

Annex - ENPI Regional East Action Programme 2012, part III

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Eastern Partnership Youth Window CRIS : ENPI/2012 /24307 ENPI/2012/24308		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 29 million EUR 14 million to be committed in 2012 EUR 15 million to be committed in 2013, subject to the approval of the 2013 Budget by the Budgetary Authority and the effective availability of appropriations		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach - direct centralised management - indirect centralised management with: - Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture - Youth in Action National Agencies (EU Member States + Croatia + Iceland + Lichtenstein + Norway + Turkey) ¹		
DAC-code	16010	Sector	Social/ welfare services

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window is designed to reflect the national and regional priorities within the Eastern Partnership region in line with the Joint Communication "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"², as well as priorities in the youth policy sphere within the European Union. The Eastern Partnership Youth Window forms part of the broader agenda for collaboration between the European Commission and the Eastern Partnership countries³ set out in the revised ENPI East Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and the ENPI East Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) 2010-2013, in which youth is identified as one of the priority areas for funding. The Window is an important component of the work programme of the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "people to people" and has been the topic of several Platform discussions.

¹ The Youth in Action programme is implemented for its main part (approximately 85%) by national agencies set up in the EU Member States and in other countries eligible according to Commission decision 1719/2006/EC "establishing the "Youth in Action" programme for the period 2007 to 2013". National Agencies have been set up in the EU Member States and in Croatia, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Turkey. A National Agency has also been set up in Switzerland but it is not eligible for benefiting from ENPI activities (ENPI Regulation (EC 1638/2006) - Article 21).

² See: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood" COM(2011)303 of 25.05.2011.

³ The beneficiary countries of the Eastern Partnership are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

In the Eastern Partnership countries, youth affairs are recognized as a priority area by all national governments. The priorities within the youth field, as identified in the course of the needs assessment⁴ conducted for the identification of the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme, are closely matched to priority areas within the European Union in the sphere of youth⁵ i.e.:

- Employability of young people, skills development, lifelong learning;
- Social inclusion of youth, access to services, opportunities;
- Health of young people – addressing key health concerns, promoting healthy lifestyle;
- Promotion of participation and active citizenship of young people.

The following needs and key challenges relating to the youth sector in the Eastern Partnership countries were identified in the needs assessment:

- The complex nature of the needs of the youth population demands an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to policy responses. The capacity of Eastern Partnership countries is limited in this regard at present, and needs to be strengthened;
- Where ministries with a portfolio for youth policy and affairs are in place, their remit is often too narrow in order to tackle the broad range of issues contained in the youth sphere, and they have rather limited capacity in terms of human and financial resources. Moreover, youth issues are often not mainstreamed sufficiently within other ministries (such as education, health, social affairs, labour) whose policy areas clearly relate directly to the needs of the youth population;
- There is a need for greater involvement of civil society actors, and the greater inclusion of young people, into the identification of needs of the youth population and formulation and implementation of responses at the policy and practice levels;
- There is relatively limited regional collaboration in the sphere of youth at present;
- There is a need to afford greater attention to responding to the needs of disadvantaged groups within the youth population, in order to address the significant levels of inequality that exist in these societies, as reflected in the large disparities in living conditions and life opportunities within the youth population;
- There is a need to devote greater attention and efforts to the development of a more comprehensive system of youth work, and associated development of the role of youth workers, in order better to respond to the needs of young people;
- The spheres of lifelong learning and non-formal education deserve prioritization as a response to the needs of young people, and the economies of the Eastern Partnership region.

The Eastern Partnership Window under the Youth in Action Programme will help to address most of the abovementioned challenges through regional projects with and for the key beneficiaries – young people living in the Eastern Partnership region.

⁴ An extensive consultation exercise was conducted by an expert team in the period December 2010 to May 2011.

⁵ See: ‘Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), Council of the European Union, (2009/C 311/01) ‘Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship’; European Commission White Paper: A New Impetus For European Youth’, Commission of The European Communities, Brussels, 30.05.2005.

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window is demand-driven, and aims to foster the principle of ownership and development of capacity in the youth sector, in accordance with the Paris Declaration and the European Commission's Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid".

2.2. Lessons learnt

The lessons learnt for the Eastern Partnership Youth Window are drawn from the range of relevant EU-funded programmes in this region, and related studies (on education, social inclusion, employment and skills, etc), as well as the longstanding EU commitment in ENPI South region in the sphere of Youth (EuroMed Youth). It also draws on the extensive range of programmes and activities conducted by other international donors, which include a certain number of joint programmes with the European Commission, in the region in the youth sphere.

- Policy level lessons: There has been a tendency for activities of donor and other organizations to focus on those aspects of the policy process that relate to identification of priorities and production of strategic plans, without adequate follow up on activities aimed at sustainability of the policy cycle and tackling the challenges of implementation, review and evaluation;
- At the level of implementation, review and evaluation, there tends to be limited engagement of a broader range of stakeholders in the policy process (such as youth organizations, other civil society actors, expert communities, youth population in general);
- At the level of project implementation by non-governmental actors, there is a need to expand the opportunities for organizations to be able to participate more actively in such schemes, and thus broaden the geographical impact of these activities, and build the capacity of a larger group of organizations and their staff;
- There is a need to extend the impact of EU funding to more disadvantaged target groups within the youth population, such as those living in rural areas, young people with disabilities, discriminated young women, youth from ethnic minorities, etc.;
- The evidence produced by those activities that do target the needs of more disadvantaged youth, for instance through skills development, is that significant impacts can be achieved, such as tangible increase in employability of young people after participation in projects. These activities are also seen as having an impact more broadly on the communities in which the young people live;
- The Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013) supports cooperation between young people and youth workers from the EU and its Neighbouring Partner Countries, thus supporting the EU political objective of establishing closer links between the Union and its neighbours.

2.3. Complementary actions

In the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window will provide a parallel action to the longstanding Euromed Youth programme in ENPI South.

Within the Eastern Partnership region, there is a substantial range of ongoing actions in the sphere of Youth, funded by the EU and by other donors:

The **Eastern Partnership Youth Programme** aims to support and strengthen the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies, through the promotion of regional cooperation between policy institutions, youth organizations, youth workers and youth populations. This €5.5 million programme is to be delivered through a combination of two components: capacity development (€3m) and a grant scheme (€2.5 million). With its Decision of 2nd July 2012, the European Commission decided to merge the grant scheme (component 2) with the Eastern Partnership Window under the Youth in Action Programme in order to avoid duplication and to provide a fast and effective response to target the needs of disadvantaged young people.

The Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), funded by the EU, offers opportunities to support youth exchanges, voluntary service and the training and capacity-building of youth workers and organisations from the Eastern Partnership countries. Two monitoring surveys on the qualitative impact of the Youth in Action programme on its beneficiaries carried out in 2010 and 2011⁶ have shown that the programme has a strong effect on individuals' educational and professional development both as regards young people and youth workers, as well as on the development of youth organisations (e.g. 75% of participants learned better how to identify opportunities for their personal or professional future; 92% of youth workers considered that they gained skills and knowledge they would not be able to gain through projects organised at national level; 90% of youth organisations considered that participating in a project supported by Youth in Action programme had increased their project management skills).

Ongoing programmes funded by other donors such as the Council of Europe, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, the World Bank, cover a broad spectrum of sectors and priorities (education and skills, employment, social protection, health, migration, citizenship and participation, etc), and include actions that are targeted specifically at youth, or which focus on issues that affect young people significantly, but where youth is often not identified as the key or only target group (e.g. trafficking of human beings, unemployment, drug abuse, etc).

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window will provide significant added value, through its emphasis on regional collaboration, by offering more non-formal learning opportunities to young people, with a special focus on young people with fewer opportunities, to enhance their skills, competences and active participation in society. It will also offer opportunities for training and cooperation for youth organisations and youth workers, so as to enhance their professionalism and their ability to build capacity in the youth sector.

2.4. Donor coordination

The need to strengthen and extend coordination and collaboration among donors, and between donors and beneficiary countries, was noted frequently during the needs assessment. This programme – in line with the aims of the Paris Declaration, the European Consensus on Development, will contribute to more effective donor coordination and interaction with the beneficiary countries through the implication of National Youth Agencies from the Youth in

⁶2010 and 2011 surveys on the qualitative impact of the Youth in Action Programme. Results available http://ec.europa.eu/youth/focus/doc/monitoring_survey/report_monitoring_survey.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/focus/doc/monitoring_survey/main_results_monitoring_survey_2011.pdf

Action Programme Countries (in the EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Turkey). In this regard, through the synergies created and exploited by the programme, SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre will contribute to the activities of the programme notably by sharing good practice and know-how in the sphere of Youth in the Eastern Partnership countries.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window is to support the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies through cooperation among young people and youth workers⁷.

The specific objectives are:

- To support partners countries in responding to the needs of disadvantaged young people;
- To promote youth work development.

3.2. Main activities and Expected results

Main activities

In order to reach its objectives the programme it will be delivered through a grants scheme aiming at financing more than 1,400 projects involving about 21,000 young people and youth workers.

The grants scheme will take the shape of an "Eastern Partnership Youth Window" under the Youth in Action Programme

The grants scheme will provide support to disadvantaged young people living in rural or deprived urban areas in Eastern Partnership countries. It will also make a contribution to raising awareness of the nature of youth work in the region, and identification of best practice approaches in this sphere.

Activities will include support to exchanges between youth organisations

Priority in awarding grants will be given to those projects that demonstrate a clear commitment to, and capacity for, regional collaboration. In addition, extensive networking among project teams working on related thematic areas around the Eastern Partnership region will be promoted and facilitated, to ensure that peer learning and exchange of best practice occurs.

Expected results

- An increased number of young people from Eastern Partnership countries, with a specific focus on disadvantaged sections of the population, will have participated in

⁷ Those who work, on a professional or volunteer basis, with young people in supporting their social and personal development, principally in non-formal/informal learning contexts.

projects with the potential to contribute to their educational pathway, employability, citizenship and the quality of life in the Communities concerned;

- The projects delivered will have addressed a wide range of priority themes, relating to local, national, regional and EU priorities, for example in the spheres of non-formal education and skills development, health, citizenship and participation, environment, inter-cultural and inter-ethnic dialogue;
- The skills acquired and developed by young people through their participation will have had a positive impact on their personal and social development, evidenced through increased employability, greater civic participation, increased self-esteem, enhanced understanding of their role in society and their relations with others, including young people from other cultures, countries, etc;
- The grants scheme will have contributed to the development of greater social inclusion of young people, and social cohesion between young people and their communities on inter-social, inter-ethnic, inter-generational bases;
- The capacity of the youth sector – at the governmental level (national and local) and civil society level (non-governmental organizations, youth workers and others involved in the grants scheme) will have been increased as a result of their experience in the implementation of projects;
- The lessons learnt from the implementation of the grants scheme will, with the support of the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit under the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme, have fed into the evidence base and broader public and policy debates in the Eastern Partnership region, regarding youth policy development and the provision of services for the youth.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risk 1. Regional lack of stability. Recent events have indicated that there is a potential for lack of stability in the Eastern Partnership countries, including tensions in external relations involving partner countries; internal political and social conflict, including societal protests against governments and their policies; and worsening economic situation in partner countries. An escalation of such trends in one or more partner countries can have an impact on the delivery of the programme. However the programme's activities are intended to support the development of greater social cohesion, and more effective responses to the needs of young people, who are a key actor in the transformations seen in these countries.

Risk 2. Difficulties encountered in reaching key target groups. The majority of young people in the Eastern Partnership countries do not participate in organized activities. Furthermore, in the case of certain disadvantaged groups, a considerable degree of isolation from mainstream social engagement can be seen, and this affects the information flow to these young people, and their ability to make their voices heard. There is, accordingly, a risk that the programme will not be able to involve these key beneficiaries into its activities. This will be mitigated through the focus of the grants scheme on engaging with disadvantaged youth, and through the support to be provided by SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre in reaching out to these categories of young people.

Risk 3. Uneven delivery of the grant scheme across the region and within countries. Variation in the capacity and commitment of civil society organisations across the region may lead to an uneven pattern of grant awards (for example, between countries, between urban and rural

areas). Grant scheme management should take measures accordingly to ensure equity of access and opportunity for participants, particularly focusing on participants who traditionally have been under-represented in such schemes; and to ensure that the capacity of NGOs, and their associated needs for capacity-building, are effectively addressed.

3.4. Crosscutting Issues

The programme will contribute to the goals of **good governance** through its strengthening of capacity in the policy sphere, through the inclusion of a broad range of societal stakeholders in the activities of the projects, and the promotion of active participation among young people in community-based projects.

Gender is identified as a key cross-cutting theme, as young female people represent a vulnerable group (with regard to restrictions of employment/economic opportunities, risks of becoming victims to human trafficking, abuse; risks related to health problems, etc). The programme will address such priorities through capacity building in the policy sphere, and through projects involving young people, with young female participants identified as one of the target groups. The experience of the Youth in Action Programme points to a slight majority of young female participants involved in the available activities.

Environmental sustainability, including climate change issues, will be prioritised through inclusion as themes in community-based activities under the grants scheme. Raising young people's awareness and mobilization in tackling environmental challenges has been seen as a thematic priority that offers a good scope for regional collaboration between young people in addressing common problems

Good governance, human rights and fostering respect for cultural diversity and intercultural learning by facilitating joint activities of young people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds could be addressed as project themes. The Eastern Partnership Youth Window will bring a significant number of young people closer to youth related policy making processes at local, regional and national level within the Eastern Partnership Countries.

3.5. Stakeholders

Service providers for youth at sub-national level: key stakeholders in this sphere can include:

- Youth centres
- Advice centres for youth (e.g. on healthcare, employment, civil rights)
- Out-of-school educational establishments

Non-governmental sector: stakeholders in this sector cover both youth policy development, and/or the provision of services for youth. They include, indicatively:

- Youth councils on national and sub-national levels
- Youth organizations, or youth-led organizations
- Organizations for which youth is a primary target group

- Charity organizations with a focus on youth issues
- Foundations with a focus on youth, or a majority youth membership

Youth population: it is an aim of the programme to promote conditions in which young people are able to participate actively in developments in the societies where they belong, and have the opportunity to make their voice heard. The communications activities of the programmes, along with the projects that will occur as a result of the grants scheme, will contribute to young people's engagement as stakeholders in their communities and societies as a whole.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

Indirect centralised management

Indirect centralised management in accordance with article 54(2)(c) of the Financial Regulation is the main implementation modality (99% of the programme).

Not only indirect centralised management is the main management mode used by the Youth in Action Programme, but it provides the fastest and most effective response to target the needs of disadvantaged young people through a combination of already tested non-formal learning activities including a focus on the development of youth work by being integrated into an already existing programme.

The delegated bodies are:

- The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)⁸ subject to the extension of the mandate of the Agency, allowing it to manage Youth in Action contributions and contracts to be financed by the Union's external aid instruments;
- the Youth in Action national Agencies in the EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Turkey. For this component, the funds will be allocated to DG EAC, which in turn will delegate the management of the funds to the Youth in Action national agencies, under indirect centralised management.

Direct centralised management

EUR 260.000 will be allocated to SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre, an entity that is part of the Polish National Youth Agency and that is funded with an operating grant from DG EAC under direct centralised management. Thanks to ENPI funds, SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre will facilitate cooperation between the National Youth Agencies and youth organisations from Eastern Partnership countries and conduct communication and visibility actions for the Eastern Partnership Window. ENPI funds will be included in the operating grant from DG EAC.

⁸ The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is a public body created by the Decision 2005/56/EC of the European Commission adopted on 14 January 2005. The Agency's mission is to implement a number of strands of more than 15 Community funded programmes and actions in the fields of education and training, active citizenship, youth, audiovisual and culture.

The change of management mode constitutes a substantial change except where the Commission "re-centralises" or reduces the level of tasks previously delegated to the beneficiary country, international organisation or delegated body under, respectively, decentralised, joint or indirect centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

1) Contracts

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the rules set out in Part Two, Title IV, "External Relations" of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the EU, completed by rules of Part One, Title VI when so provided by Part Two, Title IV.

Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by Regulation 1638/2006 (ENPI). Further extensions of this participation to other natural or legal persons by the concerned authorising officer shall be subject to the conditions provided for in Article 21(7) ENPI.

2) Specific rules for grants

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are laid down in the Youth in Action Programme Guide (valid as of 1 January 2012)⁹. They are established in accordance with the principles set out in Title VI 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget. When derogations to these principles are applied, they shall be justified, in particular in the following cases:

- Financing in full (derogation to the principle of co-financing): the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants is fixed in the Youth in Action Programme Guide, depending on the type of action (European voluntary service, Youth exchanges and Training and networking). Full financing may only be applied in the cases provided for in Article 253 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget.
- Derogation to the principle of non-retroactivity: a grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only if the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant is awarded, in accordance with Article 112 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The grants scheme budget is as follows:

Delegatee bodies	2012	2013
EACEA	€5 million	€5 million
National Agencies	€9 million	€10 million

⁹ See: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/programme-guide-2012_en.pdf

EUR 260.000 will be allocated to SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre which is directly attached to the Polish National Youth Agency. SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre will facilitate cooperation between the National Youth Agencies and youth organisations from Eastern Partnership countries and conduct communication and visibility actions for the Eastern Partnership Window.

Selection of projects under the Eastern Partnership Youth Window will be based on the Youth in Action Programme Guide (revolving call of proposals) which foresees three deadlines to submit project applications per year¹⁰.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring will be supervised by DG EAC and carried out by the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and Youth in Action National Agencies. The monitoring action implemented under Youth in Action will be extended to cover beneficiaries and projects supported by the grants scheme. This will enable the Agencies to monitor activities and performance, as well as to offer guidance to beneficiary organisations. Independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission may carry out external monitoring under the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) System.

Indicators of the programme will relate to, inter alia:

- The impact of the programme on young people and youth workers' personal and skills development through personal interviews or questionnaire on a sample of participants;
- The number of projects and project participants supporting the Eastern Partnership Youth Window with a focus on matching the following priorities:
 - projects demonstrating a clear commitment to provide support to young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas
 - projects raising awareness about the nature of youth work
 - projects promoting the sharing of best practices in the sphere of youth work.

Monitoring measures of the flow of participants from Programme Countries (EU Member States + Croatia + Iceland + Lichtenstein + Norway + Turkey) and from Eastern Partnership Countries will be conducted on a regular basis and if necessary, measures will be taken by the Commission in order to ensure sufficient opportunities for participants from the Eastern Partnership countries, notably for Youth in Action – European Voluntary Service action over the years of implementation.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

Funds allocated will be taken into consideration when the Commission does the final evaluation of the Youth in Action Programme.

In addition, external audits will be carried out if required.

¹⁰ See: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/programme-guide-2012_en.pdf

Evaluations and audits will be funded from sources other than the programme budget.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window will benefit from the visibility infrastructure of the Youth in Action programme at European level - including the visibility measures of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency - and at the level of Youth in Action programme countries (National Agencies and SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre). The discussions on the Eastern Partnership Youth Window taking place in the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 meetings provide further visibility to this programme.

The Youth in Action programme involves more than 150.000 young people and youth workers in about 8.000 projects each year. The Programme's website reaches annually about 1.4 million visitors. Web-based visibility, a project compendium on the Eastern Partnership Youth Window and flyers are complemented by visibility events like the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 Youth Event in Yerevan or the Youth in Action National Agencies staff trainings.

The website of each EU Delegations in Eastern Partnership countries as well as the website of the Eastern Partnership Youth Programme will also have a link to the Eastern Partnership Youth Window section on the Youth in Action website.