

Project Fiche: No. 12

Youth in Action Programme – Western Balkans Window

1. Basic information

- 1.1 ABAC Number:** SI2.556309
- 1.2 Title:** Youth in Action Programme – Western Balkans Window
- 1.3 ELARG Statistical code:** 02.26 - Education and culture
- 1.4 Location:** Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹; Montenegro, Serbia as well as Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99.

Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority (EU):** European Union represented by the European Commission on behalf of the Beneficiaries.
- 1.6 Implementing Agency:** The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
- 1.7 Beneficiary:** Non-profit organisations or associations, local or regional public bodies legally established in the Western Balkans identified as Neighbouring Partners of South East Europe under the Youth in Action programme.

Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost (VAT excluded)²:** EUR 1 875 000
- 1.9 EU contribution:** EUR 1 500 000
- 1.10 Final date for contracting:** 30 November 2011
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts:** 30 November 2013
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements:** 30 November 2014

¹ Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia could benefit from participation in this project depending on their state of preparedness for full participation in the Youth in Action Programme

² The total cost of the project should be net of VAT and/or other taxes. Should this not be the case, the amount of VAT and the reasons why it should be considered eligible should be clearly indicated.

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective

Strengthen democracy, civil society and social inclusion in the Western Balkans by facilitating the integration and active participation of young people in society through the development of youth organisations and the voluntary sector.

2.2 Project purpose

Promote the non-formal education and youth sector in the region by:

- Supporting projects with the partner beneficiaries, in particular exchanges of young people and those active in youth work and youth organisations;
- Supporting initiatives that reinforce young people's mutual understanding, sense of solidarity and tolerance, as well as the development of cooperation in the field of youth and civil society in the Western Balkans.

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA³

Youth as such is not a priority included in the Accession or European Partnerships of the Western Balkans. However, the Commission Communication on the Enlargement Strategy 2008-2009⁴ underlined the importance for the increased participation of civil society organisations in the reforms to be undertaken by the Candidates and Potential Candidates for Accession. Therefore, the Youth in Action programme is an additional tool to the Civil Society Facility for strengthening the youth organisations development.

2.4 Link with MIPD

This project has been designed on the basis of the IPA Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011⁵ in which youth is a priority under Section 2.3.2.3. As noted in the MIPD the objective of the IPA Multi-beneficiary youth strategy is to: Strengthen democracy in the Western Balkans; Facilitate the integration and active participation of young people in society; Develop youth organisations and the voluntary sector through cooperation between local NGOs, youth organisations and youth workers and those of the EU Member States, and through youth exchanges, networking and voluntary service.

³ AP = Accession Partnership; NPAA = National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (for Candidate Countries), National Action Plan (for Potential Candidates); EP= European Partnership; SAA = Stabilisation and Association Agreement

⁴ COM(2008) 674, 05.11.08 - "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009"

⁵ COM (2009) 4518

3. Description of project

3.1 Background and justification

Since 2000, organisations and young people from the Western Balkans have had the possibility to participate as partners in certain activities supported through the Youth programme.

In 2005, the European Commission launched a pilot initiative aimed at reinforcing the level of participation of organisations from the region in the Youth programme. By such means, organisations from the Western Balkans were granted the opportunity to become coordinating organisations for youth projects and to apply directly to the European Commission for a programme grant. Despite the limited resources, the results of the pilot phase were successful both in terms of the number of applications received and the quality of the projects submitted. These results showed that there was a demand for greater opportunities to participate in youth projects in the region.

Although the means of participation for Western Balkan organisations introduced in 2005 have been confirmed under the new Youth in Action programme covering the period 2007-2013, the EU has been called upon to increase its actions and instruments in the field of non-formal education and youth in the region. In line with this, the European Commission Communication “the Western Balkans on the road to the EU: consolidating stability and raising prosperity”⁶, reaffirms the commitment made by the European Union to reinforce cooperation with the Western Balkans in the area of youth and emphasises that the European Commission will create new opportunities. In this context, the establishment of a Western Balkans window, funded by IPA within the Youth in Action programme, reflects the commitments made in the Commission’s Communication by allowing for more projects submitted by Western Balkan organisations to be supported.

The first Western Balkan Window was used in 2008 within the Youth in Action framework (EUR 1 000 000). In 2009, the Western Balkan Window dedicated to The Youth in Action Programme amounted EUR 1 500 000.

Furthermore, the Western Balkans Window facilitates the long-term participation of the Western Balkans in the Youth in Action programme. The Youth in Action programme foresees that the Western Balkans participate in the programme on an equal footing with the EU Member States. This participation is achieved by a differentiated time schedule according to the preparedness and capacity to put in place the necessary administrative structures for the implementation of the programme at a national level (Youth in Action National Agencies).

The Western Balkans present their application under Action 2 (European Voluntary Service) and Action 3.1 (Cooperation with the Neighbouring Partner Countries of the European Union) of the Youth in Action Programme, in accordance with the three deadlines for submission of applications set in the Programme Guide (1st of February, 1st of June, 1st of September).

The financial planning prepared by the Executive Agency allows financing, under each selection round a stable amount of projects, on the basis of the combination of the Western Balkan Window and the funds dedicated to the Youth in Action Programme, independently of the time of availability of the Balkan Window funds. The selection processes are organised in

⁶ COM (2006)27, 27.01.06

such a way that the notification of results intervenes nowadays 2,5 months before the beginning of the eligibility period. The payment of the prefinancing of the projects is done with 48 hours after signature of the grant agreement by both contractual parties.

Furthermore, in line with the supportive approach recommended in the legal basis of the Youth in Action Programme, the Youth Helpdesk of the Executive Agency:

- Provides support to the target public of the Programme, the beneficiary organisations and the Youth in Action participants;
- Gives support in terms of visa's delivery and diffusion of good practises in order to help the projects to surpass obstacles linked to the transnational mobility;
- Offers support in the framework of crisis management.

In this context, projects supported through the proposed window contribute to increasing opportunities for Beneficiaries in the region until the cited national structures are established.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact

The programme will be regularly monitored and the impact evaluated in cooperation between the European Commission and the EU Member States in order to allow for readjustments.

The cross border impact of the programme offers youth organisations and young people from the Western Balkans and from the EU Member States to participate in exchanges, to reinforce a mutual understanding and to strengthen cooperation in the area of civil society.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators

Results:

- Increased opportunities for young people to experience international mobility and to acquire socio-educational skills which could better facilitate their integration in society;
- Increased participation of young people in democratic life and active citizenship in particular with regard to young women and young people with fewer opportunities;
- Improved interethnic and inter-religious dialogue among young people and youth organisations.
- Development of long-lasting partnerships as well the exchange of expertise and know-how in the field of youth and non-formal education.
- Improved organisational skills of organisations established in the Western Balkans, in particular with regard to management of European Union funds.

Measurable indicators

All activities:

- Number of organisations (including partners) from the Western Balkans participating in activities supported by the Window;
- Number of projects involving young people with fewer opportunities;
- Number of projects dealing with minorities and inter-ethnic inter-religious dialogue issues;
- Number of young women involved in the activities;
- Rating of submitted projects;
- Measures of efficiency in administrative and financial management.

Activity 1:

- Number of youth exchanges among young people from different locations taking place in the Western Balkans.

Activity 2:

- Number of European Voluntary Service projects in the Western Balkans;
- Number of organisations accredited as EVS host organisations under the Youth in Action programme in the Balkans.

Activity 3:

- Number of training and networking projects organised in the Western Balkans.

3.4 Activities:

Activity 1: Youth Exchanges (Action 3.1 of the Youth in Action programme)

Youth exchanges offer an opportunity for groups of young people from the Western Balkans participating in the Youth in Action programme to meet and learn about each other's cultures. Their pedagogical value and non-formal learning element comes from the fact that the groups explore themes of common interest.

Activity 2: European Voluntary Service (Action 2 of the Youth in Action programme)

Young people take part individually or in groups in non-profit, voluntary activities abroad, helping in local projects in a wide range of fields: social, ecological and environmental, arts and culture, new technologies, leisure and sports, etc.

Activity 3: Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations (Action 3.1 of the Youth in Action programme)

Activities supporting the training of those active in youth work and youth organisations, in particular the exchange of experiences, expertise and good practice between them; as well as activities which may lead to long-lasting quality projects and partnerships and networks. The action supports training courses, seminars, study and feasibility visits, evaluation meetings, job-shadowing, partnership-building and networking activities.

General selection procedures and criteria:

All activities supported through the window are based on partnerships between organisations from the Western Balkans and organisations from the EU and other countries participating in the programme. Activities 1 and 3 take place in the Western Balkans and Activity 2 may consist either in volunteers from the Western Balkans sent to Youth in Action Programme Beneficiaries, or, vice versa, in volunteers from the Programme Beneficiaries sent to the Western Balkans.

Project applications are selected by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency through calls for proposals on the basis of criteria defined in the Youth in Action programme.

The evaluation of the projects is performed by external assessors, selected on the basis of their knowledge of the youth sector. During the first evaluation week, all eligible projects are assessed by a first panel of experts. A second evaluation is performed during a second week by a distinct panel of experts. The final score of each project reflects the average scoring given by the two experts. When the difference of points given by the first and the second expert is equal to or exceeded 20, a third panel assesses the applications concerned. The final score given to these projects reflects the average scoring between the two closest evaluations.

Each evaluation includes an overall assessment summarising the conclusions of the analysis, underlining the strengths and weaknesses of the project and formulating recommendations to the attention of the applicant.

The evaluation committee proposes to the Authorising Officer, on the basis of the evaluation performed by the external experts, the list of projects suggested for acceptance. The Authorising Officer takes the final decision. The Youth in Action Committee and the European Parliament are informed.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing

As the Youth Programme is run with a demand driven approach, the good functioning of the programme will depend on the interest of the youth organisations (and other actors) in participating in youth projects, as well as the quality of the project proposals submitted.

3.6 Linked activities

European Union activities:

The establishment of the Western Balkans Window confirms the European Commission's desire to foster youth mobility and mutual understanding of cultural diversity among young people in the Western Balkans, as well as to strengthen civil society and promote and European values in the region. It complements the EU existing opportunities of cooperation with the Western Balkans in the field of non-formal education and youth (Youth in Action programme).

The Youth in Action Programme is also linked to the other mobility activities undertaken through the Erasmus Mundus Programme:

- Erasmus Mundus Action 1, a world-wide programme which provides scholarships for students to around 100 Erasmus Mundus Master Courses in Europe. In 2006, a specific Window for the Western Balkans was started under the Erasmus Mundus Programme to enable the selection of 100 post-graduate students from the region (200 as from 2009).
- Erasmus Mundus Action 2 (former External Cooperation Window). This Programme was extended to the Western Balkans in 2007 in order to enable academic cooperation as well as mobility of academic staff and students at all levels.
- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has been supporting the development of non-formal youth education in the region for several years through the project "Forum Syd." Swedish support includes community youth work, youth policy work and education. The last component is organised in cooperation with the universities in the region.
- The Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes in Croatia, the National Agency for EU Education Programmes and Mobility in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the designated national agencies for management of the Youth in Action Programme, which are undertaking preparatory measures for their countries' full participation in Youth in Action Programme, launched the Call for Proposals referring to pilot projects for Youth in Action Programme in year 2009 funded by IPA 2007 and 2009 national funds. More pilot projects, founded by IPA 2009, will be implemented in 2010. The pilot projects concern the following Actions and Sub-Actions: Sub-Action 1.1 (Youth Exchanges); Action 2 (European Voluntary Service) and Sub-Action 4.3 (Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations).

3.7 Lessons learned

Past assistance has promoted intercultural dialogue among young people and supported the development of cooperation in the field of non-formal education and youth through the Youth Programme. The pilot initiative launched in 2005 under the Youth programme has supported 50 projects involving 600 participants and 90 organisations from the Western Balkans.

In the period after 2005, the participation rate of Western Balkans was growing constantly. In 2008, a total number of 55 projects have been selected and will be supported in the Western Balkans. These were the first results of the Western Balkan Window and demonstrated that there is an unbalance between the Beneficiaries mainly due to a lack of promotion of the Programme within institutions in some Beneficiaries. The emphasis will be put on the visibility of the Programme and on the public awareness in order to inform the citizens and the Youth organisations about the opportunities of the programme.

The concerns expressed by WB youth organisations in 2008 closely meet the permanent priorities of Youth in Action Programme: European citizenship, participation of young people, cultural diversity and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. A particularly strong representation of activities related to European citizenship, participation of young people in democratic life, cultural diversity and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities has been identified. The 2008 European year of Intercultural Dialogue has generated a large number of Youth in Action projects and the applicants have clearly assimilated the 2009 annual priority linked to the European Year for Innovation and Creativity.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in EUR)

			SOURCES OF FUNDING									
			TOTAL EXP.RE	EU CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	%(2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/ Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1	X		625 000	500 000	80						125 000	20
Activity 2	X		625 000	500 000	80						125 000	20
Activity 3	x		625 000	500 000	80						125 000	20
TOTAL IB			1 875 000	1 500 000	80						375 000	20
TOTAL INV												
TOTAL PROJECT			1 875 000	1 500 000	80						375 000	20

Amounts net of VAT

(1) In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV

(2) Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

Financing rules

The EU grant is based on a mix of actual costs, fixed amounts and flat rates.

The grant cannot finance the entire costs of the project. Promoters must show their commitment to the project by finding financing sources other than the EU grant. This can be done, for example, by running fund-raising activities, by adding own resources, or by requesting grants from other organisations (e.g. municipalities or other local or regional authorities). Proof of co-financing must be included in the final report.

Contributions of a flat-rate amount and scales of unit costs are not affected by this rule. Contributions in kind are considered an eligible source of co-financing.

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter)

The selection is founded on the Youth in Action Programme Guide (permanent call for proposals) which foresees 3 selection deadlines (Rounds) per year. Projects concerning one of the mentioned activities and committed over the amount available can be submitted and run according to the following scheme:

Round	Deadline for submission	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Round 3 2010	01/09/2010	01/12/2010	31/12/2011
Round 1 2011	01/02/2011	01/05/2011	30/06/2012
Round 2 2011	01/06/2011	01/09/2011	30/10/2012

6. Cross cutting issues

6.1 Equal Opportunity

An important priority of the Youth in Action Programme to give all young people equal opportunities to access to the activities supported through the Programme. Youth groups and organisations should take appropriate measures to avoid exclusion of specific target groups.

6.2 Environment

Environment is one of the fields in which European Voluntary Service activities are carried out and is a re-occurring theme in youth exchanges.

6.3 Minorities

The respect for cultural diversity together with the fight against racism and xenophobia are priorities of the Youth in Action Programme. By facilitating joint activities of young people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, the Programme aims to develop the intercultural learning of young people.

ANNEXES

- I- Logical framework matrix in standard format
- II- Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter over the full duration of project
- III- Description of Institutional Framework
- IV - Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents:
- V- Details per EU funded contract

ANNEX I: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche	YOUTH in Action Programme	
	Contracting period expires: 30 November 2011	Disbursement period expires: 30 November 2014
	Total budget : EUR 1 875 000	2010 IPA budget: EUR 1 500 000

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
Strengthen democracy, civil society and social inclusion in the Western Balkans by facilitating the integration and active participation of young people in society through the development of youth organisations and the voluntary sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active participation of young people in democratic life - Influence of civil society in policy-making process - Development of the voluntary sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central Bureau of Statistics and other official statistics - Reports of "Think thanks" and professional organisations - National Governmental reports 	
Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Promote the non-formal education and youth sector in the region by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting projects with the partner beneficiaries, in particular exchanges of young people and those active in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public and private investment in non-formal education and youth sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports of "Think thanks" and professional organisations - National Governmental reports 	

<p>youth work and youth organisations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting initiatives that reinforce young people's mutual understanding, sense of solidarity and tolerance, as well as the development of cooperation in the field of youth and civil society in the Western Balkans. 			
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased opportunities for young people to experience international mobility and to acquire socio-educational skills which could better facilitate their integration in society; - Increased participation of young people in democratic life and active citizenship in particular with regard to young women and young people with fewer opportunities; - Improved interethnic and inter-religious dialogue among young people and youth organisations. - Development of long-lasting partnerships as well the exchange of expertise and know-how in the field of youth and non-formal education. - Improved organisational skills of organisations established in the Western Balkans, in particular with regard to management of European Union funds. 	<p>All activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of organisations (including partners) from the Western Balkans participating in activities supported by the Window; - Number of projects involving young people with fewer opportunities; - Number of projects dealing with minorities and inter-ethnic inter-religious dialogue issues; - Number of young women involved in the activities; - Rating of submitted projects; - Measures of efficiency in administrative and financial management. <p>Activity 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of youth exchanges among young people from different locations taking place in the Western Balkans. <p>Activity 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of European Voluntary Service projects in the Western Balkans; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency - Other implementing bodies of the Youth in Action programme 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of organisations accredited as EVS host organisations under the Youth in Action programme in the Balkans. <p>Activity 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of training and networking projects organised in the Western Balkans. 		
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Exchanges 2. European Voluntary Service 3. Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations 	Call for Proposals	EUR 1 500 000	

ANNEX II: Amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed per quarter (Q) over the full duration of project

Contracted	Q4 2010	Q1 2011	Q2 2011	Q3 2011
Activity 1	175 000	0	175 000	150 000
Activity 2	175 000	0	175 000	150 000
Activity 3	175 000	0	175 000	150 000
Cumulated	525 000	525 000	1.050 000	1 500 000
Disbursed	Q4 2010	Q1 2011	Q2 2012	Q3 2013
Activity 1	0	100 000	300 000	100 000
Activity 2	0	100 000	300 000	100 000
Activity 3	0	100 000	300 000	100 000
Cumulated	0	300 000	1 200 000	1 500 000

ANNEX III: Description of Institutional Framework

These are the authorities in the Beneficiaries in charge of issues related to the Youth Sector:

- Albania: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Commission for the coordination of youth issues in BiH
- Croatia: Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Department for International Cooperation Youth Sector, Agency of Youth and Sport
- Kosovo⁷: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
- Montenegro: Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Serbia: Ministry of Youth and Sports

⁷ Under UNSCR 1244/99

ANNEX IV: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents

- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/210/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/211/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC
- Council Decision of 12 February 2008 (2008/119/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Croatia and repealing Decision 2006/145/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/212/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2006/57/EC
- Council Decision of 22 January 2007 (2007/49/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Montenegro.
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/213/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC
- Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2009/2011

ANNEX V: Details per EU funded contract

The Programme will be implemented on the basis of a permanent Call for Proposals, which foresees three deadlines (September 2010, February 2011 and June 2011). Grants will be awarded to Youth organisations following the selection of the projects after an evaluation by experts.

The programme will be implemented on an indirect centralised basis by the European Commission following Article 53a of the Financial Regulation and corresponding provisions of the Implementing Rules.

Implementation tasks are delegated under Article 54(2) (a) of the Financial Regulation to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, which was created by Commission Decision 2005/56/EC of 14 January 2005. The mandate of the agency was extended by Commission Decision 2007/114/EC of 8 February 2007.

According to Article 12 (3) of the Council Regulation No (EC) 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes⁸, any programme delegated to an executive agency has to contribute to the financing of the administrative budget of the agency.

⁸ OJ L11, 16.1.2003, p. 1.