

# CESI RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR A BOOSTED PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CIVIC PROCESSES WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON TRADE UNION WORK

### **REVAMPING EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

1. Enhanced links must be established between youth work organisations/civil society organisations and young people in order to stimulate a further engagement in voluntary work. In particular:
  - a. Organisations should systematically visit schools and raise awareness;
  - b. More project-based cooperative schemes should be established between schools and organisations; and
  - c. Teachers should be trained to inform young people about engagement possibilities.
2. Education systems should be reformed so as to increase teaching on practically useful skills and knowledge. In particular, school curricula should be reformed with a view to incorporating obligatory programmes in civic education. Teachers and educators in schools should be trained to deliver such high quality civic education lessons.

### **ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT WITH AND OF AUTHORITIES**

3. People engaging in voluntary civic activities should be awarded by relevant authorities/politicians. Certificates for voluntary engagements should be granted, turning voluntary civic activities into recognised soft skills qualifications that can be included in CVs.
4. As a practical tool for civic education, young people should be enabled to become structurally involved in the organisation and execution of elections – for instance as aides and assistants at polling stations. As a preparation to this, schools and civic organisations should run educational projects on electoral processes, including the running of mock elections.
5. Cooperation between national youth councils and national parliaments should be strengthened, involving them more seriously in consultation processes.

### **BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT WITH AND OF EMPLOYERS**

6. Employers should formally recognise voluntary work by young employees. This could be done by having voluntary hours worked externally deducted (partially) from work hours by the employer or reimbursed in holiday entitlements. Public financial compensation schemes for employers may be necessary to implement this.
7. Young employees should be given adequate work and employment conditions as a basic precondition for their voluntary involvement in civic activities. People out of work or in precarious work conditions are especially prone to social exclusion and non-engagement in voluntary civic activities.
8. The EU youth guarantee scheme should also encompass voluntary work in civic organisations.

### **ADDRESSING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT NEEDS**

9. Youth organisations should integrate refugees and migrants into their voluntary work schemes through mentoring programs and other activities adapted to their needs.
10. Local youth work and civil society organisations should be systematically made more aware about the benefits and added value that engagements by refugees and migrants can bring to them.

### **EMPOWERING YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS AND BRINGING IN SPORT, CULTURE AND ART AS TOOLS FOR CIVIC INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION**

11. Youth work should be promoted from early age onwards so that voluntary civic engagement becomes natural for people already in their formative years. There should be more structural involvement support for little children in particular. Voluntary youth groups of, for instance, fire brigades, scouts or environmental NGOs could be opened to young children, too.
12. Better framework conditions and support structures should be given to youth work and civil society organisations that want to offer more cultural holiday excursions and educational workshops.
13. Measures should be socially inclusive with a focus on young people far detached from civic processes through their leisure activities in, for instance, sports or dancing clubs.
14. There should be more possibilities for paid internships within youth work and civil society organisations. This should be financially supported by the state, also through scholarships.
15. Civilian service schemes should be encouraged and promoted for both genders to ensure that everybody gains experience in social work. To this end, options for a limited time of social work during school time could be considered.
16. Dedicated time to voluntary work in youth and civil society organisations should, to a certain extent, be treated as donations deductible from taxes.

### ENGAGING PEOPLE MORE IN TRADE UNION WORK

17. There should be more awareness raising and improved information sharing regarding the work and added value of trade unions in order to further improve their public image. The ultimate objective is to give young people a global view of what a community environment could look like, make them aware of the various advantages and benefits of being a trade union member – and have them accede to a union. This could be achieved through, for instance:
  - a. campaigns in schools, universities and job-seeker forums; and
  - b. special events and after-work activities, conducted in partnerships with cultural institutions and various other communal creative spaces.
18. An increased focus on young leadership within trade unions should be envisaged to empower young members of trade unions and make their work more attractive for them.  
Young leadership could be the first stepping stone to create youth structures which offer services directed specifically at younger people.
19. Trade unions should offer special benefits adapted to the different needs of young people to become more relevant for them.
20. Trade unions could also adapt their social media communication strategies more to younger people's needs. They could, for instance, use their social media channels to disseminate series of videos which explain relevant labour legislation, legislation reforms and public policies that affect young people, feature success stories of young people, and show interviews with young workers.
21. Trade unions should organise and hold more training seminars (including online courses) for young affiliates, including language classes and courses on communication, social media, and ways to be more attractive on the labour market.
22. The perception of trade unions among employers must be improved. A possible way to achieve this might be certain tax benefits for employers that allow their employees to join and work in trade unions.
23. There is a need to improve the legal protection of trade unionists in order to avoid obstructions of their work by employers.

**THIS DOCUMENT** has been produced as a part of a Project entitled “**Youth and the unions: an example of participation in democratic life**”, co-financed under the **Erasmus+ Programme**, Key Action 3 dedicated to “Support for Policy Reform, Dialogue between young people and policy makers”.

The recommendations have been drafted during a Seminar held in Brussels on 3-4 March 2016 which gathered thirty young trade unionists - mostly public sector employees – coming from CESI member organisations from various EU countries.

This seminar has offered them the opportunity to discuss with European experts and policy makers ways of reinforcing youth participation in democratic life and, more specifically, given CESI's role as European social partner, of boosting young people's participation in trade-unions' work as an important form of democratic commitment and participation.

**SINCE 2013** CESI has been having a branch dedicated to youth issues, **CESI Youth**. Its work is handled by young affiliates and youth organisations in CESI, the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, a European organisation, made up of trade union organisations from European Union Member States as well as accession states. With no political affiliations, CESI represents over 5 million affiliates, promoting better living and working conditions, as well as improving the European social dimension.

CESI Youth was launched in 2013, a year when youth initiatives were at the heart of EU employment and social policies through the Youth Package initiated by the European Commission. Since then, the Youth movement has been regularly consolidated. Youth affiliates of CESI are particularly involved and concerned by EU policies. CESI Youth's ambition is to promote young people's rights regarding employment issues.