the inclusion of diversity of youth voices. The role of large scale, high-resource organisations, such as One Young World and the Kofi Annan Foundation, should also be assessed for their legitimacy and ability to represent youth voices. A stronger relationship between organisations of and for youth is being built and should be further reinforced. For that reason, this section will examine their role and the role of youth organisations in the mainstreaming and adoption of the YPS agenda at EU level.

The European Youth Forum

- Youth-led
- Youth, peace and security focus

The European Youth Forum, is the leading network of youth organisations (mostly national councils) at the European level. It is established and respected within the EU institutions and has acquired expertise in their functioning mechanisms. As a result the European Youth Forum understands the different way to interact with the EU. The European Youth Forum has played a prominent role in key YPS events with the EU and continues to position itself as a central actor in the field. In 2018, the European Youth Forum appointed its first staff member to cover the organisation’s YPS portfolio. In addition, the organisation intends to elaborate a similar study to the present one in the coming year, 2019, in order to keep developing its YPS expertise.

This organisation plays a central role in shaping the discourse and political narrative around YPS in its advocacy capacity with the European Parliament and Council. However, only a limited number of its member organisations have specific expertise on YPS or undertake programming in conflict settings. Therefore, its capacity to represent and raise the voice of all young people is compromised, in particular those focused on YPS. In addition, its membership criteria makes it difficult for grassroots youth organisations or youth groups facing marginalisation to join. The European Youth Forum is actively reviewing and seeking to address this barrier.

Its role in the implementation of YPS programming is and should continue to be central as a youth organisation that has been able to establish itself as a referent point within the EU. However, it is crucial to maximise that expertise by building partnerships with other youth organisations that specifically focus on YPS in order to complement one another’s specialities.

European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB)

- Not youth-led
- Strong youth, peace and security focus

The European Partnership for Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (EYPB) is composed of organisations involved in the field of youth, children participation in peacebuilding (see box on page 9). The platform successfully engages with the EU institutions to progress the YPS agenda.

The continuity and sustainability of the platform appears to be strongly conditioned by the personal commitment of individuals within EYPB’s member organisations. It is also dependent on organisational priorities and availability of resources. Interactions with the EU institutions happen on an ad hoc basis.

49. Save the Children, Search for Common Ground, United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), World Vision and Peace Matters
In order to strengthen its power of representation and inclusion in the policy dialogue and development of programmes, the EYPB could benefit from a formal and permanent space for interaction with the institutions (for instance, similarly to the functioning of EPLO) and secure resources for its development.

**United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders)**

- Youth-led
- Strong youth, peace and security focus

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a global network of more than 80 youth-led peacebuilding CSOs. Many members are grassroots organisations in conflict affected regions, which makes it a unique platform to create connections and support meaningful engagement between young peacebuilders and the EU. Its expertise and solid achievements in YPS makes it a referee in the field and thus, successfully informs the EU in YPS policy making and programming, this relation should therefore be maintained and reinforced.

**European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)**

- Not youth-led
- Youth, peace and security focus

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) is a civil society platform of European NGOs, NGO networks and think tanks which are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. EPLO aims to influence European policymakers to secure sustainable peace between and within states and the non-violent resolution of conflicts. Among its activities, EPLO manages the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) in cooperation with the EU. The CSDN is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policymakers on peace and conflict issues. It is co-financed by the EU (IcSP) and EPLO. Although EPLO’s membership fees hinder the involvement of European grassroots and youth-led organisations, the CSDN generates space for all types of CSOs to engage in discussions relating to peace and security issues, which makes it a potentially solid platform for engagement between youth, EU policy officials and other stakeholders. Despite the fact that EPLO does not have a specific policy objective relating to the YPS agenda, a few discussions on YPS issues have been organised under the CSDN mechanism, generating fruitful engagement between young people, youth organisations, EU officials and other relevant stakeholders.

**Summary**

CSOs are successfully engaging with the EU institutions to influence and support policy making and programming. Some of these CSOs, such as the European Youth Forum and EPLO, are well established and engage regularly with the EU institutions. The mechanisms, set-up by these organisations, should serve other CSOs that have a stronger focus on YPS in order to successfully and sustainably interact with the EU bodies in the progress of the YPS agenda. At the moment, these permanent and solid engagement mechanisms only partially contribute to the progress of YPS in the EU institutions. Therefore, enabling the participation of other grassroot youth organisations and YPS focused organisations in these mechanisms would provide the solid and sustainable engagement needed to progress the YPS agenda.
This study endeavoured to map the development of the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda, the degree of its implementation and translation into concrete actions at EU level. To this aim, the present study has analysed YPS related discourses displayed by EU institutions as well as policy and programme developments. This analysis is based on a desk-review, document analysis, interviews with key stakeholders and observations of events related to YPS.

The findings of the present study reveal that YPS is gaining traction at EU level. However, YPS related commitments still occur on an ad hoc basis and are limited in their scope, instead of real systemic inclusion and mainstreaming of YPS.

The perceptions about youth and its role in peace and security have significantly evolved. This is as a result of recent policy developments and the commitments of Member States both on their national stage and within the institutions. Nevertheless, there is still some hesitation among policy officials to acknowledge the positive role young people play in constructing peaceful and secure societies. The role of a small number of Member States in shaping the discourses and policy development has been considerable, particularly in the Council of the European Union.

These changes in the discourse coupled with policy developments have resulted in a considerable increase in programmes for and with youth related to peace and security and more specifically about preventing and countering violent extremism. Programmes by youth, however, remain marginal at EU level.

The study shows that there is a desire to develop programmes by youth, in which young people would be regarded not solely as beneficiaries, instead involved in the design and implementation. The development and success of this new approach to programming can solely be achieved by securing meaningful engagement and participation of youth with the EU. In this sense, the study has presented several platforms and mechanisms inside and outside of the EU to engage with youth and civil society organisations. However, these platforms currently operate on an ad hoc basis, within the frame of specific projects or are not always able to engage with a diverse representation of youth.

Young people have also flagged their difficulties to meaningfully engage with the EU. This is due to limited communication and transparency of the activities taking place at this level. Similar issues are associated with the EU funding mechanisms for YPS. There is no dedicated YPS funding window or any guarantee that programmes will integrate a youth lens. However, there are rising numbers of opportunities in youth specific mechanisms as well as peace and security specific mechanisms for youth and youth organisations in the field of peace and security.
The following recommendations are based on:

- the scoping study on the EU support to youth, peace and security,
- the identification of capacity gaps,
- recommendations formulated in *The Missing Peace*.

To this aim, the European Union and its bodies should:

**Mainstream Youth, Peace and Security**

1. Adopt actionable Council of the EU guidelines on YPS and a regular reporting mechanism on their implementation.
2. Mandate resources to ensure cross-cutting implementation of the YPS agenda at EU delegation level and in headquarters.
3. Formalise, reinforce and expand the network of youth focal points across DG DEVCO, EEAS, FPI and IcSP to include representatives in all EU bodies and policy areas, including the European Parliament, in order to promote coherence, joint action and accountability and support the mainstreaming of YPS agenda.
4. Develop toolkits and training curricula for EU policy officers, mediators, and other relevant staff in delegations and headquarters to ensure that dedicated capacities and expertise are in place for youth-sensitive interventions and meaningful engagement with young people and youth organisations.
5. Institutionalise a youth lens into context and conflict analyses and country reporting by EU delegations, particularly in conflict affected or post-conflict settings.

**Meaningful youth engagement**

6. Improve the accessibility and impact of existing participation platforms, such as the EU Dialogues to enable diverse groups of young people to channel their concerns and needs to the EU institutions and develop joint solutions. Ensure youth participation in the decision making following these dialogues, including policy making and programming, for example through permanent EU-funded youth advisory boards.
7. Increase the use of participation mechanisms such as the CSDN to engage with youth on YPS-related issues and to feed into its efforts to support the implementation of the YPS agenda.
8. Invest in YPS coalitions and youth-adult collaboration platforms, such as the EYPB and the EU-AU Youth Hub, and establish ongoing consultation, coordination and collaboration with these platforms on the implementation of YPS agenda at EU level.
Develop relevant programmes

9. EU programmes and projects related to youth, peace and security should be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with and by young people themselves.

10. Learn from the good practice on supporting youth civic engagement, mobility and dialogue developed by the Erasmus+ Programme to inform the EU’s investments in youth, peace and security worldwide.

11. Promote sustainable, long-term and collaborative initiatives for and with young people, including joint initiatives that build on existing efforts and interventions at scale. Avoid short-term projects that can only benefit a few.

12. Ensure inclusive representation of young people in all programmes. Actively seek to represent the experiences and needs of broader constituencies of youth. Do this by engaging with them through their roles in youth organisations, informal groups and movements.

13. Make special efforts to ensure the inclusion of youth that face multiple forms of marginalisation, including: young women, refugees, internally displaced people, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities, the LGBTQI community, young people living in rural communities, among others.

14. Employ youth-sensitive and youth-informed conflict analyses to advise programming and funding priorities in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Provide with funding opportunities

15. Generate and open up existing dedicated funding instruments for YPS initiatives that are flexible and accessible to all youth, including youth that face multiple forms of marginalisation.

16. Introduce quotas for the inclusion of at least one youth-led organisation in partnerships implementing YPS programming.

17. Ensure that the administrative and financial eligibility criteria of YPS focused funding is youth-accessible and that small and informal youth groups are not precluded from applying for funding. This could be achieved by also offering smaller grants, or sub-granting through a youth-led network or larger peacebuilding CSOs.

18. Prioritise funding for peacebuilding projects that promote young people’s leadership and agency, and de-prioritise funding that focus on economic empowerment and P/CVE.

Ensure transparency and monitoring

19. Create youth markers measuring and reporting on YPS commitment across EU programming and funding to ensure greater transparency, visibility, and accountability of the EU’s efforts to implement UNSCR 2250 and UNSCR 2419.
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