



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CC-ERYICA(2024)PV35

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN ERYICA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Joint Co-ordinating Committee

35th meeting
Monday 21 October 2024
18.15-19.15

Strasbourg
European Youth Centre
Room 4.1

REPORT

Present:

ERYICA: Tanja Herceg, ad interim Director and Imre Simon, ad interim Deputy Director

CDEJ: Miriam Teuma (Malta), Maria Christodoulou (Cyprus)

CCJ: Peter Torok

Secretariat: Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of Youth Department; Clementina Barbaro, Head of Youth Policy Division; Natalja Turenne, responsible for Partnership with ERYICA

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The secretariat opened the meeting, the participants introduced themselves and the agenda was adopted with no change as it appears in document [CC-ERYICA\(2024\)OJ35](#).

2. Nomination of the Chair of the meeting

The Committee nominated Miriam Teuma (Malta, CDEJ member) as Chair of the current meeting.

3. Recent developments within ERYICA - an oral up-date

Tanja Herceg, ERYICA Director ad interim, informed the Committee that ERYICA's previous Director, Eva Reina, had been on a long sick leave since February 2024 at the end of which she resigned end of August 2024. Since then Tanja Herceg was nominated Director ad interim and Imre Simon Deputy Director ad interim. The procedure for the recruitment of a new Director had been launched, it was hoped that the new postholder would join the team early next week. Patrick Burke, Youth Work Ireland, continued to be ERYICA's President; Sif Vik (Iceland), who represented ERYICA in youth sector's statutory meetings several times, continued to be its First Vice-President, and Daniel Poli (Germany) was its Second Vice-President.

Ms. Herceg continued her presentation of recent developments within ERYICA concentrating on the one hand, on the achievements the organisation had attained, and on the challenges in front of it, on the other. She also mentioned that several members of staff were recruited this year, but they were still quiet new. An unexpected development was the non-renewal by the new Finnish government of a contract to one of the best and most experienced ERYICA's member – Finnish «Koordinatti» which has been disbanded. Ms Herceg's full speaking notes appear in the Appendix to this report.

The Head of Youth Department recalled that he attended this year's ERYICA's General Assembly and that the former Head of Youth Department was also there as a guest of honour where she received an award for her life-time commitment to the work for, with and by young people. He recognised efforts made by ERYICA members and its staff to succeed in the full implementation of the activities of the Grant Agreement 2024 according to plan.

4. Implementation of the work programme 2024

[Link to the grant agreement 2024; Implementation of Activities PPP](#)

The ERYICA representatives thanked the secretariat for its visit to the ERYICA headquarters in Luxemburg in July 2024 to personally take news of ERYICA's developments and discuss the 2024 and 2025 programme of activities. The Grant Agreement 2024 was being implemented according to plan despite the difficulties. The first webinar «*Information, disinformation and democracy: exploring informed youth participation in democratic processes*» took place on 17 April 2024; the second webinar «*Youth Information and AI: Understanding AI and its impact and role in youth information provision*» would be held early December 2024 counting to reach out also to countries which were not yet ERYICA's members. An online training course «*Youth Information Mediator*» (JIMMY) kicked-off on 7 October 2024, the manual had been updated in view of that training. 23 participants joined the course.

A seminar on «*Mental health literacy in youth information work*» was held on 10 September 2024 in Brussels. Thanks to the Council of Europe's promotion, the event boasted 40 participants and the CCJ member Anne Knoebl made an excellent contribution to the discussions. A first periodical report on this issue would start already end of this year.

A new *Task Force on the European Quality Label for youth information and counselling*¹ consisting of 10 members was elected this year for a mandate of 3 years, and held its 1st meeting in April 2024 in EYCB. The 2nd meeting would be on-line in Autumn 2024. Currently there were 11 labelled centres. These centres, considered as co-ordinating structures, had the right to label local youth information services within their network: for example, in Ireland 18 local youth services were quality-labelled. Some regions of Spain would soon start this activity. In Cyprus, the Youth Board would like to go even further in the development of this project. Young Scot was to become the 12th member of the labelled network on 14 November 2024.

The Head of Youth Department noted that that would link the youth information and counselling mission to the UK authorities in the run up to the Ministerial Conference next year. It could be

¹ The European Youth Information Quality Label was developed in the 2019-2020 Council of Europe – ERYICA partnership agreement, to assist young people in finding quality information, in accordance to the European Youth Information Charter. The Quality Label has been designed together with young people and is linked to a series of quality assessment standards, mechanisms and tools. It's available for public or private non-profit organisations providing youth information services in Council of Europe countries. Applicants must become signatories of the European Youth Information Charter and fulfil at least 70% of the criteria. Once awarded, the coordinating structures are qualified to label the youth information services within their network. The Label is awarded for 3 years, after which a review must take place. This project has been developed in the framework of the Partnership Agreement between the Council of Europe and the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency.

an opportunity to invite and encourage some countries to sign the Charter on Youth Information in the margins of the Conference.

The secretariat mentioned that it paid special attention to promote these activities through the youth sector's networks, Think Youth! Newsletter and as from September also on social media. ERYICA representatives, in turn, noted that the Council of Europe resources and particularly those developed in partnership with ERYICA were promoted at all ERYICA's events.

5. Preparation of the work programme 2025

[CC-ERYICA\(2024\)1 concept note; Proposal activities 2025 PPP](#)

ERYICA representatives made their suggestions for the next year's programme of activities of the Partnership between ERYICA and the Council of Europe, pleading for the grant 2025 not to decrease, and pointed out that the proposal continued to include online activities which allowed to reach out to more people. ERYICA's Governing Board met on 17 September and gave its opinion on the proposals for 2025. A major activity could be a seminar for ERYICA member organisations, youth information workers and CDEJ representatives/their colleagues in the ministries on the theme of young people's economic anxiety and institutional distrust. This was the theme youth information workers and youth counsellors were facing the most.

Other JCC members and the secretariat pointed out to the need to link this possible theme to youth information and counselling: the activity should showcase the added value of youth information in helping young people to navigate through changing economic reality in Europe. As regards the topic of institutional trust or trust in society at large, it should also be linked to the work done by the Council of Europe's youth sector, for example in the framework of youth engagement in climate-change agenda (particularly keeping in mind the adoption of a CM Recommendation to member States on climate change and young people) and the topic of youth participation. Another relevant subject was indeed youth information and counselling for young people in rural areas (and again, with a link to a draft CM Recommendation on rural youth which was expected to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers early next year).

The suggestion to organise a seminar in one of the Youth Information Quality Labelled Centres received no objection from the JCC, so this option could be looked into.

In conclusion, the JCC agreed that the above-mentioned proposal needed repackaging and fine-tuning in link with the priorities and standard-setting documents of the Council of Europe youth sector. The activity should ideally lead to insights, recommendations and possible tools as to how youth policy could respond to building trust between young people, society and institutions, which could even feed into the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on Youth.

6. Continuation of the discussion on the development of a strategic partnership between ERYICA and the youth sector of the Council of Europe

In respect of a strategic partnership, there are several possibilities apart from a joint seminar next year (which could be seen as a first step): invitation of ERYICA's members of secretariat, as well as ERYICA's member organisations to the Youth Department's events; invitation of CCJ members responsible for the ERYICA files and relevant thematic files to ERYICA's events; circulation of ERYICA's events to the CDEJ members/their colleagues for possible participation, if relevant.

ERYICA representatives could be invited to the breakfasts with the Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe which took place on Tuesday mornings during the statutory meetings in Strasbourg. If ERYICA would inform the secretariat about countries' events, Quality Label Awards, General Assembly, it would try to link them to its missions and events, as well as promote them through its networks and resources. ERYICA representatives suggested to work on user-

friendly (and youth-friendly) versions of the recently adopted Committee of Ministers Recommendations to member States in the field of youth which the JCC thought an excellent idea, because one of the problems of trust in institutions was that people could not understand their formal language.

7. Any other business

8. Date and place of the next meeting: in the framework of the statutory bodies of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in Autumn 2025 subject to their organisation due to the Ministerial Conference on Youth (7-8 October 2025, Malta).

Appendix

Presentation of Tanja Herceg, ERYICA Director ad interim, item 3

Thank you for your time. I will briefly provide an update on ERYICA in six key points that are not covered in the following presentations. I will offer a brief overview with some statistics, then focusing on the areas of capacity building and training, the EUinform project, mental health, digital innovation, international cooperation, and challenges.

Despite global recognition of the right to information, many young people still lack access to necessary resources, emphasizing the need for standardized youth information centers. ERYICA's mission, in partnership with Council of Europe is vital in addressing this gap.

Importance of ERYICA

ERYICA continues to develop and promote quality youth information policies, supporting the principles of the European Youth Information Charter. With a network of 42 members in 27 countries, over 4,000 youth information services with 31,000 staff and volunteers that our members have, ERYICA ensures standardized youth information across Europe and has trained over 2,700 professionals.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The [European Youth Information Quality Label](#) is one of the highlights of the CoE- ERYICA partnership linked to a set of **quality assessment criteria**, mechanisms and tools but in next presentation my colleague Imre will present these achievements in more detail, so I'll just briefly touch on other accomplishments.

1. Capacity Building and Trainings: we have completed the YInfoPioneers project, establishing youth information services in underrepresented areas of the Western Balkans. We have also organized 3 trainings annually, including the ongoing JIMMY training, supported by the Council of Europe.

2. Through EUinform Project we have launched the "Walk the Talk" platform, available in 13 languages, to engage youth in elections, focusing on 9 key priorities: climate change, human rights, mental health, affordable housing, a fair economy, accesible education, full employment, security and safety, better local opportunities. We have also mapped and publish youth information services accross Europe.

3. Mental Health Initiatives: we have completed the YIMinds project and launched a follow-up, Do you mind project to empower youth workers with mental health skills, while mapping best practices across Europe.

4. Digital Innovation: we are promoting the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence (AI) in youth work, with a new project on artificial intelligence going on and on development.

5. Strengthening International Cooperation

Through the GA hold in Bucharest and Network meeting ERYICA open discussion about priorities inside of CoE-ERYICA partnership voted to focus on economic anxiety and distrust, especially in relation with climate change.

About other international cooperations, We are also active in Steering group of youth participation strategy with SALTO PI, our Governing board is preparing for meeting with European commission on the topic of Youth, we are active in Steering group of Europe Goes Local, preparing for Youth Network Event in European Parliament.

Our new projects and projects of our members, align with the values of the Council of Europe, and we provide platforms for members to invest in relevant topics.

6. Challenges and Future plans

We have faced internal and difficult challenges, particularly with staffing, which allowed us to reassess and improve our working operations that we are detail mapping, aligning tasks within existing staff and externals and implementing education of staff.

The Youth participation process in ERYICA and the Youth Commission model that we have expected will be adopted already, have reached a level where all our members are engaged, discussing various models of youth participation on democratic way and giving opportunity to find the best youth participation model in which members will have consensus about.

Together, with our partners and members, ERYICA will continue to innovate and positively impact on the youth and through next two presentations we will more present about 2024 and plans for 2025.

Thank you for your attention.