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From:	European Committee of Regions
On:	6 December 2021
To:	The President of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Youth 2022

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Delegations will find in annex the Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on the above-mentioned Proposal.

Other language versions, if needed, will soon be available on the following website:

<https://dmsearch.cor.europa.eu/search/opinion>



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

**RESOL-VII/018**

**147th plenary session, 1-2 December 2021**

**RESOLUTION**

**on the proposal for a European Year of Youth**

**Submitted by the EPP, PES, Renew Europe, ECR, EA and The Greens Groups**

## Resolution on the proposal for a European Year of Youth

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR),

- having regard to the proposal from the European Commission for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on a European Year of Youth 2022<sup>1</sup>
- 1. welcomes the European Commission's proposal to designate the year 2022 as the "European Year of Youth", and supports the overall objectives of the proposal, which aim at encouraging youth participation in democratic and civic life and supporting the development of talent and personal, social and professional development of young people in a greener, more digital and more inclusive Union;
- 2. emphasises that the European Year of Youth 2022 should be an opportunity to encourage youth participation in democratic life with a view to strengthening both participatory and representative democracy, not only by informing them of policies affecting them but also by involving them in their design, leadership and implementation;
- 3. to this end, underlines the need to involve young people in decision-making at EU, national, regional and local levels, including for policies relating to the green and digital transitions, where generational divergences are felt. Particular attention should be paid to the glass ceiling to substantive participation in political life encountered by young people; in this context, underlines the key role of local and regional authorities in promoting youth participation in local democracy or through support for local youth organisations, youth councils and youth parliaments;
- 4. in this regard, stresses the importance of the Conference on the Future of Europe as a means of fostering European identity and citizenship based on common values and of reducing the democratic deficit in the EU; calls on the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission to ensure that the input provided by young people through different channels, such as the European Youth Event (EYE2021), is fully taken into account;
- 5. considers that, in order to ensure a long-lasting legacy of the European Year of Youth and in recognition of the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy, an additional objective of the Year should be to mainstream a youth perspective in all EU policy areas at EU, national, regional and local levels;
- 6. stands ready to further strengthen the Young Elected Politicians Programme in its own work, and to share the best examples of this programme with other stakeholders; in this regard, points out that CoR local dialogues are an effective tool to enhance open, two-way communication with citizens, in particular young people, on the EU political agenda, and to bring their views to EU decision-makers;
- 7. welcomes the importance given to inclusivity and recognises that the objectives of the European Year of Youth can only be fulfilled by taking into account the needs and aspirations of all young people, in their diversity and with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities. This include young people from rural, peripheral and less developed regions, as well as socially diverse or vulnerable groups, whether on the basis of socio-economic background, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, origin or disability;

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2021) 634 final

8. believes that the Year should not be limited to young people from the 27 EU Member States, but should also involve young migrants and young people from the Enlargement countries;
9. considers that the European Year should provide momentum to strengthen intergenerational solidarity for greater social, economic and territorial cohesion, and more inclusive societies; to this effect, highlights the growing demographic changes with strong territorial divergences due to, among other things, brain drain and brain gain. The European Year should address the very significant impact of such changes upon young people when it comes intergenerational solidarity and working life, as well as the urban-rural divide;
10. points out that for young people the COVID-19 crisis caused considerable setback in the fields of education, employment, mental health and financial income; calls for the Year to strengthen efforts to tackle youth unemployment and precarious working conditions for young people, including unpaid internships, as well as access to housing, and to create new and decent jobs for them, while addressing the crucial issue of future-proof skills;
11. emphasises the importance of involving local and regional authorities, as well as other stakeholders, including the private sector and third-sector bodies, in delivering measures to ensure young people's integration into the labour market; believes that education and training systems should better match young people's competencies with the needs of the labour market, making it easier for young people to acquire the skills and resources needed to empower them and to involve them in this process; stresses the need to ensure this for cross-border areas in particular;
12. calls for particular attention to be paid to youth entrepreneurship by supporting young entrepreneurs, including through facilitated access to finance, with a particular focus on small and medium-size enterprises and start-ups, as they often face difficulties in this regard, and for measures to be promoted encouraging businesses to recruit young people, as well as to training; recalls the importance of educating from an early age in entrepreneurship, innovation, critical thinking, decision-making, tolerance to uncertainty, leadership, collaboration, and acceptance of success and failure, among other values and skills;
13. expects the European Year to become a milestone for meeting the target set in the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan of reducing the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by five million by 2030, and to boost the implementation of the European Child Guarantee, through which Member States guarantee effective and free access to early childhood education and care, to education and school-based activities, to at least one healthy meal each school day and to healthcare, as well as to healthy nutrition and adequate housing;
14. points to the utmost importance of European investment in education and culture as well as in civic education and media literacy, the latter being key to empowering young people to navigate safely through the information provided on social media, and not only, and to resisting disinformation. In the same vein, there is also a need for investment at European level in scientific research carried out by young people;
15. reaffirms its will – as a follow-up to the European Year of Rail – to work with the European Commission in order to further develop the DiscoverEU initiative and make it more geographically

inclusive, to support regional schemes inspired by DiscoverEU, and to link this to cultural events and opportunities on offer in Europe's cities and regions;

16. welcomes the European Commission's commitment to undertaking studies and research on the situation of young people in the EU; stresses that these efforts should tackle the lack of available data on young people at local and regional level, which is an important challenge for regional and local authorities' capacity to properly design and implement effective tailor-made, place-based youth policies;
17. welcomes the proposal to set up meetings of national coordinators appointed by the Member States to organise the running of the European Year of Youth, and proposes that the CoR be included, as an observer, in the national coordinators' meetings.
18. welcomes the recommendations prepared by the Young Elected Politicians of the CoR on the European Year of Youth, and invites the European Commission to take these into account to the maximum extent possible in the design and implementation phases of the European Year of Youth activities and initiatives;
19. recognises that the European Youth Capital award is an initiative that empowers young people, fully acknowledging their role, and raises awareness of their needs and aspirations at European and local level; therefore, considers that complementarities between the European Youth Capital and the European Year of Youth should be sought to reinforce their mutual effectiveness and outreach;
20. stresses that the European Commission's budget allocation to the European Year of Youth 2022 should include a substantial commitment from EU programmes outside Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, without compromising the delivery of existing projects. Moreover, local and regional authorities should have access to funding opportunities for projects aimed at supporting local youth initiatives throughout 2022 and beyond;
21. urges the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to swiftly reach an agreement on the European Year of Youth, to allow activities to begin to be rolled out from January 2022;
22. instructs its president to forward this Resolution to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Slovenian, French and Czech Presidencies of the Council of the EU, and the president of the European Council.

Brussels 2 December 2021

The President  
of the European Committee of the Regions

Apostolos Tzitzikostas