



Prague, October 2015
Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group
and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field 2015 - 2017

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Introduction

Visegrad Group (V4 - Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic) and Eastern Partnership countries (EaP - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) have a productive and steadily developing relationship with substantial dialogue across a wide range of youth issues, working seminars and annual V4 presidential meetings supported by the active participation of representatives of Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, and SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

Participants in the *“Youth Policy and Youth Work: Working Seminar on Cooperation between Visegrad Group, Romania and Eastern Partnership Countries”* in Prague on 6 – 7 October, 2015 agreed on deepening and enlarging the existing cooperation based on three-year framework action plans. It is not only due to the common will of both geographical groupings to collaborate but it is also a need. Although both geographical grouping are facing different realities even among their individual countries, the challenges related to their youth policies have a lot in common. Besides, there is indeed a strong solidarity for not turning the back on the others: on contrary, Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries need each other more than ever. To build on this momentum and based on the signed *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministries of Countries of Visegrad Group Responsible for Youth and the Ministries of Countries of Eastern Partnership to European Union Responsible for Youth in Youth Field* in Bratislava on June 22, 2015, the joint initiative to launch ***the first Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field for 2015 – 2017*** is the response to this need: it shows the will of both geographical groupings to strengthen their links in order to ensure an efficient collaboration in the youth field between them but also beyond them on request of other countries interested in cooperation, as a condition of their national youth policy developments.

Background Information

Cooperation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth has been implemented within the official programmes of the respective V4 country taking the presidency of the Visegrad Group (it is a one year rotating presidency which starts on the 1st July and finishes on the 30th June of the subsequent year) since 2011.

The cooperation was initiated by the Slovak Presidency (SK V4 PRES; 1. 7. 2010 – 30. 6. 2011) when a CDEJ (= European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe) member from Georgia – based on personal relations – was invited as an observer to an annual V4 meeting in Bratislava in May 2011. Afterwards, the Georgian minister of youth and sport invited the directors of V4 ministerial youth departments to Tbilisi in July 2011 to discuss the cooperation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth.



As a result, under the Czech V4 PRES (1. 7. 2011 – 30. 6. 2012) the representatives of EaP countries were invited to join the annual V4 meeting in Prague in May 2012. During this meeting the participants agreed on developing cooperation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth on three levels: among 1. ministries responsible for youth, 2. Youth in Action national agencies, and 3. national youth councils. One of the final products of such cooperation was a training seminar in Georgia organised by the Czech Youth in Action National Agency in 2013 aimed at creating partnerships between V4 and EaP countries which resulted into four successful projects granted through Eastern Partnership Window of the Youth in Action Programme.

Under the succeeding Polish V4 PRES (1. 7. 2012 – 30. 6. 2013) in Sulejowek, Poland, in April 2013 *the Comparative Study of the Situation of Youth in the Countries of the Visegrad Group* which covered participation and decision making, volunteerism, non-formal education as well as employment and entrepreneurship was introduced (Ewa Krzaklewska; Council of Europe 2013). The V4 and EaP participants evaluated the results of the cooperation in a youth policy development.

In the annual V4 and EaP annual meeting under the Hungarian V4 PRES (1. 7. 2013 – 30. 6. 2014) in Visegrad in March 2014 the V4 and Georgian participants evaluated the results of the cooperation. It was for the first time when an idea of signing *the Memorandum of Cooperation between V4 and EaP Countries in the Field of Youth* was heard. Slovakia and Georgia took there their responsibility for drafting the text of Memorandum.

Under the Slovak V4 PRES (1. 7. 2014 – 30. 6. 2015) *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministries of Countries of Visegrad Group Responsible for Youth and the Ministries of Countries of Eastern Partnership to European Union Responsible for Youth in Youth Field* was signed in Bratislava in June 22, 2015. The Czech Republic supported the Slovak V4 PRES by organising a thematic working seminar for V4 and EaP countries on volunteerism of young people in Prague in September 2014 in a close cooperation with SALTO EECA and the Czech Erasmus+ National Agency (Centre for International Cooperation in Education).

The current Czech V4 PRES (1. 7. 2015 – 30. 6. 2016) organised “*Youth Policy and Youth Work: Working Seminar on Cooperation between Visegrad Group, Romania and Eastern Partnership Countries*” on October 6 – 7, 2015 which resulted in a *joint action plan of cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries in the youth field*. The priority of the Czech V4 PRES in the youth field was to enable Romania to join the cooperation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth as an equal partner in so-called V4+ format on request of the Romanian Deputy Minister responsible for youth. This is why a Romanian delegation took an active part in this seminar. Moreover, an annual V4 and EaP meeting will be organised in May or June 2016.

All the annual and thematic V4 and EaP events were supported by Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, and SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.



Financing Framework

The use of the financial resources is programmed at the national and European level and will be determined by the ongoing dialogue on the basis of planning:

- National financial resources allocated for Working Plans of the Presidencies of the Visegrad Group
- Erasmus+ youth TCA budget
- Budget of Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth within an annual planning of supported activities¹
- Budget of SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre within an annual planning of supported activities

The main potential financial sources of the cooperation funding in grant form are:

- Grants from the EU Programme Erasmus+ youth and its TCA budget
- Grants from International Visegrad Fund
- Grants from the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe

Common Strategic Framework

Common strategy to be taken to maintain and enhance current achievements, addressing the common interests of cooperating countries:

- Strive to enhance mutual support, coordination and cooperation on multilateral issues within the framework of the European Union and the Council of Europe, particularly to harmonise the national positions in the CDEJ meetings, Youth Working Party meetings and meeting of the Erasmus+ Programming Committee,
- Continue to facilitate the excellent cooperation on 3 levels: governmental sector, NGO sector and Erasmus+ National Agencies,
- Encourage continued dialogue and best-practice sharing on youth policy issues,
- Continue to maintain and enhance an equal partnership with national youth councils from cooperating countries,
- Create support structures for common tasks and mutual information (EKCYP Country Sheets).

2015 – 2017 Action Plan for Concrete Cooperation

The concrete events for the period of 2015 – 2017 were planned during “*Youth Policy and Youth Work: Working Seminar on Cooperation between Visegrad Group, Romania and Eastern Partnership Countries*” being held in Prague on October 6 – 7,

¹ Subject to decisions of the two partners institutions, Council of Europe and European Commission



2015. They have to be acknowledged by the organisational party, respectively in case of the EU-CoE youth partnership the institutional settings, in accordance with their institutional rules, further developed and planned, in particular regarding the budget, objectives, number and profile of target groups, themes of the event.

Working seminar on Youth Worker Qualifications (coordinated by SALTO EECA and PL E+ NA)

Number of participants: 35-40

Profile of participants: youth policy and youth work actors from public bodies and NGO, researchers. To invite external experts (e.g. from Lithuania, Luxembourg...)

Date: Spring 2016

Hosting country: Ukraine

Budget: SALTO EECA with the support of E+ NAs (TCA budget) and CoE-EC youth-partnership

Responsible person: Andrij Pavlovych

Background information from the Prague seminar to the topic: Each country presented in the seminar deals with the topic of youth worker qualification. But there is missing shared information about developments in this area in each country and exchange of good practices.

Seminar on the topic of cross-sectorial youth policy

Format: similar to annual V4 and EaP meeting (possible to be enlarged by inviting participants from Latvian / Luxembourg peer-learning project, if co-financed through PL TCA budget)

Participants: invited guests from peer learning seminar on good practices of cross-sectorial youth policy, ministerial representatives, NGO's, NA's representatives, researchers, EU-CoE youth partnership

No. of participants: 40 - 60

Date: June 2016

Hosting country: Czech Republic

Budget: Czech Youth Ministry + CZ NA (TCA) + PL NA (TCA)

Responsible person: Zdenka Mašková

Working seminar on the topic of Young People for Human Rights and No Hate Speech

Format: Annual V4 & EaP working seminar

Participants: ministerial representatives, national coordinators of the CoE No Hate Speech Campaign, NA's representatives, representatives of National Youth Councils

No. of participants: up to 50

Date: spring 2017 during Polish Presidency of V4

Hosting country: Poland

Budget: Polish Ministry; E+ NAs (TCA)

Responsible person: Joanna Mazur



Thematic symposium on the topic of youth policy (principles, standards, concepts) (has to be identified)

Format: symposium

Participants: Council of Europe member states – representatives of ministries, NGO's, experts, researchers, guests

No. of participants: 60-70

Date: May/June 2017

Hosting country: Czech Republic (under the CZE Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe)

Budget: CoE-EC youth-partnership (accommodation, meals, travel expenses, working rooms, facilitators and moderators), Czech Youth Ministry (logistics – complete service, two social evenings, welcome packs, transfer from and to the airport)

Responsible persons: Joachim Schild (Partnership) and Zdenka Maskova (Czech Ministry)

Eastern Partnership Youth Forum

Format: similar to previous EaP Youth Forums

Participants: stakeholders from all levels, ministry officers, experts, NGO's, youth workers, young people representatives, researchers

No. of participants: 150

Date: Autumn 2017

Hosting country: Hungary

Budget: Ministry of Human Capacities with the support of E+ NA of Hungary, NYC of Hungary, COM, SALTO EECA

Responsible person: Peter Paczuk

Topic: Radicalisation of young people (in wider perspective) linked with youth policy and youth work

English language training course for youth workers within E+ program

Format: five-day training, with elements of contact making seminar within E+ Programme

Participants: active youth workers from V4 & EaP who need language support to start activities on international level

No. of participants: 24

Date: 2016 / 2017

Hosting country: Slovakia

Budget: Slovak E+ NA in cooperation with SALTO EECA, PL E+ NA and HU E+ NA

Responsible person: Alena Tomanová



Coordinating Framework

The **overall responsibility** for coordinating *Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field for 2015 – 2017* in general takes the Czech Republic as a country that introduced cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU in January – June 2009.

In autumn 2017 or early spring 2018 during the respective V4 presidential annual meeting the first *Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field for 2015 – 2017* will be

evaluated and the second *Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field for 2018 – 2020* will be elaborated.

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Respective Presidencies of the Visegrad Group take the main responsibility for coordinating concrete planned activities of *Framework Action Plan of Cooperation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership Countries in the Youth Field for 2015 – 2017* during the period of their Presidencies in a close cooperation with Eastern Partnership Countries, Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, and SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

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**Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in
the field of youth**

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