

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: *A part of the structures and organizations in Bulgaria engaged with the European priorities set up by Strategy 2020 which concern young people are considered in this publication.*

In the last few years Bulgaria has made significant progress with regard to the activity of the youth organizations.

At the development of the themes, we report the weak awareness of the young people with regard to the possibilities for financing, as well as about the existing youth organizations and their activities, as a serious problem.

For the clarification of the possibilities of the programmes from Strategy Europe 2020 amongst Bulgarian young people there is need of improvement of the coordination and the concordance in the actions of the individual organizations, as well as of more modern means for communication and popularization of the possibilities before young people provided by the European Union.

Key words: *Europe 2020, Youth Organizations in Bulgaria.*

1. Introduction

”Europe 2020“is the ten-year strategy of the EU for economic growth and creation of work places. It was introduced in 2010 to create conditions for intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. Five main objectives were defined which the EU should attain up to the end of year 2020. They are in the sphere of the employment, the scientific research and development activities, the climate (energy, education, social inclusion and reduction of poverty) [11], [13,14].

As a part of this process the EU accepts specific for the separate states recommendations, which aim at giving directions to the member-states about the manner, in which to provide competitiveness and creation of work places. As education and training are more

and more important for the employment and the development of the economy, the specific for each state recommendations are directed – in a significant and bigger and bigger degree – also at issues related to the education and training.

The Strategy is directed at five ambitious objectives in the spheres of: Employment; Innovations; Education; Reduction of poverty; Climate/energy.

To guarantee the achievement of results through “Europe 2020”, a strong and efficient system of economic management was created, which coordinates the political actions between the EU and the individual countries [4,5,6].

The recovery of the confidence and the renewal of the growth in the entire EU may be attained solely with common efforts: this requires a decisive commitment by the member-states to act in a different manner

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at a national level. It is guaranteed through the European semester that the member-states shall conform their budget and economic policies to their commitments within the framework of the EU (the commitments in connection with the debt and the deficit related to the Stability and Growth Pact, the plans for economic reforms, input in the specific for each state recommendations for 2015, as well as the long-term objectives for growth and work places in the Strategy “Europe 2020”) [3], [7,8,9].

In Bulgaria a part of the organizations committed to the set up European objectives, which concern youth, education and sports are the structures considered in this publication.

2. National Youth and Sports Organizations

2.1. Ministry of Youth and Sports

The Ministry of Youth and Sports pursues a unified state policy in the sphere of youth, sports and social tourism. The new sports policy of the Republic of Bulgaria includes the following main priorities and focuses:

Provision of possibilities for practicing physical activity and social tourism.

Development of pupils’ sports and of the sports for high achievements as means for enhancement of the prestige of the nation.

Reconstruction and modernization of the sports bases and their bringing into conformity with the international standards of the European Union; equipment of a doping laboratory in compliance with the requirements of the World Anti-Doping Agency and construction of new sports sites.

By a Resolution of the National Assembly of 29 May 2013 the Ministry of Physical Education and Sports was transformed into the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In conformity with Decree No 142 of the Council of Ministers of 8.07.2013

on adoption of Structural Regulations of the Ministry of Youth and Sports the activity and the archives of Directorate “Youth” from the transformed Ministry of Education and Science passed to the transformed Ministry of Youth and Sports [10], [12].

The Minister of Youth and Sports is a central individual authority of the executive power which develops, organizes, coordinates and controls the implementation of the state policy in the sphere of youth and sports as well as of social tourism.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is engaged with the implementation of the Project “It Is Never Late for a New Beginning”. It is realized with the financial support under Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, co-financed by the European Union through the European Financial Fund.

2.2. National Youth Forum

The creation of National Youth Forum is a process which follows the natural need of development of medium of the youth organizations in Bulgaria.

2.2.1. 2008 – National Debate - Varna

In 2008, the Youth Consultative Authority (YCA) was created as a consequence of the National Debate “Structural Dialogue and Young People in Bulgaria”, conducted in the town of Varna. The Youth Consultative Authority develops as a horizontal informal network of youth organizations uniting 52 representatives of youth organizations and informal groups from all over the country. The main objective of the network is to provide possibility for cooperation for the development of a strong and efficient youth policy corresponding with the needs of the young people in Bulgaria.

2.2.2. 2009 – Youth Consultative Authority

It is amongst the objectives of the Youth Consultative Authority to serve as a pilot project, which should disclose the realities and the difficulties before the young people in their joint work so that they could be taken into consideration in the building up of a future National Youth Forum. The experiment Youth Consultative Authority should have proven the need of creation of a national platform of the youth organizations.

2.2.3. 2010 – Days of the Cooperation of European Youth Forum

Two years later, in the aspect of its strategy for interaction with the countries from Central and Eastern Europe without effective National Youth Councils, as well as with a view to the initiatives of the Youth Consultative Authority into the direction of structuring of a youth representation at a national level, the European Youth Forum organized Days of Cooperation for Bulgaria during the period 25-28 March 2010 in the town of Hisar.

The initiative was organized jointly with the Youth Association for Peace and Development on the Balkans and the financial support of the Ministry of Education and aimed at rendering support to the young people in Bulgaria in their work for creation of a strong and sustainable platform, which should be a partner of the state in the development of youth policies.

Representatives of nearly 30 youth organizations from all over the country attended the event, who united around specific steps for the building up of a functioning National Youth Forum with a clearly defined mission, objectives,

structure and democratic forms of work after they got acquainted with the positive European experience.

2.2.4. March 2010 – Steering Committee for Creation of a National Youth Forum

A Steering Committee was formed which should popularize the initiative for creation of a National Youth Forum, hold information meetings aimed at the attraction of the maximally broadest circle of youth organizations to the idea and prepare the Constituent Assembly of the National Youth Forum aimed at the ratification of the structure as working and democratically functioning. The Steering Committee cooperates with the national institutions in all the stages of preparation and realization of the initiative as a part of the national youth policy of the state.

2.2.5. November 2010 – Constituent Assembly

52 representatives of youth organizations gathered in November at Eco-Hotel Zdravets to establish the National Youth Forum. The Articles of Association of the new organization were adopted. The Constituent Assembly assigned to the elected Management Board to develop priorities of the National Youth Forum for the next ten years.

2.3. National Association "YOUTH VOICE"

National Association MLADEZHKI GLAS (MG) ("YOUTH VOICE") is the biggest independent Non-Governmental Organization in Bulgaria, numbering over 8 000 officially accepted members, distributed in Regional and Municipal

Structures and Clubs per interests throughout the country. The organization is a full member and a representative of the young citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria in a number of international unions and formations, amongst which IPYG – the International Peace Youth Group, uniting over 300 of the largest NGOs all over the world with a seat in South Korea. “YOUTH VOICE” is a representative of our country also in the International NGO Network “WE ARE TOGETHER”, which has representation offices in 18 states throughout the world, amongst which the USA, China, Germany, France and so on. The seat of WE ARE TOGETHER is in Russia and all the contacts and work on programmes on the territory of Bulgaria are performed by “YOUTH VOICE”. Our organization is a co-founder and permanent member of the National Youth Forum /NYF/, a part of the European Youth Forum. A number of organizations and institutions in Europe, the USA and Russia in the course of the years established partnership interrelations with Youth Voice and as of today our team works with them and with all the institutions, state and municipal administrations, representatives of the non-governmental sector all over the country.

National Association "YOUTH VOICE" is an association of the young people in Bulgaria, who can and want to realize their potential through public initiatives, support of their own ideas and realization of their possibilities in the name of the team of the young people.

The slogan of “YOUTH VOICE” was created by our members and it states: “Listen to the young generation, it has what to tell you!” and is directed at the society. Association “YOUTH VOICE” Bulgaria as of this time is the only organization which really works for the

young people throughout Bulgaria and renders assistance to their activities and development with the force of its entire structure.

The organization laid the beginning of its existence in 2007 in the town of Burgas, where a group of young people created the first core of MG (Youth Voice). A few months after that young leaders undertook the management of branches consecutively in the cities and towns of Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse, Varna and so on. A lot of clubs per interests were created which are autonomous and work with the Organization with their own management and members.

In the course of time the Association ratified the principle to be managed throughout the country solely and only by young people. Without any external interference, religious and political influences, the structure attracts hundreds of official members every week. The main principle of MG remains unchanged up to date – to develop the potential of the young people. This is realized through a lot of workshops, instructions, trainings and events, organized in each city and town of the country, which young people attend and participate in.

“YOUTH VOICE” works on a number of European Projects, in which the transparency and the principle of development of young people is the main priority. The organization is a partner with all the institutions in the country and colleagues from the remaining NGO structures.

MG is a member of the Control Boards of a number of Ministries in the Republic of Bulgaria, the youth municipal councils in the municipalities on the territory of the country, the consultative boards of youth to the Regional Administration in each populated area.

Objective: The young people should develop their capabilities, their potential, their opinion should be heard and work should be done specifically for its realization. The voice of the young people should be heard, they are not only the future but also the present of Bulgaria.

The mission of Association "YOUTH VOICE" is to establish position of the young people in the society making them show their possibilities before the environment surrounding them, and use their qualities for the attainment of their own self-realization in the sphere appropriate for them.

3. Register of the Youth Organizations in Bulgaria

Directorate Youth Policies with the Ministry of Youth and Sports keeps a public register of the youth organizations. Three types of organizations are included in the register: youth organizations, non-profit organizations, working for and with young people and nationally representative youth organizations.

54 youth organizations are included in the register, which are relatively uniformly distributed on the territory of Bulgaria and three nationally representative youth organizations – "Youth Voice", „Bulgarian Youth Red Cross" and the „Organization of Bulgarian Scouts".

4. Youth Information Consultative Centers

Services are rendered to young people in the Youth Information Consultative Centers in conformity with the identified problems of the young generation in the country and the specific needs of the young people within the region of activities of each Youth Information Consultative Center. Youth Information

Consultative Centers are created on the grounds of a Project financed under a National Youth Programme (2016-2020). The National Coordinator of the Programme announces the procedures for submission of Project Proposals by the Youth Information Consultative Centers, which are managed by NGO [1,2].

The Youth Information Consultative Centers provide services in the following three categories: trainings; information services; consulting services. (yci.onprs.eu)

36 Youth Information Consultative Centers are indicated in the official site of the National Youth Information System, Directorate "Youth Policies" with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (**nism.bg**)

5. A Survey among Managers and Owners of medium-sized and small Enterprises in Bulgaria.

The goal of the survey is to analyse the awareness regarding European programmes and youth organizations, as well as the financing options related to dual careers, among the managers and owners of medium-sized and small enterprises.

570 managers and owners of medium-sized and small Bulgarians enterprises were interviewed. The interviewees have not been selected based on the activity of their organization or on any demographic principle. The survey was performed through an electronic survey form sent through an e-mail marketing campaign.

The results of the survey among managers and owners of medium-sized and small enterprises in Bulgaria.

Awareness of European youth programmes (n=570)

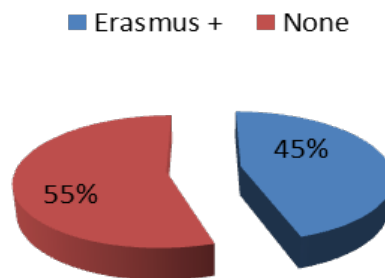


Fig. 1. *Awareness of European youth programmes*

Fig. 1 shows a graphic of the results from the question regarding awareness of European youth programmes among the representatives of small and medium-size

enterprises, interviewed herein. Most of the interviewees are not familiar with any European programmes (55%).

Awareness of youth organizations (n=570)

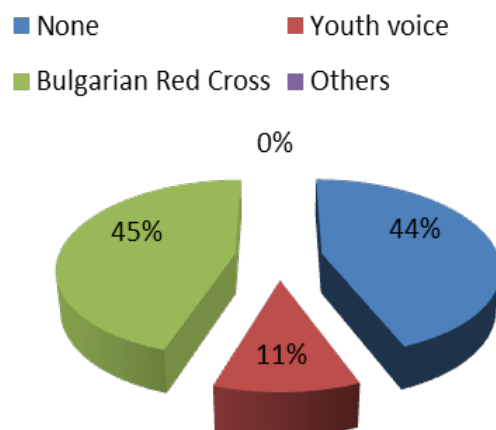


Fig. 2. *Awareness of youth organizations*

45% of the interviewed managers and owners of medium-sized and small enterprises in Bulgaria respond that they know of the “Bulgarian Red Cross”, 44%

of them do not know of any youth organizations, and 11% know the organization “Youth Voice”.

**Awareness of Youth
Information Consultative
Centres (n=570)**

■ I am aware ■ I am not aware

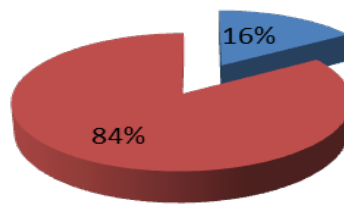


Fig.3. *Awareness of Youth Information Consultative Centres*

Eighty four percent of the interviewees are not aware of the activities of the Youth Information Consultative Centres.

**Desire for additional
information (n=570)**

■ I don't want additional information
■ I want additional information

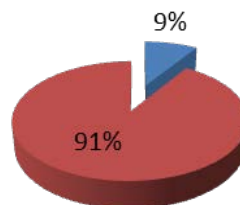


Fig. 4. *Desire for additional information*

It is evident that the interviewees (91%) have the desire to receive additional information, showing a clear interest in their future awareness on the topic.

6. Conclusion

Bulgaria made a significant progress with regard to the activities of the youth organizations.

We report the weak awareness of the young people about the possibilities for financing as well as about the existing youth organizations and their activities as a serious problem at the development of the themes.

The Commission makes for Bulgaria five specific for the state recommendations aimed at rendering it assistance to improve its economic indicators. They are in the following spheres: budget consolidation,

taxation and health care; financial sector; labor market and determination of the salaries; education; insolvency.

For the attainment of the recommendations made, there is need of improvement of the coordination and the concordance in the actions of the individual organizations as well as of more modern means for communication and popularization of the possibilities provided for young people by the European Union.

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