Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

The Youth Law[1] stimulates that public institutions implementing youth policy should evaluate the impact of their relevant policy actions on the youth population. According to the Youth Law, local governments developing an institutional system that works with youth have the right to establish youth councils whose tasks should include collecting and analysing information about local youth problems, needs and interests. The evaluation of youth interests, rights, needs and opportunities is one of the main principles of the youth policy (the principle of observance of youth interests).

Cooperation between policy-making and research

In the Youth Law, it is prescribed that public institutions should evaluate the impact of the relevant field policy on youth (according to their competencies in terms of implementing youth policy). According to the Youth Law, local governments developing an institutional system that works with youth must establish youth councils, all of which must be tasked with collecting and analysing information about local youth problems, needs and interests. The evaluation of youth interests, rights, needs and opportunities is one of the main principles of the youth policy (the principle of observance of youth interests).

As mentioned above, regular youth monitoring, youth research and analysis are also defined as significant tasks in the Guidelines.

Until 2009, Latvia was represented in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP), participating in activities such as reporting on youth policy implementation in Latvia and elaborating on developments and activities in the field of youth research. In 2012, Latvia’s participation in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy was renewed. Two reports (Better Knowledge of Youth, and Youth and the World), as well as an informative report on youth policy, were also developed in Latvia in 2012.
Additionally, in 2013, the Information sheet on the Social Inclusion of young people in Latvia was created. At the end of 2014, all the aforementioned reports were updated.

Until 2013, Latvia was also represented in the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR).

**National Statistics and available data sources**

The Central Statistical Bureau collects all official statistics on the population of Latvia. Publications and databases are also available on the Central Statistical Bureau’s website [2]. Unfortunately, young people are not treated a separate target group and are not displayed in statistical summaries. The Central Statistical Bureau publishes annual statistical yearbooks that include basic information on the youth population (with the most recent available figures accessible [3] in Latvian only [3]). The Bureau also publishes annual publications like Children in Latvia [4], which gives in-depth statistical information on children in Latvia and their quality of life. Unfortunately, in these and other statistical data collected by the Central Statistical Bureau, the youth is most often defined in different age groups (mostly 15-24, sometimes also 18-24) than that which is defined in the Youth Law of Latvia (13-25). Therefore, it is difficult to carry out statistical data analyses of young people in Latvia within the age group defined by the law.

**Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field**

Information support and research work in the field of youth from the state budget for youth is approximately 17000 EUR.