

ENGSO Youth response to the Agenda 2020



Introduction

ENGSO Youth is the youth organisation of ENGSO (European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation). ENGSO Youth is the youth sport-for-all organisation at European level. It has 41 member organisations, which are national umbrella organisations for sport from across Europe. ENGSO Youth represents youth sports in the Council of Europe's co-management system.

ENGSO Youth is a non profit organisation and has the aim to represent the interests of people under the age of 35 dealing with sport in Europe. Youth sport for all is our main focus. We promote sport and health, participation and volunteering of children and young people in sports and international cooperation.

The main activities of ENGSO Youth are

- networking;
- offering a discussion platform for current sport political issues in the field of youth;
- exchange of ideas on national sports developments in the field of youth;
- seeking common positions on sport issues in the field of youth and publicising these positions;
- strengthening the cooperation with other bodies dealing with children and youth matters.

ENGSO Youth's comments on the Agenda 2020

ENGSO Youth welcomes the Agenda 2020, which outlines the priorities of the Council of Europe's policy and action in the youth field for the next ten years, namely human rights and democracy, living together in diverse societies, and the social inclusion of young people.

First of all, ENGSO Youth would like to emphasise the importance of sustaining and developing the unique principles and practice of the co-management system mentioned, for example, in point 2.5. ENGSO Youth believes that in order to successfully implement the Agenda 2020, a co-operation between governments and youth organisations based on equal rights, mutual recognition and respect is essential. Youth organisations provide a direct link to the reality of young people's lives and to the challenges that young people face. Furthermore, youth organisations can offer innovative and effective tools for developing solutions to these challenges.

Moreover, ENGSO Youth would like to underline the need for cross-sectoral co-operation as a way of promoting efficient mainstreaming of the youth dimension throughout the Council of Europe, mentioned especially in point 2.4 of the Agenda 2020. Especially, ENGSO Youth would like to point out the benefits gained through co-operation between the youth and the sport sectors. Sport is a non-verbal form of communication, with the ability to cross all boundaries. It brings people together and generates solidarity, tolerance and fair play – sport is an excellent tool for promoting the priorities set in the Agenda 2020. To demonstrate this, ENGSO Youth would like to share with you this example of a youth sport project involving young people with fewer opportunities:

LOS project of the city of Bonn in co-operation with local sport club SSF Bonn

The LOS project targets young people with fewer opportunities and problematic social behaviour in parts of the city of Bonn, Germany. The project offers sporting opportunities for young men in their neighbourhood. The sport club SSF Bonn provides a facility where youth may gather in a safe environment where they may reach common understanding through sport and develop relationships and friends.

The young people come from various ethnical backgrounds and spend their free time boxing and weight training. This is provided free of charge and facilitated by a coach who is paid by the sports club. The club provides not only opportunities to do sport, but additional social benefits. Life coaching and the development of the young people's social skills is the main aim of the coach. A side effect and strength to the programme is that the young people learn to respect rules for life through their involvement and often apply them in society. The coach comes from a similar background to participants and can relate to the youth as they are members of the same community. He guides them through problematic situations regarding friends, parents, or teachers offering a helping hand they can count on, if they stick to the club rules. A decrease in violence and increase in community welfare is seen as one of the major successes of this project.

Therefore, ENGSO Youth believes that enhancing co-operation within the Directorate of Youth and Sport would have a significant impact on achieving the goals set in the Agenda 2020 and encourages the development of this co-operation. **Therefore, ENGSO Youth also supports the proposal made at the Joint Council meeting in March 2008 of adding a bullet point of "ensuring young people's equal right of access to creative activities, arts and sport activities" under the agenda point 1.3.**

Furthermore, ENGSO Youth would like to point out the significance of supporting young people's well-being and good health previously mentioned under point 1.3. **Health should not be left out of the Agenda 2020 in point 1.3. but it should say "Supporting young people's well-being and health and the access to decent living conditions for all".** ENGSO Youth believes that it is important to young people that they are given the information, knowledge and facilities that will empower them to make their own choices concerning their health, and that society supports their desire to follow healthier lifestyles. Again, sport is an excellent tool for improving young people's social, physical and mental health: more than 700 000 hundred sport clubs in Europe offer health enhancing activities for millions of young people in Europe.

Conclusion

ENGSO Youth welcomes the Agenda 2020 and would be willing to actively support the implementation of it and of the suggestions included within this paper. ENGSO Youth hopes that you take into consideration the above comments to build together a Europe, where the well-being and social inclusion of young people is ensured, where young people are provided with adequate learning, and where young people are enabled to actively participate.

ENGSO Youth Committee
6 April 2008