



Public Online Consultation on the Evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy

Overview of the Results

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Directorate B – Youth, Education and Erasmus+
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Introduction

The online consultation has been conducted within the context of the interim evaluation of the European Union (EU) Youth Strategy, the framework for European cooperation in the youth field for 2010-2018¹, and of the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the European Union which has been integrated into this framework². It complements the report which had been drafted by an external contractor in support of this interim evaluation between February 2015 and March 2016³.

The subsequent sections present the methodology and the findings of the public online consultation on the EU Youth Strategy and the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU. Each survey question is covered individually.

Methodology

The public online consultation was available on EUsurvey between 16 July and 16 October 2016 in 23 EU languages. It was composed of 15 questions, which addressed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value of the EU Youth Strategy and the Council Recommendation. The online consultation included some future-oriented questions. This means that its results will also be used when preparing for the post 2018 youth policy cooperation.

Questions were mostly quantitative in nature, supplemented by three qualitative (sub-) questions. As the contribution to the interim evaluation by the external contractor had already covered stakeholders' views thoroughly, the online public consultation primarily targeted the general public. Nonetheless, all other interested stakeholders were invited to reply as well. No question was made compulsory for the completion of the survey. This decision was made in order to minimize the number of drop-outs half-way through the questionnaire. It leads to a varying number of respondents for each (sub-) question. Despite the wide audience targeted by the online public consultation, it is important to note that the obtained results may not necessarily be representative of the European Union's population. This is mainly due to two factors: Firstly, the results are based on a relatively low number of participants: a total of 269 replies were received, of which 175 individuals and 94 organisations. Secondly, the composition of the sample is based on the self-selection of respondents, carrying the risk that less accessible individuals and organisations are under-represented or not represented at all.

The analysis focuses on general trends amongst the respondents as a whole and, if at all, on differences between individuals and organisations.

¹ Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) OJ C 311, 19.12.2009.

² OJ C 319/8, 13.12.2008.

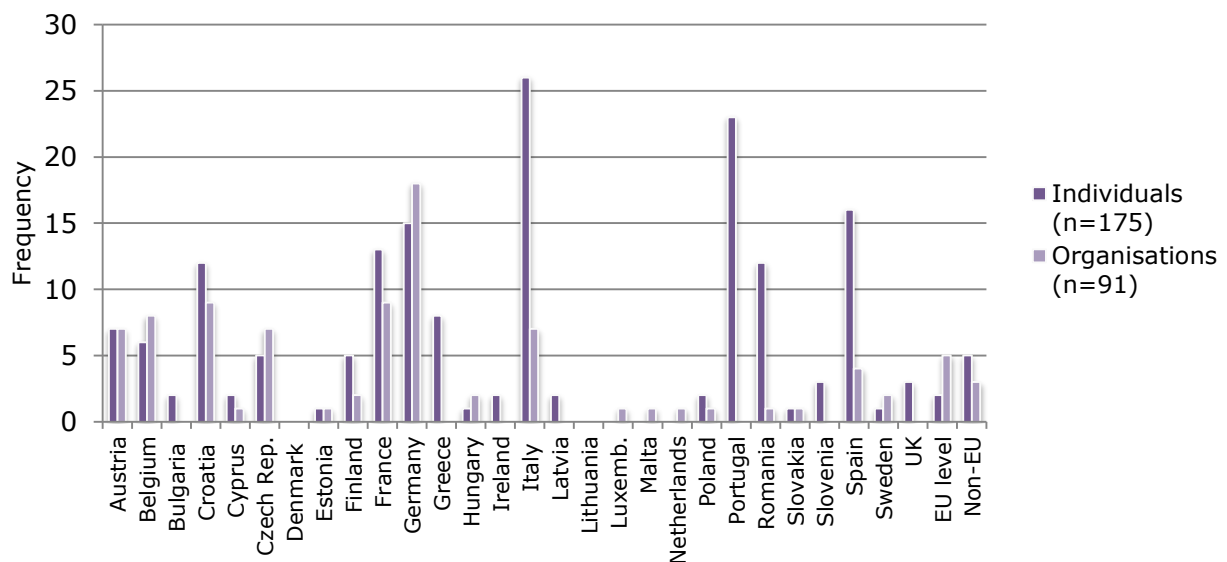
³ Please find the external evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy and on the Council Recommendations on the mobility of young volunteers across the EU [here](#), and the executive summary [here](#).

Results of the Online Consultation

Demographics

The consultation gathered input from a total of 269 respondents: 175 individuals and 94 organisations. With the exception of Denmark and Lithuania, all Member States are represented, although to a varying extent. Individual respondents tend to be rather young: half are below 30 years of age and four fifths are below 44. Amongst the organisation respondents, most are either youth organisations or public authorities. Only approximately one in five organisations is registered in the EU Transparency Register.

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of survey respondents



Participants in the survey were asked for their names, their country of residence (or where their organisation was based), contact information, and whether they were answering as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Those falling within the former group were then asked for their age group and whether they were a member of a youth organisation. Those falling in the latter group were asked to indicate the name and type of their organisation and, if applicable, to enter their transparency register number.

In total, 175 individuals and 91 organisations replied to the online survey, which roughly represents a 2/3 – 1/3 distribution. Additionally, three organisations sent written comments via e-mail. As this input is more descriptive and not directly related to the closed questions of the survey, it is considered for the open questions only (Questions 7, 10 and 15). Amongst the group of **individuals**, almost all EU Member States are covered, although to a varying extent. Only Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands and Denmark are not represented. Most replies came from Italian (26) and Portuguese (23) residents. Most individual respondents are between 15 and 29 years old (46%). Another 33% are between 30 and 44 years of age. While 43% of them are members of a youth organisation, 48% of them are not (and 9% did not answer).

Amongst **organisations**, most replies have been received from German (18 replies), French and Croatian (9 each) organisations. No replies are registered for Bulgaria,

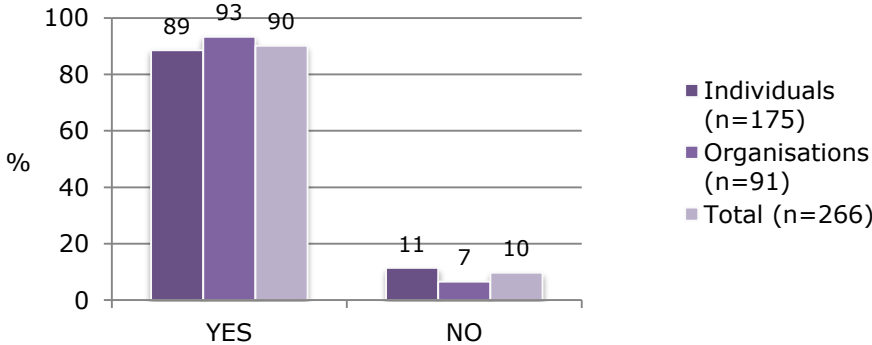
Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Additionally, 5 organisations mentioned that they are acting at the EU level and 3 are based outside the EU. Most organisations are youth organisations (34) or public authorities (9 national and 8 regional or local public authorities). 2 international institutions have participated in the survey and 5 research organisations/universities. 30 organisations do not fall in any of the categories mentioned and 3 have not answered. Finally, approximately one fifth (20) of the organisations that have participated in the survey are registered in the Transparency Register, while four fifths (71) are not.

The EU Youth Strategy

1. Were you aware (before reading the introduction to this consultation) that the European Union is active in youth policy, through the EU Youth Strategy?

The question shows that a great majority of the respondents is aware of the EU Youth Strategy: roughly nine out of ten participants in the survey, with only a small difference between individuals and organisation, are acquainted with EU policy in this area.

Figure 2: Awareness of EU Youth Strategy

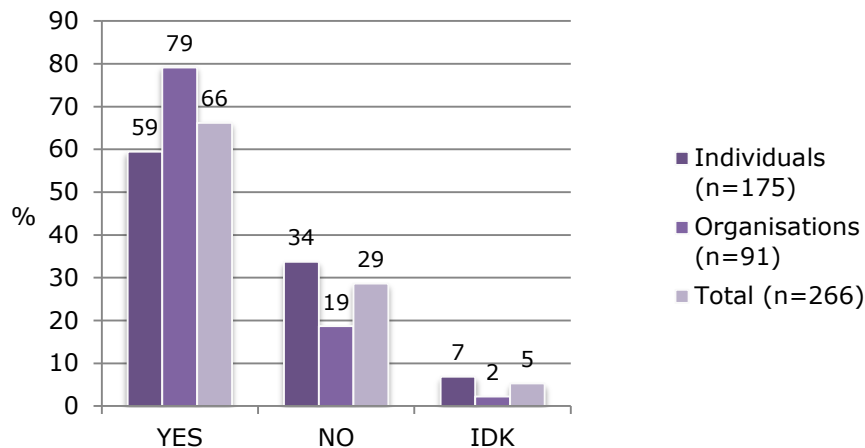


The binary question with two response options (Yes; No) was completed by all participants in the online survey. Amongst organisations, 93% (a total of 85) were already aware of the EU Youth Strategy. Four of the six organisations not aware of the EU Youth Strategy are based in Czech Republic. Amongst individuals 89% (or a total of 155) were aware of the EU Youth Strategy, while only 11% (20) were not. It is not possible to observe a general trend based on the country of residence of those not aware of the EU Youth Strategy as they are mostly from countries which have delivered many replies to the survey. Moreover, it seems that membership in a youth organisation does not make a meaningful difference here. 89% of those who are a member of a youth organisation are aware of the EU Youth Strategy, but also 87% of those who are not a member of a youth organisation. To put it the other way around, amongst the 20 individuals not aware of the EU Youth Strategy, 40% (8) were members of a youth organisation and 55% (11) were not (1 did not reply to this question).

2. Have you taken part in any activities under the EU Youth Strategy since 2010 (e.g. conference, structured dialogue process, a 'mutual learning activity' - learning from peers in other EU countries), or under the EU youth programmes (Youth in Action until 2013, Erasmus+ youth since 2014)?

We can observe that around two thirds of the respondents have already participated in at least one activity under the EU Youth Strategy since 2010. Organisations tend to have participated more often (8 out of 10) than individuals (6 out of 10).

Figure 3: Prior participation in activities under EU Youth Strategy



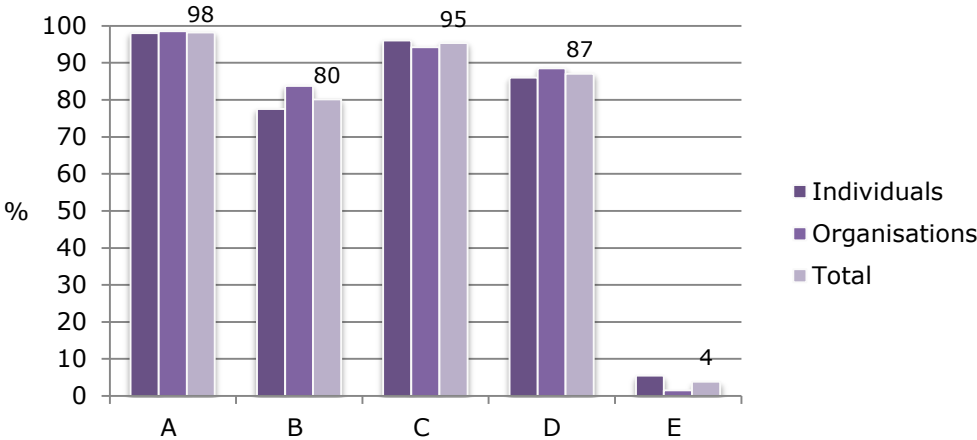
For this question respondents could choose between three options: Yes, No, and I don't know (IDK); all participants in the survey have completed this question. In total, around two thirds of all respondents have taken part in at least one of the activities mentioned under this question, 29% have not and 5% were not sure if they have done so. It is possible to observe a difference between organisations and individuals. While 79% of the organisations that have participated in the online survey have already taken part in one or more activities under the EU Youth Strategy since 2010; 59% of the individuals have. This outcome is understandable if seen in the context of the implementation of this survey. The organisations responding to this survey were stakeholders of EU youth policy; it was to be expected that a great majority of them would have already taken part in activities under the EU Youth Strategy. Amongst those who have participated in activities under the EU Youth Strategy, most organisations are based in Germany (absolute: 17; relative: 24%) and most individuals are Italian residents (absolute: 18; relative: 17%). These two countries are also the ones from which most replies to the survey were provided for organisations and individuals respectively.

What was the concrete impact of this activity for you or your organisation? :

- A. It had a general positive impact on me (or on those involved in the activity)**
- B. It allowed my voice (or the voice of the young people involved in the activity) being heard**
- C. It helped me to learn from others and apply this knowledge in my personal life or my work**
- D. It helped me or my organisation to network with other young people and/or organisations in other countries**
- E. It had no impact at all**

Overall, we can observe that taking part in an activity under the EU Youth Strategy is considered by almost all respondents to have a general positive impact on the respondent him- or herself or on those involved in the activity. The approval rate for all three specifications is very high: 80% agree that it allowed making one's voice heard; 95% believe that it strengthened peer-to-peer learning and 87% note that it was beneficial for networking.

Figure 4: What was the concrete impact on you/your organisation⁴



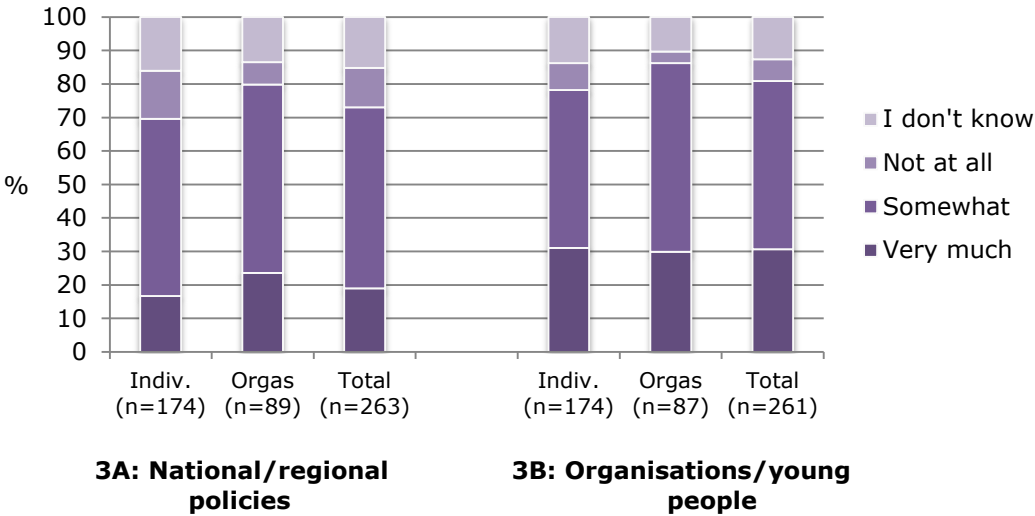
The response rate for this question, being a non-compulsory one, ranged between 58% and 65%, depending on the sub-question. This rather low rate is understandable taking into account that roughly one third of the survey respondents indicate in the first part of Question 2 that they have either not yet participated or do not know whether they have already participated in an activity under the EU Youth Strategy. In order to complete this question, respondents could choose between Yes and No. Amongst those replying to this question, an overwhelming 98% believe that the activity had a general positive impact on them personally or on those involved in the activity and 80% add that it allowed their voice (or the voice of the young people involved in the activity) to be heard. Further, almost all respondents (95%) agreed that the activity helped to learn from others and apply this knowledge in their personal life or at work and 87% pointed out that it helped to network with other young people and/or organisations in other countries. Confirming this trend, 96% disagree with the statement that the activity did not have any impact for the organisation or the individual. Generally speaking, results do not differ much when investigating the results for organisations and individuals separately.

3. How much has the EU Youth Strategy helped:
A. National/regional policies
B. Youth organisations and young people

This question demonstrates that an overwhelming majority, namely at least seven out of ten respondents, believe that the EU Youth Strategy has helped national and regional policies as well as youth organisations and young people in some way.

⁴ Note that the number of respondents varies from sub-question to sub-question. The numbers are as follows: A (101 individuals/69 organisations/170 total), B (98/68/166), C (102/70/172), D (100/70/170), E (90/64/154).

Figure 5: How much has the EU Youth Strategy helped...

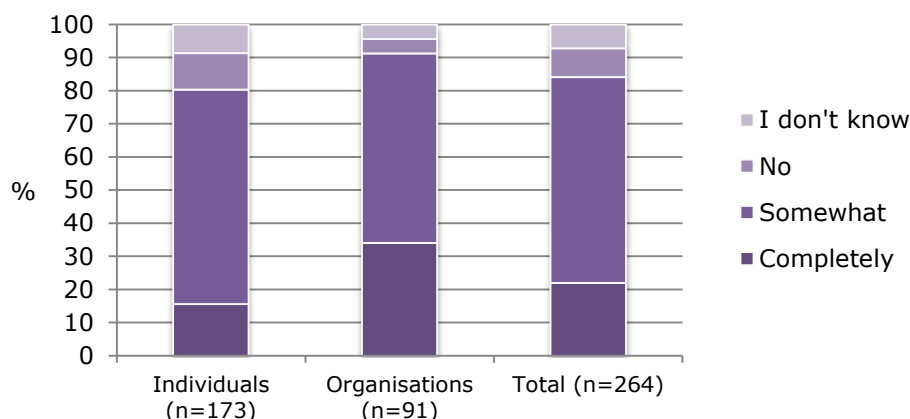


Despite not being compulsory, the response rate for both sub-questions was very high. Only three respondents in the case of sub-question A and five respondents in the case of sub-question B did not complete this question. This question of whether the EU Youth Strategy has helped national and regional policies on the one hand and youth organisations and young people on the other allows for four response options: very much, somewhat, not at all and I don't know. Generally speaking, a high number of respondents is rather optimistic (very much and somewhat) with respect to the impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national and regional policies (73%) and with respect to the impact on youth organisations and young people (81%). A considerable number of people even indicate that the EU Youth Strategy has had a very high impact on policies (19%) or youth organisations and young people (31%). Organisations tend to be slightly more positive than individuals: 80% believe that the EU Youth Strategy has helped national/regional policies "very much" or "somewhat"; 86% say the same with respect to youth organisations and young people. In comparison only 70% of individuals opt for these replies regarding national/regional policies and 78% with respect to youth organisations and young people.

4. Are the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy (as listed in the introduction) in line with national policies?

A great majority deems the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy to be in line with national policies (84%). It is noteworthy however, that only one out of four positive replies finds a complete consonance with national policies; whereas the remaining ones refer to some overlap.

Figure 6: Are the objectives of the Youth Strategy in line with national policy?



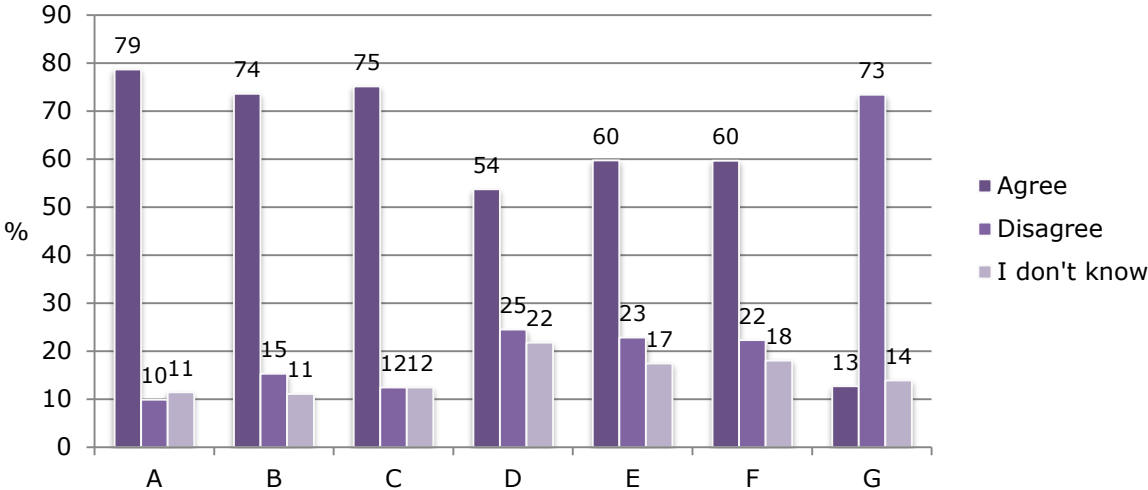
Participants could choose between four options: Yes, completely; Yes, somewhat; No; I don't know. The turnout of this question is very high; only two respondents have not completed it. 84% of the total respondents opine that the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy are generally in line with national policies. Around three quarters of the positive replies, or 63% of total replies, are "Yes, somewhat". Only one fourth of the positive replies, or 22% of total replies, believe that the objectives are completely in line with national policies. In a similar way as it has been observed in the questions above, organisations tend to be more positive than individual respondents: 91% agree that the EU Youth Strategy is (either completely or somewhat) in line with national policies. In comparison, for individuals the percentage of those believing that the EU Youth Strategy is either completely or somewhat in accordance with national policies is 81%.

5. In your opinion, what is the added value of the EU Youth Strategy compared with measures at a local, regional or national level?

- A. It helps develop a youth strategy or a consistent approach to young people and youth policy at national level**
- B. It helps to put young people higher on the EU political agenda**
- C. It helps to improve coherence between national/regional and EU-wide youth-related measures**
- D. It helps allocate more national public funding to specific activities or initiatives in the youth sector**
- E. It helps to encourage young people to take part in the decision-making process at all levels**
- F. It helps to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process**
- G. The Strategy has no added value over national/regional/local measures**

This question shows that a majority of survey respondents perceive an added value of the EU Youth Strategy in comparison with local, regional or national measures in every aspect mentioned. Respondents are most positive about the Strategy's additional benefit as regards the development of a consistent approach on youth, the placing of young people higher on the EU political agenda, and the coherence between national, regional and EU-wide measures.

Figure 7: The added value of the EU Youth Strategy⁵



Respondents were invited to reply to the seven sub-questions with either Agree, Disagree, or I don't know. Additionally, they could decide not to reply to one or several of the sub-questions at all. However, depending on the sub-question, only between 4 and 9 respondents pursued this option. Respondents were most positive regarding the first three propositions. Almost four fifths (79%) of the total respondents agreed that the EU Youth Strategy helps develop a youth strategy or a consistent approach to young people and youth policy at national level. Around three quarters agree that the EU Youth Strategy helps to put young people higher on the EU political agenda (74%) and that it helps to improve coherence between national/regional and EU-wide youth related measures (75%).

Responses by individuals and organisations only differ slightly, with organisations being slightly more positive regarding the first two "it helps develop a youth strategy and youth policy at national level and it helps to put young people higher on the EU political agenda and individuals being more positive with respect to the third aspect "it helps to improve coherence between national/regional and EU-wide youth related measures". Respondents were less enthusiastic about the propositions four to six. Whereas the number of those agreeing with "It helps allocate more national public funding to specific activities or initiatives in the youth sector", "It helps to encourage young people to take part in the decision-making process at all levels" and "It helps to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process" drops to 60% or less, the number of those who disagree or don't know increases and roughly distribute the remaining percentages between each other evenly. Generally speaking, the differences in replies of organisations and individuals are rather minor, except for proposition six where 25% of the responding individuals disagree, but only 16% of the organisations. Proposition seven "the Strategy has no added value over national/regional/local measures" confirms the overall results of this question: around three quarters of the total respondents disagree with the proposition that the Strategy has no added value over national/regional/local measures (69% of the individuals and 80% of the organisations) and 13% agree (individuals:16%; 8% organisations).

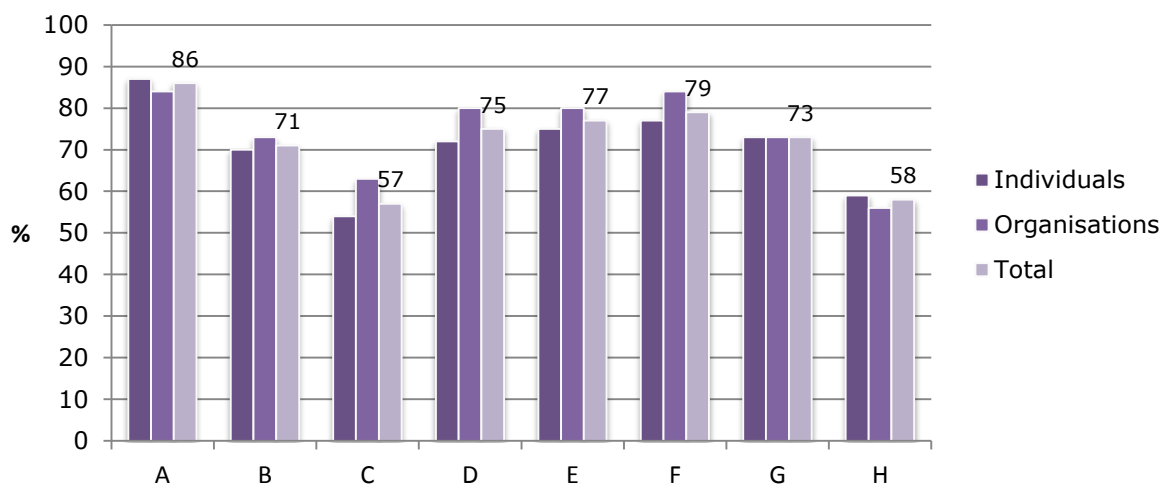
⁵ Note that the number of respondents varies from sub-question to sub-question. The numbers are as follows: A (171 individuals/91 organisations/262 total), B (170/91/261), C (168/89/257), D (168/89/257), E (169/89/258), F (169/91/260), G (170/89/259).

6. In your opinion, do the priority areas of the EU Youth Strategy address young people's needs?

- A. Education and Training**
- B. Employment and entrepreneurship**
- C. Health and Wellbeing**
- D. Inclusion in society**
- E. Getting involved into democratic and civic life**
- F. Volunteering**
- G. Access to cultural activities**
- H. Awareness of global challenges and contact with regions outside Europe**

It becomes apparent from Question 6 that, in the eyes of the majority of the respondents, the EU Youth Strategy's eight priority areas address young people's needs. The approval rate varies from priority area to priority area. Overall, the priorities "Education and training", "Getting involved in democratic and civic life" and "Volunteering" score highest.

Figure 8: Agree that the EU Youth Strategy addresses young people's needs...⁶



In a similar fashion as in Question 5 respondents could choose between Agree, Disagree and I don't know, or they could decide not to reply to one or several of the sub-questions at all. Most participants, however, have replied to this question; the number of no-replies never exceeds 5 (in absolute terms). Generally speaking, a solid majority of respondents agree that the EU Youth Strategy addresses young people's needs regarding all eight priority areas. Most of the time, the agreement rate is even well above the 70%; only for the areas "Health and Wellbeing" as well as "Awareness of global challenges and contact with regions outside Europe", the general approval rate is lower (57% for the former, 58% for the latter).

The differences between individual respondents and organisations are rather small. With the exception of the areas "Education and Training" and "Awareness of global challenges", organisations tend to be slightly more favourable than individuals (and there is no difference between individuals and organisations regarding "Access to cultural activities"). The biggest difference in the approval rates between individuals and

⁶ Note that the number of respondents varies from sub-question to sub-question. They are as follows: A (175 individuals/91 organisations/266 total), B (n=173/90/263), C (n=171/91/262), D (n=173/91/264), E (n=173/91/264), F (n=172/91/263), G (n=170/91/261), H (n=173/90/263).

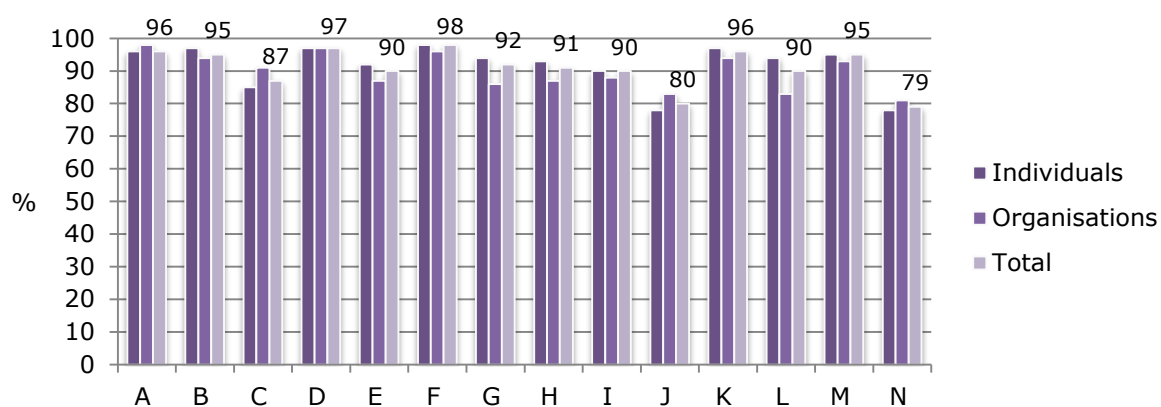
organisations can be identified with respect to the areas "Health and Wellbeing" (difference of 9 percentage points) and "Inclusion in Society" (difference of 8 percentage points). Having a closer look at the two areas which have yielded the lowest overall support, "Health and Wellbeing" and "Awareness of global challenges", it is apparent that the "I don't know" response option scores particularly high here (overall 26% for the former and 23% for the latter); it could be an indicator for an increased lack of knowledge about the activities of the EU Youth Strategy in these two priority areas.

7. In the future, what are the main areas that the EU should contribute to in the field of youth policy?

- A. Supporting and developing youth work & non-formal learning**
- B. Supporting the involvement of youth organisations and young people in policy-making and other democratic processes**
- C. Promoting volunteering among young people**
- D. Lowering youth unemployment and inactivity**
- E. Promoting the health and well-being of young people**
- F. Improving the social situation of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion**
- G. Supporting the inclusion of young people with a migrant background**
- H. Encouraging the integration of recently arrived young migrants including refugees**
- I. Encouraging young people's creativity and improving access to culture**
- J. Improving young people's digital literacy**
- K. Supporting young people's access to information and knowledge of their rights**
- L. Encouraging youth engagement in the European project**
- M. Preventing marginalization or violent radicalisation among young people**
- N. Engaging with youth stakeholders outside Europe**

All areas listed under Question 7 constitute, in the opinion of a great majority of respondents, either a high or medium priority for the EU to contribute to in the future. The policy areas with the highest overall support are "Lowering youth unemployment and inactivity" (83% of the respondents identify this area as a "high priority") and "Improving the social situation of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion" (79%).

Figure 9: Areas the EU should contribute to in the field of youth policy: high and medium priority⁷



For each of the fourteen subject-areas, participants were invited to indicate whether, in their opinion, they constituted either a "high priority", "medium priority", "low priority", or "I don't know" for the EU to contribute to in the field of youth policy. Participants were also free not to reply to one or more of the sub-questions (policy areas), but only very few made use of this option (never more than 5 respondents per sub-question). Generally speaking, it can be observed that a great majority of respondents classify any of the areas mentioned as either a high *or* a medium priority in the field of youth policy to which the EU should contribute. In fact, with the exception of three policy areas (promotion of volunteering, improvement of digital literacy and engagement with non-EU stakeholders), 90% or more of the total respondents opine that the respective area should be either a high or a medium priority (NB that these areas still score high results with 87%, 80% and 79% respectively).

When looking at **high priority** areas only, the areas with the overall highest support are "Lowering youth unemployment and inactivity" and "Improving the social situation of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion". Respectively 83% and 79% of the total respondents have indicated that these areas should be a "high priority". Other areas, such as "Supporting and developing youth work & non-formal learning" (73% of total respondents), "Preventing marginalisation or violent radicalisation among young people" (72%) and "Supporting the involvement of youth organisations and young people in policy-making and other democratic processes" (70%) follow closely thereafter.

Looking at **high and medium priority** together, the field of action which received the highest support is "Improving the social situation of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion" with 98%, followed by "Lowering youth unemployment and inactivity" (97%), "Supporting and developing youth work & non-formal learning" and "Supporting young people's access to information and knowledge of their rights" (each 96%).

The results for organisations and individual respondents generally follow similar trends. Considering the outcomes of high and medium priority together, the difference for the various policy fields between individuals and organisations usually does not exceed 6 percentage points. Exceptions are the fields of inclusion of young migrants and youth engagement in the European project (difference of 8 and 9 percentage points between

⁷ Note that the number of respondents varies from sub-question to sub-question. They are as follows: A (174 individuals/91 organisations/265 total), B (n=172/91/263), C (n=173/91/264), D (n=173/90/263), E (n=175/91/266), F (n=175/88/263), G (n=175/90/265), H (n=174/91/265), I (n=172/90/262), J (n=173/91/264), K (n=173/91/264), L (n=173/91/264), M (n=174/90/264), N (n=171/90/261).

individuals and organisations). The results are slightly less homogenous when comparing responses of individuals with those of organisations at the individual priority levels.

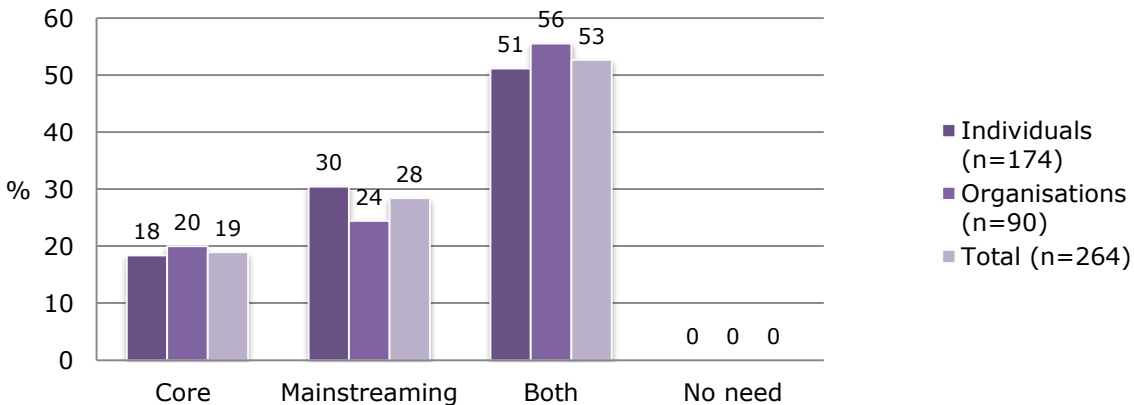
Next to the subject areas mentioned in the sub-questions, participants were invited to list additional areas to which the EU should contribute in the future. A point that was mentioned several times was the **inclusion in society of all young people**. Apart from young migrants, young unemployed and young people at risk of poverty – groups of young people that had been taken up by the survey - respondents mentioned the need to also address the needs of disabled young people, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, girls and young women, young LGBTQIA, and former juvenile delinquents. Another recurring aspect was the **preparation of young people for the labour market**, which goes beyond the fight against unemployment per se. Respondents mentioned the prevention of brain drain, the provision of quality jobs, the abolition of unpaid traineeships, as well as the support and the promotion of entrepreneurial activities amongst young people. Moreover, the thematic focuses on sustainable development (in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals) and sport were listed. Therefore, many commenters mentioned the need to strengthen the cooperation between Member States in youth matters and to systematically connect formal, non-formal and informal learning environments. Finally, information on existing activities and offers as well as the provision of advice to young people should also be an area to which the EU should contribute, in the view of some commentators.

8. In the future, where do you see the focus of the European youth policy cooperation should be?

- **Promoting policies and actions specifically targeted at young people (e.g. non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility)**
- **Mainstream youth issues better into other policy areas: education and training, getting a job or setting up a business, youth-specific health issues, social exclusion of young people**
- **Develop efforts in both directions: core activities of youth policies and mainstreaming**
- **I don't think there is a need for future EU action on youth policy**

In the opinion of the majority of survey respondents, European youth policy cooperation should focus both on the promotion of policies and actions specifically targeted at young people and on mainstreaming youth issues better into other policy areas.

Figure 10: Future focus of European Youth Policy Cooperation



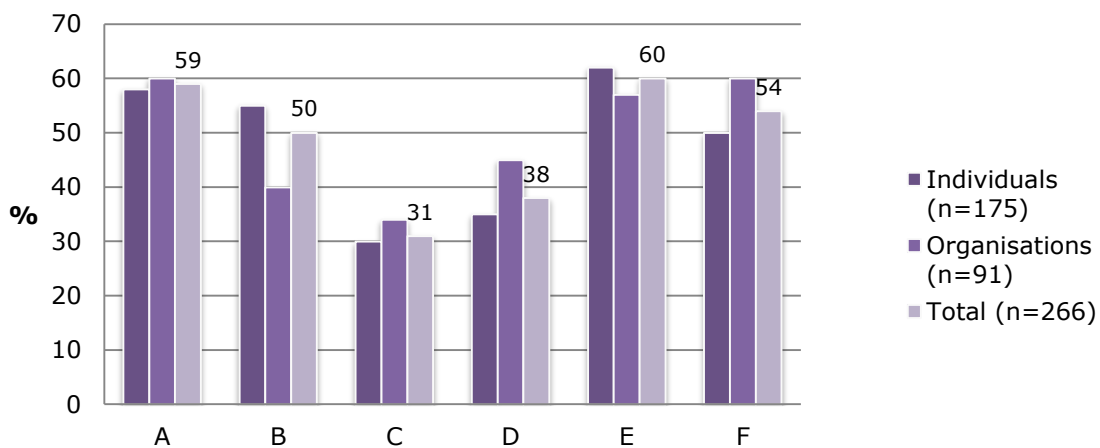
With respect to the focus of European youth policy cooperation in the future, participants had the choice between four options: focus on core youth policy, youth mainstreaming in other policy areas, efforts in both areas or no need for future EU action in this area. Only 2 participants in the survey did not reply to this question. It is remarkable that all respondents saw a need for further cooperation in the field of youth either via traditional policies targeted at youth, youth mainstreaming into other policy areas or a combination of efforts in both directions. More than half of them (53% of total participants) deem it important to continue efforts regarding core activities in youth policies and youth mainstreaming simultaneously.

9. What steps should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the EU policy action in the youth sector?

- A. Develop deeper synergies between EU and national measures**
- B. Increase knowledge-building in the youth sector**
- C. Improve monitoring activities in the youth field**
- D. Promote stronger coordination of the EU youth policy agenda**
- E. Encourage broader participation in EU policy activities by local and regional youth policymakers**
- F. Improve mechanisms for consultation and dialogue with young people**

This question shows that, in order to improve the effectiveness of EU policy action in the youth field, most respondents believe that increased efforts should be made so as to encourage broader participation in EU policy activities by local and regional youth policymakers and to develop deeper synergies between EU and national measures.

Figure 11: Future steps to improve the effectiveness of EU youth policy



In order to complete this question, participants had the possibility to choose one or several of the options listed that, in their opinion, should be taken as a next step in order to improve the effectiveness of EU policy action in the youth sector (hence: multiple replies possible). Generally speaking, most respondents identify the development of deeper synergies between EU and national measures (59%) as well as encouraging a broader participation in EU policy activities by local and regional youth policymakers (60%) as an effective way to improve EU youth policy. The improvement of monitoring activities (31%) and stronger coordination (38%) seem to have the lowest appeal. Differences between individuals and organisations can sometimes be quite substantial. While 55% of individuals participating in the survey have indicated that knowledge-building should be increased, only 40% of the organizations did so. In contrast, stronger

coordination (35% of individuals/45% of organisations) and better mechanisms for consultation and dialogue (50% individuals/60% organisations) were considered more important by organisations.

10. Are there any other issues you would like to share with us in relation to the EU youth policy cooperation?

A total of 15 individuals and 30 organisations commented on this question. The replies roughly revolve around four main themes: the definition of the **target group** of EU youth policy, the **content** of EU youth policy, the main **channels** through which youth policy is to be shaped and lastly, and the **implementation** mechanisms. As to the first point, the definition of the **target group**, several respondents highlighted that the EU youth policy should focus more on disadvantaged young people – be it those coming from a difficult socio-economic background, young people with a migrant background or else. It would be important to, in particular, reach those young people which are not organised. One contribution also criticised the one-fits-all approach. Accordingly, the challenges a 16 years old faces are very different from those of a 25 years old.

Although Question 7, including the open part of the question, had already encouraged survey respondents to share their ideas about the future orientation of EU youth policy, a number of respondents also raised ideas on the **content** of EU youth policy in this context. For this reason, the points mentioned here should be understood in connection with Question 7. On a general note survey participants stressed the need to base EU youth policy on clear aims and objectives. It seems that many respondents would like to see EU youth policy focus more on social policy issues, including the better access to housing, credits and jobs as well as healthcare and wellbeing of young people (in particular drug prevention). Moreover, a number of commenters request a greater focus on employment and economic policy aspects. Such focus would include a better transfer of skills and competences that can enhance young people's employability, such as digital or language skills, to be achieved through a close cooperation between the formal, non-formal and informal learning sectors. An example mentioned in this context was the integration of a cross-border volunteering experience in the higher-education curriculum ("year off"). A better recognition of such skills, including those a young person has gained through non-formal and informal learning settings, was also deemed to be key. Despite the focus on economic factors, the personal growth of young people should continue to be central.

Thirdly, as to the **channels** through which EU youth policy shall be further shaped, survey respondents mentioned a variety of actors: public actors in the Member States at national, regional and local level, other international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe through the youth partnership, actors from the private sector, in particular employers, and importantly, youth workers and young people themselves. Many highlight that consultation mechanisms with the various actors should be strengthened and improved, for example by ensuring a better representativeness of various societal groups. While several commenters stress the need for young people's participation in policy-making regarding aspects that are of relevance to them, there are also critical voices highlighting that it might be of better help to young people if they were given adequate socio-economic opportunities.

Finally, survey participants also shared their ideas with respect to a better **implementation** of EU youth policy. Many highlighted that EU action in the field of youth should have a greater visibility. They added that communication efforts should be strengthened at European, national, regional and local levels. Moreover, several commenters submit that access to EU activities should be facilitated: accordingly,

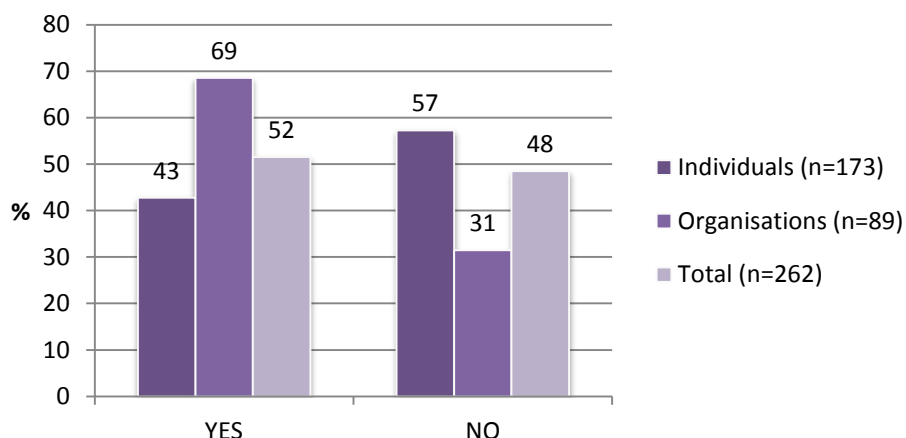
bureaucratic hurdles for participating in EU actions and receiving funding should be lowered and existing tools should be simplified. By the same token, cooperation between Member States, between different sectors, including the private sector, should be enhanced.

The Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers

11. Were you aware (before reading the introduction to this consultation) that a Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the EU was adopted in 2008, to create more cross-border volunteering opportunities?

Generally speaking, only a little more than half of the respondents were aware of the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers. It is noteworthy, however, that, amongst organisations, almost 7 out of 10 organisations were aware of it.

Figure 13: Were you aware of the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers?



The binary question with two response options (Yes; No) has been completed by 262 participants in the online survey. 52% of the respondents are aware of the existence of the Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers. Awareness of the Council Recommendation is much higher for organisations than for individuals. While 69% of responding organisations indicate that they are aware of the Council Recommendations, only 43% of the individuals do. No significant difference can be found between the replies of individuals which are members of youth organisations and individuals which are not.

12. Did you ever take part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU as an organisation or an individual?

In total only a bit less than half of the respondents have already taken part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU. The participation rate is much higher amongst organisations (six out of ten indicate "Yes") than amongst individuals (four out of ten indicate "Yes"). Being a member of a youth organisation seems to provide a positive stimulus to individuals for engaging in a European Voluntary Service (EVS).

Figure 14: Did you ever take part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU as an organisation or an individual?

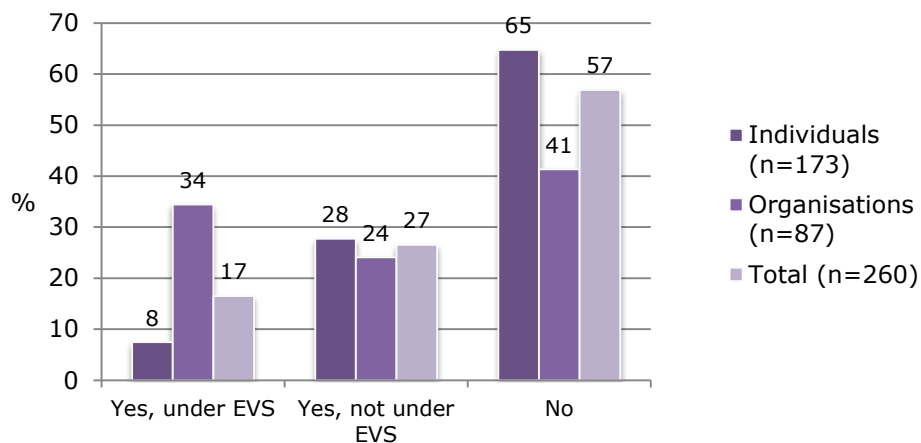
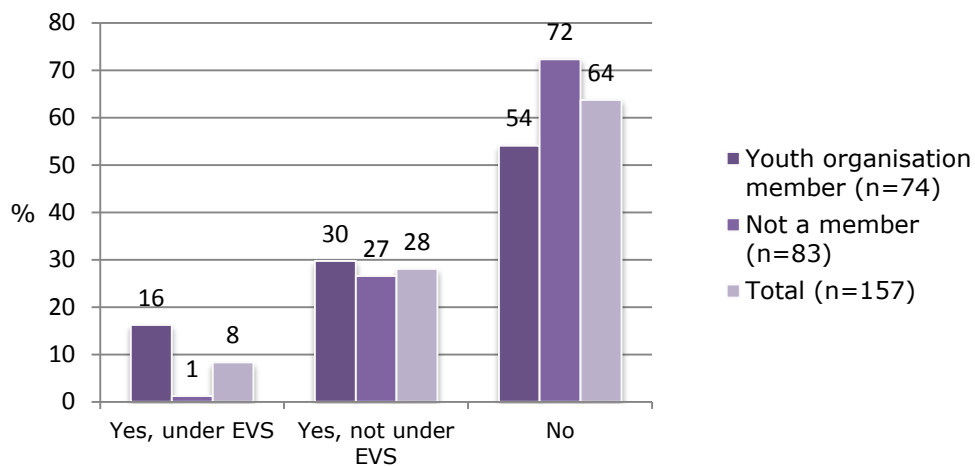


Figure 15: INDIVIDUALS: Did you ever take part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU?



The question leaves survey participants with three response options: "Yes, under the European Voluntary Service", "Yes, but not under the European Voluntary Service" and "No". Again, the completion of this question has not been made compulsory. 260 replies have been received for this question.

Overall, roughly 44% of the respondents indicate that they have already taken part in voluntary activities abroad in the EU, including 17% under the EVS. The rate is much higher for organisations: while 34% of them have participated in EVS, it is only 8% of the responding individuals. It is striking that more than half (around 65%) of the survey participants have never taken part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU. Here, the rate is higher for individuals than for organisations. While 65% of the individuals that have participated in the online survey have never taken part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU, it was only the case for 41% of the replying organisations. Amongst individuals there is a marked difference between members of youth organisations or non-members: 46% of individual respondents who are members of youth organisations have already taken part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU; amongst individual respondents who are not a member of a youth organisation the rate is only 28%.

13. Are the objectives of the Council Recommendation on creating more cross-border volunteering opportunities still relevant

A. to the needs of youth policymakers

B. to the needs of youth organisations and young people?

Overall, 7 out of 10 respondents find that the objectives of the Council Recommendation are fully or somewhat relevant to the needs of youth policymakers and 8 out of ten respondents believe that they are fully or somewhat relevant to the needs of youth organisations and young people. Organisations and individuals who are members of a youth organisation tend to see a slightly higher relevance of the objectives of the Council Recommendation.

Figure 16: The objectives of the Council Recommendation are relevant for...

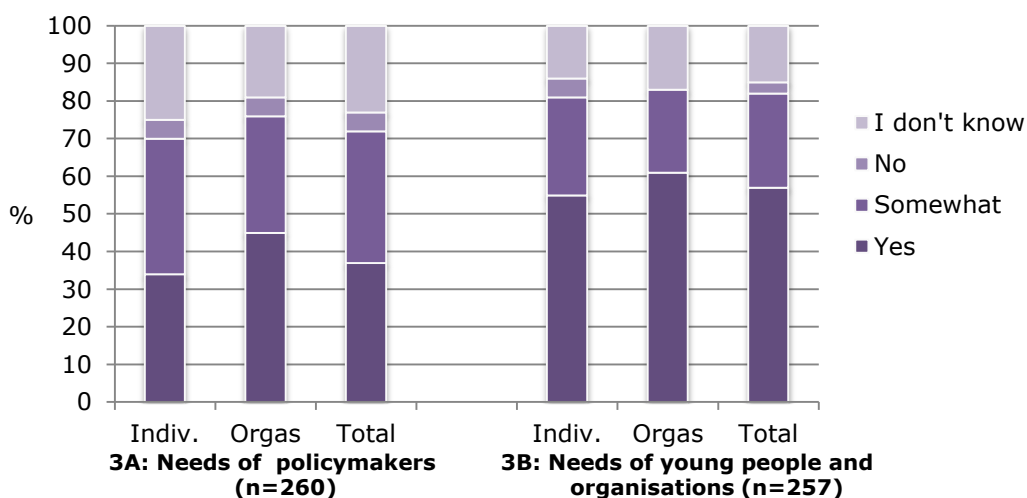
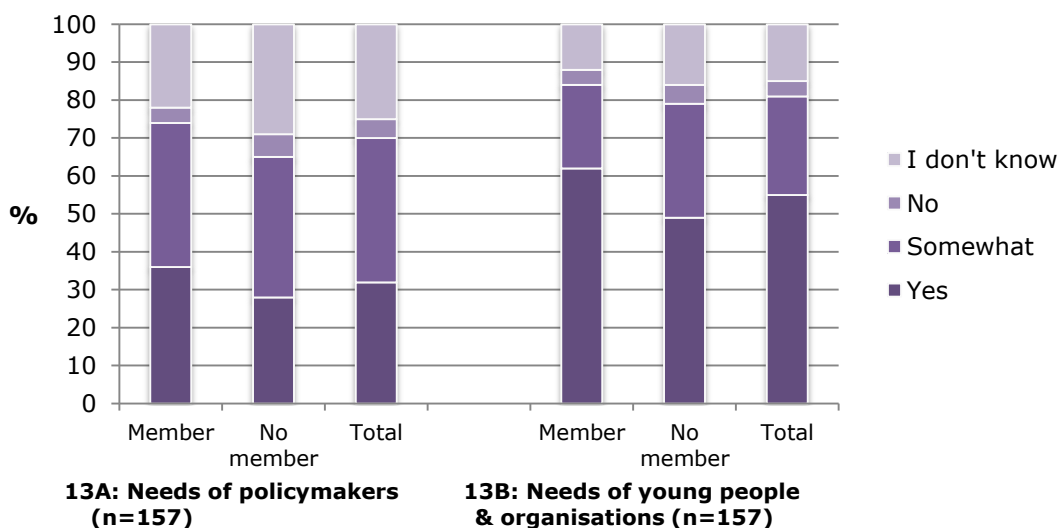


Figure 17: INDIVIDUALS: The objectives of the Council Recommendation are relevant for...



The response options for this question were fourfold: "Yes", "Somewhat", "No" and "I don't know". 260 replies have been registered for Question 13a (needs of youth policymakers), 257 replies for 13b (needs of youth organisations and young people).

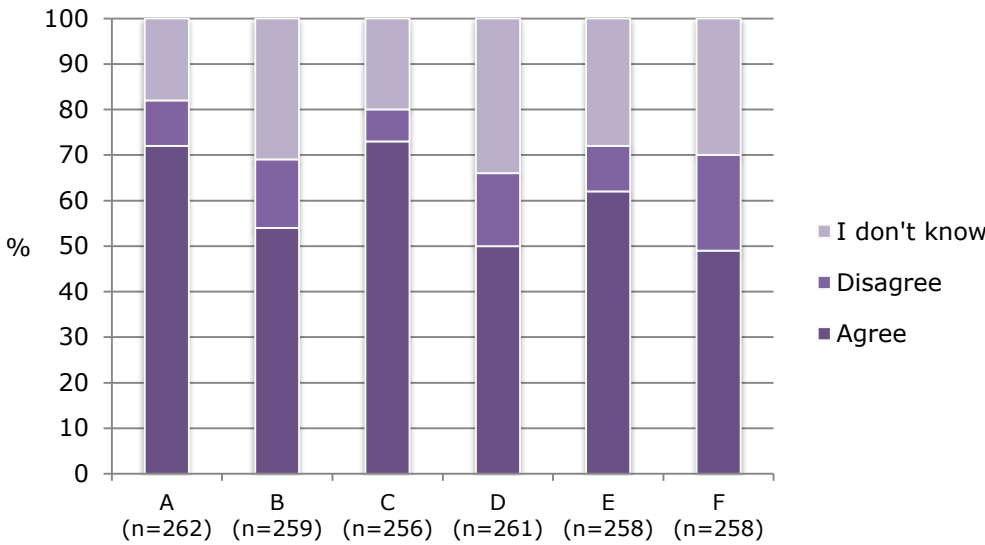
72% of the respondents think that the objectives of the Council Recommendation are still relevant to the needs of policy makers (37% "fully", 35% "somewhat"); 82% even believe that these objectives are still relevant to the needs of youth organisations and young people (57% "fully", 25% "somewhat"). It is striking that a relatively big group of respondents does not know how to answer the two sub-questions. Respectively 23% (13a) and 15% (13b) of the respondents have chosen "I don't know". Results differ only slightly when investigating the results for organisations and individuals separately. A somewhat more important difference can be found when investigating the results for individuals who are members of youth organisations or other individual respondents separately; the first category tends to be more convinced of the relevance of the objectives of the Council Recommendation, in particular for what concerns youth organisations and young people: 61% of the members of youth organisations believe that they are still relevant, versus 50% of the other individuals.

14. What is the added value of the Council Recommendation compared with actions at a local, regional or national level? :

- **A: It contributes to raise awareness of opportunities to volunteer abroad;**
- **B: Helps increase the quality of volunteering projects**
- **C: It supports development of opportunities for cross-border volunteering within and beyond the European Voluntary Service scheme;**
- **D: It helps simplify procedures for cross-border volunteering;**
- **E: It promotes recognition and validation of the skills gained through volunteering experiences;**
- **F: It encourages people to pay particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities**

All propositions received a favourable evaluation by at least 5 out of 10 respondents. The added value of the Council Recommendation compared with actions at a local, regional or national level is seen to be highest with respect to raising awareness of opportunities to volunteer abroad (14a) and the support of development of opportunities for cross-border volunteering within and beyond the EVS scheme (14c).

Figure 18: Added value of the Council Recommendation



Respondents were given three response options: "Agree", "Disagree" and "I don't know" for each of the propositions. Depending on the proposition between 256 and 262 replies were registered.

When asked about the added value of the Council Recommendation compared to local, regional or national level, 73% of the respondents believe that it supports development of opportunities for cross-border volunteering within and beyond the EVS (14c). 72% of the responses indicate that the Council Recommendation contributes to raising awareness of opportunities to volunteer abroad (14a). 62% reply that it promotes recognition and validation of the skills gained through volunteering experience (14e). It is noteworthy that, with respect to these three points, organisations tend to evaluate the added value of the Council Recommendation slightly higher than individuals. Furthermore, for 54% of the total respondents the Council Recommendation helps increase the quality of volunteering projects (14b). 50% of the replies picked up the help in simplifying procedures for cross-border volunteering (14d), and 49% believe that the Council Recommendation encourages people to pay particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities (14f). For what concerns the latter three categories, individuals deem the added value of the Council Recommendation to be slightly higher than organisations.

A significant percentage of respondents underlines that they do not know how to reply to parts of this question. Depending on the suggested category, between 18% and 34% of the replies go in this direction. For example, 34% of the respondents have chosen "I don't know" when evaluating whether the Council Recommendation has an added value on helping to simplify procedures for cross-border volunteering (Question 14d).

15. Are there any other issues you would like to share with us in relation to the Council Recommendation?

In total 28 survey participants have commented on this question, including 15 individuals and 13 organisations. A number of respondents underline that volunteering opportunities should not be a substitute for paid jobs.

Other respondents praise the benefits of volunteering on the personal development and skills of young people. Nonetheless, some highlight the need to better reach out to more disadvantaged young people (including those with a disability), their institutional environments and the experts who accompany and advise these young people.

Furthermore, some respondents have used this question to suggest changes to the EVS scheme: accordingly, it has been suggested broadening the scope of the EU cross-border volunteering service so as to include volunteering with third countries, in line with the Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus. Universities, whether public and private, should be integrated in the EVS; many of them develop their own voluntary service for the benefit of local communities. Lastly, one respondent suggested increasing volunteering opportunities in the area of health and well-being under the EVS scheme.

Annex 1: Questionnaire

The EU Youth Strategy

1. Were you aware (before reading the introduction to this consultation) that the EU is active in youth policy, through the EU Youth Strategy?

| | |
|-----|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |

2. Have you taken part in any activities under the EU Youth Strategy since 2010 (e.g. conference, structured dialogue process, a 'mutual learning activity' (learning from peers in other EU countries), or under the EU youth programmes (Youth in Action until 2013, Erasmus+ youth since 2014)?

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |
| I don't know | |

If yes: what was the concrete impact of this activity for you or your organisation?

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| It had a general positive impact on me (or on those involved in the activity) | | |
| It allowed my voice (or the voice of the young people involved in the activity) being heard | | |
| It helped me to learn from others and apply this knowledge in my personal life or my work | | |
| It helped me or my organisation to network with other young people and/or organisations in other countries | | |
| It had no impact at all | | |

3. How much has the EU Youth Strategy helped⁸...

| | ...national/regional policies | ...youth organisations and young people |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Very much | | |
| Somewhat | | |
| Not at all | | |
| I don't know | | |

4. Are the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy (as listed in the introduction) in line with national policies?

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Yes, completely | |
| Yes, somewhat | |
| No | |
| I don't know | |

5. In your opinion, what is the added value of the EU Youth Strategy compared with measures at local, regional or national level?

⁸ Outcomes expected under the EU Youth strategy include: (1) **for policymakers**: improved knowledge of the situation of young people, learning from peers in other EU countries; better, participatory and evidence-based policymaking, recognition of value of non-formal learning, volunteering and youth work; (2) **for youth organisations and young people**: better quality of opportunities (including cross-border ones), young people better represented and supported, increased recognition of the value of non-formal learning, volunteering and youth work.

| | Agree | Disagree | Don't know |
|---|-------|----------|------------|
| It helps develop a youth strategy or a consistent approach to young people and youth policy at national level | | | |
| It helps to put young people higher on the EU political agenda | | | |
| It helps to improve coherence between national/regional and EU-wide youth-related measures | | | |
| It helps allocate more national public funding to specific activities or initiatives in the youth sector | | | |
| It helps to encourage young people to take part in the decision-making process at all levels | | | |
| It helps to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process | | | |
| The Strategy has no added value over national/regional/local measures | | | |

6. In your opinion, do the priority areas of the EU Youth Strategy address young people's needs?

| | Agree | Disagree | Don't know |
|--|-------|----------|------------|
| Education and training | | | |
| Employment and entrepreneurship | | | |
| Health and well-being | | | |
| Inclusion in society | | | |
| Getting involved in democratic and civic life | | | |
| Volunteering | | | |
| Access to cultural activities | | | |
| Awareness of global challenges and contact with regions outside Europe | | | |

7. What are the main areas that the EU should contribute to in the field of youth policy?

| | High priority | Medium priority | Low priority | Don't know |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Supporting and developing youth work & non-formal learning | | | | |
| Supporting the involvement of youth organisations and young people in policy-making and other democratic processes | | | | |
| Promoting volunteering among young people | | | | |
| Lowering youth unemployment and inactivity | | | | |
| Promoting the health and well-being of young people | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Improving the social situation of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion | | | | |
| Supporting the inclusion of young people with a migrant background | | | | |
| Encouraging the integration of recently-arrived young migrants including refugees | | | | |
| Encouraging young people's creativity and improving access to culture | | | | |
| Improving young people's digital literacy | | | | |
| Supporting young people's access to information and knowledge of their rights | | | | |
| Encouraging youth engagement in the European project | | | | |
| Preventing marginalisation or violent radicalisation among young people | | | | |
| Engaging with youth stakeholders outside Europe | | | | |
| Other areas (please specify) | | | | |

8. In the future, where do you think the focus of European youth policy cooperation should be?

| | |
|---|--|
| Promoting policies and actions specifically targeted at young people (e.g. non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility) | |
| Mainstreaming youth issues better into other policy areas: education and training, getting a job or setting up a business, youth-specific health issues, social exclusion of young people | |
| Developing efforts in both directions: core activities of youth policies and mainstreaming | |
| I don't think there is a need for future EU action on youth policy | |

9. What steps should be taken to improve the effectiveness of EU policy action in the youth sector?

| | |
|--|--|
| Develop deeper synergies between EU and national measures | |
| Increase knowledge-building in the youth sector | |
| Improve monitoring activities in the youth field | |
| Promote stronger coordination of the EU youth policy agenda | |
| Encourage broader participation in EU policy activities by local and regional youth policymakers | |
| Improve mechanisms for consultation and dialogue with young people | |

10. Are there any other issues you would like to share with us in relation to EU youth policy cooperation?

The Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers

11. Were you aware (before reading the introduction to this consultation) that a Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the EU was adopted in 2008, to create more cross-border volunteering opportunities?

| | |
|-----|--|
| Yes | |
| No | |

12. Did you ever take part in a voluntary activity abroad in the EU as an organisation or an individual?

| | |
|---|--|
| Yes, under the European Voluntary Service | |
| Yes, but not under the European Voluntary Service | |
| No | |

13. Are the objectives of the Council Recommendation on creating more cross-border volunteering opportunities still relevant to the needs of...

| | ...youth policymakers | ...young people and youth organisations |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| Yes | | |
| Somewhat | | |
| No | | |
| I don't know | | |

14. What is the added value of the Council Recommendation compared with actions at a local, regional or national level?

| | Agree | Disagree | Don't know |
|--|-------|----------|------------|
| Raises awareness of opportunities to volunteer abroad | | | |
| Helps increase the quality of volunteering projects | | | |
| Supports development of opportunities for cross-border volunteering within and outside the European Voluntary Service scheme | | | |
| Helps simplify procedures for cross-border volunteering | | | |
| Promotes recognition and validation of the skills gained through volunteering experiences | | | |
| Encourages people to pay particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities | | | |

15. Are there any other issues you would like to share with us in relation to the Council Recommendation?

