Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card
Promotional seminar
"Renewing the commitment to youth mobility"
27-29 October 2026
Bucharest, Romania

Report

Rapporteur: Andreea Floroiu

About the event

Introduction

Youth Mobility has evolved throughout years as a policy priority: from advancing mobility between young people in the East and the West of Europe (after 1989) to ensuring mobility in learning opportunities, volunteering and social cohesion. Depending on the social, economic and political context, youth mobility has gained positive or negative connotations. We speak about 'youth mobility on the labour market', but in some contexts it may mean brain drain. We speak about 'youth mobility in education', but in some contexts this equals heavier bureaucracy or unrecognised credentials. We speak about 'youth mobility in volunteering', but there are few policy instruments in place that would recognise the value of volunteering abroad.

As our world, and particularly Europe, is becoming increasingly interconnected and borderless, youth mobility has changed but not lost its political aspects. Youth mobility and access to it as a right may need redefinition by the decision makers. The right place to start this policy conversation is in the framework of the Council of Europe Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the youth card.

As the political priorities shift towards green technology, digitalisation and security, the topic of youth mobility and its inclusion perspective are seemingly left behind. The conversation on youth mobility needs to be shifted and updated based on research, lived experiences of young people and perspectives ahead.

Objectives of the event:

- Reinforce the commitment towards youth mobility and that of the Partial Agreement as an ecosystem that allows young people to explore, both themselves and European values / places.
- Gain better knowledge and insights into challenges and opportunities regarding mobility of young people.

About the organisers

The Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card exists since 1991 and is a programme of the Council of Europe aimed at developing the youth card scheme, particularly at European level, in the best interests of young people with a view to facilitating their mobility as well as access to the various goods and services necessary for their personal and cultural development.

The European Youth Card Association (EYCA) groups over 35 youth card organisations all over Europe and is the Partial Agreement's statutory partner. EYCA's vision is a Europe where all young people are mobile and active (socially, culturally, educationally and economically). EYCA's mission to reach this objective consists in delivering quality youth card services and in contributing to a better policy on youth mobility and active citizenship. Today, over nine million youth cardholders benefit from youth card opportunities.

The Romanian member organisation of EYCA is the Asociația pentru Mobilitate Europeană which implements the European Youth Card and its services for Romanian youth.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity is organised and operates as a specialised body of the central public administration, with legal personality, reporting to the Government. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity implements national policies aligned with those at European and international level, within its areas of activity, fulfilling the role of a state authority responsible for strategy and planning, regulation, analysis, coordination, monitoring, inspection and control.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity ensures the coordination of the implementation of the Government's strategy and policies in its areas of activity. Romania has signed the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the youth card on 7th of March 2023, joining 23 other Member States which prioritise accessible and quality mobility opportunities for youth.

Participants profile

Number of participants: 24 international participants, 30 local participants

Countries represented in the event: Albania, Austria, Belgium, BiH, Croatia, France, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Italy, San Marino, Romania

Profile of participants:

- Government representatives from PA Youth Mobility signatory states
- Council of Europe representatives in the youth sector
- UN Agencies representatives based in Romania
- High level Governmental representation of Romania
- EYCA member organisations
- Civil society representatives in Romania and PA Youth Mobility signatory states
- National Agency for Erasmus+ Programme representative from Youth Mobility Department

Information on the participants' needs and expectations.

From the application forms, the following expectations can be summarised as the most common:

- Sharing experiences on youth mobility and networking for future partnerships
- Learn more about the European Youth Card as a tool for youth services
- Learn about youth mobility opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- To explore mobility as a tool that enables young people to learn, develop their skills, broaden their perspectives and get to know themselves better.

- Representing the voices of young cardholders
- One participant mentioned: “I expect the seminar to strengthen my understanding of the broader role of universities in supporting youth mobility. I would like to explore how academic institutions can connect mobility with student development, international cooperation, extracurricular engagement and opportunities for students to remain connected with international networks after returning home.”

Day I, 28th of October

Venue: Victoria’s Palace, Romanian Government Building,

Transylvania Hall

Panel I

Welcome

28th of October, 09:30 – 09:50

Moderator:

- Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director

Guest speakers:

- Petre - Florin Manole, Minister of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity of Romania
- Natalja Turenne, secretary to the CPJ, and Secretary to the Partial Agreement on Youth mobility through the Youth Card
- Jugoslav Radović, President of the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) and Founder and Executive Director of the NGO Centre for Youth Education in Montenegro
- Andreea Măslină, representing the EYCA Youth Panel

The opening session brought together representatives from 10 national organisations and international policy stakeholders from different sectors to discuss youth mobility, participation, inclusion, and opportunities for young people. Moderated by Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director, the session created an opportunity for participants to connect, exchange perspectives, and recognise the importance of cross-sector cooperation in shaping youth policies.

The moderator highlighted the value of bringing together policymakers, youth organisations, European institutions, and young people themselves to ensure that youth mobility remains accessible, inclusive, and relevant to young people's everyday lives.

The session moderator thanked the entire team that was involved in organizing the event and making it easier to access valuable speakers and guests.

Key Highlights

- Youth mobility as a driver of opportunity and inclusion

Petre-Florin Manole, Minister of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity of Romania, underlined the importance of European funding programmes and mobility opportunities in expanding young people's access to learning, personal development, and international experiences. He highlighted the role of initiatives such as the European Youth Card in supporting young people, particularly those with limited financial resources.

The Minister also acknowledged that funding remains a challenge and encouraged stakeholders, working directly with youth, to communicate their needs and engage with public authorities to identify solutions that better support young people.

- Youth participation in decision-making

Natalja Turenne, Secretary to the Partial Agreement on Youth mobility through the Youth Card (PAYM), emphasised the importance of involving young people directly in democratic processes and policy development. She highlighted the Council of Europe's commitment to youth participation, including through co-management and structures that allow youth representatives to contribute to decision-making, rather than simply providing advice, such as the European Youth Centres, European Youth Foundation and the Programming Committee on Youth.

Her contribution reinforced the idea that young people are not only the future but also active participants in shaping society today. Mobility should therefore create opportunities for learning, dialogue, cooperation, and the development of shared European values. This is the goal of the PAYM which serves as a platform for dialogue, exchanges of good practices, youth policies development and networking for Partial Agreement's member States, EYCA youth card organisations, representatives of youth NGOs and young cardholders.

Call for Action: ` Youth is not only the future, to build the future creating common visions - it's important to act today! `

- Addressing barriers to mobility

Jugoslav Radović, President of the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) and Founder and Executive Director of the NGO Center for Youth Education in Montenegro., stressed the importance of discussing youth mobility at the highest political level, but also in the venue that is hosting the event – Victoria Palace in Bucharest, the Romanian Government Headquarters, Transilvania Hall.

He drew attention to challenges such as the cost of living, housing, and inclusion, which can prevent young people from accessing opportunities even when these are formally available.

He encouraged participants to speak up, ask questions, promote existing opportunities from their countries, and actively contribute to setting priorities for Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card.

- The role of young people and the EYCA Youth Panel

Andreea Măslină, representing the EYCA Youth Panel, welcomed the strong participation of young people in the seminar and highlighted the value of connecting them with experienced professionals who can support their learning and development.

She introduced the Youth Panel's work, including its 11 members representing different regions, its involvement in awareness-raising projects, and the `Your Voice, our 2030` survey, which aims to collect young people's stories on the challenges that most affect them. She also announced an open call for new Youth Panel members, with applications opening on 30 October 2026.

Her contribution underlined the importance of creating meaningful spaces where young people can share their experiences, identify emerging issues, and influence the direction of youth-related initiatives.

- Connecting stakeholders and exchanging perspectives

The Welcome Panel continued with a change of moderator to Andrei Popescu, Consultant in youth work and youth policy and facilitator, he also emphasised the value of informal networking and interaction between participants from different countries, sectors, and professional backgrounds. The seminar's participatory elements encouraged attendees to exchange ideas about mobility, infrastructure, and ways to connect young people with opportunities. The moderator highlighted the importance of collaboration and practical dialogue in identifying common challenges and developing shared solutions.

The organizers suggested on the spot Menti collection from participants on the expectations, contributions and in-depth topics to be explored during the event with four guidance questions. The exercise was facilitated by Andreea Floroiu, Youth expert and trainer- rapporteur of the seminar.

1. Making Youth Mobility More Meaningful and Accessible

Most popular responses – visibility (7), affordable prices (2), meaningful participation (2), strategic partnerships (2).

Affordability: Lowering prices, particularly for transport and accommodation, as well as offering affordable opportunities.

Barriers & Inclusion: Addressing barriers, ensuring real inclusion, especially for young people in rural or low-income backgrounds, and creating quality assurance measures.

Participation & Partnerships: Encouraging meaningful youth participation in decision-making, forming strategic partnerships, and strengthening youth NGOs.

Visibility & Communication: Expanding marketing efforts, improving social media communication, and increasing awareness of mobility programs.

2. Participant Expectations from the Seminar

Exchange of Experience: Learning from good practices, real-life experiences, and practical solutions from across Europe.

New Ideas & Knowledge: Gaining new concepts, deep understanding of youth mobility infrastructures, and actionable takeaways to support youth engagement.

Network Building: Creating valuable connections and potential collaborations among participants.

3. Contributions Participants Bring

Sharing Best Practices: Insights into making mobility more accessible, empowering youth, and experiences with grassroots and national youth projects (including Erasmus+).

Policy and Practice Perspectives: Discussing governmental challenges, transport concepts, the role of youth spaces, and media literacy.

Representation Needs: Highlighting issues around representation, trust, and the generational divide.

4. Topics for Further Exploration

Funding and Access: The impact of budgets, accessibility for disadvantaged backgrounds, and strategies to widen youth participation geographically and socially.

European Youth Card (EYCA): Opportunities and awareness, exploring why perceptions and access vary by country.

Infrastructure & Heritage: Linking improvements in infrastructure to broader cultural and participatory opportunities.

Age Barriers: Discussing lowering the eligible age for mobility programs in some countries.

Panel II

Future of youth mobility and youth infrastructure

28th of October, 10:00- 11:30

Moderator:

- Andrei Popescu, Consultant in youth work and youth policy and facilitator

Guest speakers:

- Marcos Andrade, Deputy Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest, Coordinator of the Quality Label for Youth Centres (online intervention)
- Nadia Tismăneanu – FITT (Fundația Județeană pentru Tineret Timiș/ Timiș County Youth Foundation), Youth Centre in Romania with CoE Quality Label
- Alix Ramos, International relations responsible from SNJ- Service National de la Jeunesse, Luxembourg
- Simona Musteață – ANPCDEFP, National Agency for Erasmus Plus and European Solidarity Corp in Romania, responsible for the Youth Department

Panel format: Keynote speech on 'Quality Label for the Youth Centres' and two rounds of questions for the guests.

The keynote speaker, Marcos Andrade, explained the concept of Quality Label for youth centres and how you can see it implemented in different countries across Europe.

The presentation highlighted the role of European quality-labelled youth centres, such as those in Budapest and Strasbourg, as important spaces for youth participation, democracy, inclusion and non-formal education. These centres provide platforms for cooperation between NGOs, municipalities and public institutions, facilitating knowledge exchange, networking and the development of initiatives based on the Council of Europe's values, including human rights, diversity and human dignity.

The Quality Label process involves an expression of interest, assessment, networking with labelled centres, evaluation visits and periodic reviews every three years. The initiative aims to build a sustainable European network of youth centres that support international cooperation, youth mobility, capacity building and the professional development of youth workers.

<u>Round 1 – one question for each guest from Moderator</u>

Question for Nadia Tismăneanu (FITT, Romania) - Since 2016, Casa Tineretului Timișoara has been the Romanian youth centre with the Council of Europe Quality Label. In which way did this make a difference for you and what changed for the young people who walk through your door? How do you translate into practice the CoE Quality Label criteria?

Answer: *The Quality Label brought FITT Timișoara greater European visibility, recognition and opportunities for advocacy and engagement in youth policy. Although the organisation had been promoting Council of Europe values through its grassroots work since 1990, receiving the label in 2016 validated its work and provided an opportunity to assess and improve its quality standards. The label is translated into practice by actively involving young people at every stage, collecting their feedback and ideas, and giving them the tools and opportunities to turn these into concrete actions. It also strengthens FITT's legitimacy and capacity to influence youth policies and cooperate with public institutions.*

Question for Alix (SNJ, Luxembourg) - SNJ runs Luxembourg's national volunteer service, Eurodesk, as well as several educational centres. How do you support young people, especially those who are out of school but not yet in work (NEET)?

Answer: *The Children and Youth Department supports the youth sector through funding and research, with the aim of reaching all young people, including those facing social and economic barriers. Although programmes are open to everyone, NEET young people often remain excluded due to housing difficulties, school dropout, lack of trust and limited information. A dedicated initiative, Transition to Adult Life, focuses on supporting school dropouts through mentoring, social worker referrals and individual life planning. Practical workshops in cooking, arts and other skills help them rebuild routines, regain confidence and develop abilities. The programme also encourages community inclusion and access to wider opportunities, such as volunteering, working with NGOs, youth mobility and the European Solidarity Corps, helping young people broaden their horizons and find a path towards active participation in society.*

Question for Simona (ANPCDEFP, Romania) - Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps are the biggest mobility driving forces Romanian young people have. How did you get there and who is still not on board (what is the Agency doing to reach them)?

Answer: *Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps have become major drivers of youth mobility in Romania. Over the past 20 years, their focus has evolved from student and youth exchanges to supporting youth workers, strengthening organisations and promoting young people's active participation.*

The Agency has increasingly prioritised inclusion and equal access, using accreditation, training and support for NGOs to improve project quality and reach young people with fewer opportunities. Another important shift is that young people are now encouraged to design and lead their own projects, rather than simply participate in initiatives developed by adults. Opportunities also include national mobility, volunteering and civic participation activities.

The National Agency in Romania provided training courses dedicated to organizations that work with young people with disabilities, serious and chronic illnesses, marginalized youth, etc., to make sure that these young people have access to mobility and dedicated opportunities. The main remaining challenge is reaching young people facing multiple and intersecting barriers. While specific inclusion measures exist for different target groups, such as young people with disabilities or Down syndrome, addressing several barriers simultaneously remains particularly difficult.

Round II – cross-cutting questions from Moderator

Brain drain or brain circulation (Nadia, Simona): When a young person comes back from mobility, what needs to have a safety net back home, so the experience is fully explored in the original community?

Summary of the answers:

The changes observed among young people participating in European mobility programmes go beyond geographical mobility and should not be seen as brain drain, but rather as cultural empowerment and brain sharing. Research indicates that over 90% of participants feel more confident interacting with people from different communities and cultural backgrounds. They become more tolerant, develop a stronger understanding of European values and pay greater attention to social issues and the needs of their communities. An important outcome is their role as vectors of change: young people share their experiences and learning with peers, friends and NGOs, extending the impact beyond the mobility itself. The concept of brain sharing also highlights the value of connecting young people and youth workers with peers across Europe and exchanging knowledge and experiences. The remaining challenge is ensuring long-term impact: how can NGOs and local communities capture, support and use the knowledge and experience gained abroad to improve local youth infrastructure, youth centres, activities and opportunities after participants return?

Recognition (Alix, Marcos): Youth centres are often where a young person's first trip abroad starts, and where visiting young people land. What would it take for them to work as mobility hubs across Partial Agreement countries, and could the European Youth Card be the ticket that connects them?

Summary of the answers:

Youth centres can act as important mobility hubs, connecting young people with international opportunities, youth workers and organisations across Europe. Their impact is stronger when they are actively connected with partners in other countries and provide support structures such as youth workers, activities and youth hostels. The European Youth Card can play a key role in this process by connecting not only young people already involved in organised projects but also those who are not yet engaged in international mobility. It offers access to opportunities, encourages exploration and helps young people broaden their horizons. EYCA (European Youth Card Association) supports this vision by promoting mobility and making international experiences more accessible, while youth centres provide the local infrastructure and human support needed to turn these opportunities into reality.

Q&A session - questions from participants

Questions for Simona from NA Romania

Q1. What do you think about using AI to write E+/ESC projects? What are the measures taken by the NA?

A1. *Over 90 % of the projects are using AI – the use of AI tools is not forbidden but is important to guarantee that it is under your responsibility, as an NGO, that you understand the risks and to implement if funded. The challenge on how to work with the evaluators on how to separate the project from generality, smaller paragraphs, the quality and how you can integrate your idea in the project and explain it.*

Q2. What solution has NA implemented for better access for young people from social centres, institutionalized sector, Roma People, disabilities?

A2. *Among the measures to include these target groups we organized dedicated events and training courses for the NGOs that work with these target groups, we collected initiatives from the young people through informal groups. We counsel the young people or the NGO representatives on how to write the project, they receive mentorship and guidance to apply, or to improve the implementation of the project.*

Q3. Do you feel that young people create project initiatives?

A3. *The number of young people that create their own projects has increased in the last 3 years, they develop partnerships with private or public institutions that have access to these young people, with a bigger focus on young people with fewer opportunities. They are also attracted by additional funding for the people with fewer opportunities- individual and inclusion support.*

Questions for Alix (SNJ, Luxembourg)

Q4. Youth policy has a success rate to bring NEET young people back to active life – what are the actions from the Ministry with a more formal approach?

Answer: *Alix, SNJ Luxembourg, highlighted the importance of supporting NEET young people (not in employment, education or training) in returning to active social and professional life. Around 8% of young people are NEETs, with youth unemployment remaining an important concern. Through the European Solidarity Corps, approximately 1,000 opportunities are offered annually, largely targeting this group. The discussion also stressed the importance of preventing early school leaving, particularly among those under 18. Financial assistance alone is not enough: young people need a tailor-made, long-term support ecosystem, combining guidance, personalised programmes and continuous assistance to facilitate their sustainable reintegration.*

Question for Simona, NA Romania, and Nadia Tismăneanu, FITT, Romania

Q5. How to make mobility and opportunities more accessible for young people?

Summary of the answers:

Making mobility opportunities more accessible requires combining institutional communication with direct outreach to young people. The National Agency uses communication campaigns, events, Eurodesk, ambassadors and former mobility participants (EuroPeers) to promote programmes and share experiences. However, competition for funding remains high, with only around 20% of submitted projects

receiving support. Therefore, accessibility also depends on organisations actively reaching young people rather than waiting for them to seek opportunities themselves.

As Nadia highlighted, NGOs and youth organisations need to go beyond traditional communication channels by engaging young people directly in schools, parks and their communities, building connections and informing those who are less likely to access international opportunities.

Question for Marco, CoE Quality Label for Youth Centres expert

Q6. How can we better use the information for the young people – to make it accessible and interesting for them?

Answer: *From the CoE perspective we have a very cute newsletter and website. About funding the European Youth Foundation is providing information through its channels. We give access to young people to be part of the solution and the communication process. Youth Centres must provide the access to information, distribute and support the promotion of opportunities for the young people.*

Question for Nadia, FIIT

Q7. What is the advice that you can give for youth centres that would like to obtain the Quality Label?

Answer: *Explore and evaluate the criteria for the Quality Label, make a self-evaluation of the staff and of the activities implemented so far. Reflect on the work that you did, make a critical evaluation and explore how you can improve your work. More important: go and visit youth centres that already have Quality Label- use your Youth Card! - it helps to see how the youth work is implemented at grass root in other countries.*

Conclusion from the speakers: Working together with young people, rather than simply for them, is essential to building inclusive, participatory and democratic societies.

Coffee break and Group photo



Panel III

European Youth Card- shaping the conversation on youth mobility policies

28th of October 2026, 12:00 – 13:00

Moderator:

- Andrei Popescu

Guest Speakers:

- Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director
- Mihai Tapalagă, Asociația pentru Mobilitate Europeană, România
- Kristina Janković, Project Manager at the European Youth Card Program in Montenegro

Part 1. What is EYCA? - Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director

- EYCA (European Youth Card Association) is a European network that promotes youth mobility, access to opportunities and youth participation.
- Established in 1989, it has evolved from a discount-oriented tool into a broader platform supporting young people's personal and professional development. A tool developed together with the Council of Europe.
- Today, the network brings together 35 member organisations, representing over 9.2 million young people.
- The Youth Card is no longer just a physical discount card; it is increasingly a digital tool connecting young people with opportunities.

<u>EYCA's main pillars:</u>

1. Discounts and benefits: Travel, transport, accommodation, culture, museums, communication and other services.
2. Information and opportunities: Mobility, participation, employability, entrepreneurship and culture.

The card is generally aimed at young people aged 13–30, although age limits may vary according to national policies.

EYCA also works through partnerships with private and public institutions, supporting youth opportunities across Europe.

Part 2. Good practice.

Mihai Tapalagă, Asociația pentru Mobilitate Europeană, România

Main highlights:

- The Youth Card offers more than financial discounts: it can provide access to scholarships, professional development, international mobility and practical experiences.
- Romania's accession to the Partial Agreement in 2023 represents an important institutional milestone, opening doors for stronger cooperation and recognition.
- The community already includes over 45,000 young people in Romania – Youth Card could be used as a tool to connect young people across Europe.
- Future development should focus on career guidance, mentoring, professional support and opportunities for young people to become actively involved in their communities.
- Strong partnerships between NGOs, public institutions, businesses and municipalities are essential for expanding the card's reach (e.g. 3 years' work to sign a discount contract with IKEA).

Key message: The Youth Card should become a gateway to opportunities, support and active participation, not simply a discount instrument.

Q&A session:

Q1: As a youth organization in RO, how can we help to develop the card in RO, to reach the young people?

A1: *Youth organizations in Romania can play a key role in expanding the Youth Card by actively promoting its concrete benefits and opportunities among young people. Increasing visibility through Romanian-language communication, strengthening the card's national branding and developing partnerships with businesses offering relevant discounts are essential. Above all, young people need to be clearly informed about what the card offers and how they can benefit from it, both in Romania and across Europe.*

Q2: In other countries, young people must go to a youth center to get the card. Like this the young person has also the opportunity to find out about other opportunities. National wide representation is a challenge. How can you go at the national level?

A2: *At this point the Romanian Youth Card beneficiaries are from national level. The collaboration with the ministry and the youth organizations will bring added value to the partnership. More importantly, we will encourage local municipalities to generate projects at local level, and to provide the card as a tool for young people to access discounts and to travel.*

Kristina Janković, Project Manager at the European Youth Card Program in Montenegro

Montenegro presented an integrated model combining digitalisation, institutional partnerships and direct youth participation.

Main highlights:

- The Youth Card has been recognised as a programme of public interest by the Ministry since 2018.
- The myEYC app facilitates access to discounts, information, mobility and learning opportunities.
- Partnerships with businesses, technology and financial companies help increase visibility, validate young people's skills and expand access to opportunities.
- Cooperation with universities and the Ministry of Education has enabled the card to serve as an official student ID and high-school pupil ID.
- Municipalities are involved in developing local opportunities and promoting youth participation.
- The EYCA Ambassadors initiative functions as a youth panel, bringing together young people from different backgrounds to identify needs, conduct surveys and represent their peers.

The initiative has directly engaged more than 60,000 young people.

Key message: The Youth Card can become a digital platform for personal and professional development, connecting young people with education, services, opportunities and decision-makers.

Q&A session:

Q1. You mentioned in your presentation that you are building together with the municipalities and that the young people are involved in the local youth policy development. How do these steps really happen?

A1. *The important step is the municipality's involvement- They are calling us, they are creating youth actions plans with the young people, we are supporting them with activities that we can implement together, we test and we adapt. We are actively involving the young people.*

Now it's important the wave of the European youth capital status – provides a space to increase capacity, to promote the card and its opportunities as a package.

E.g. Promote the EU values at national level - Podgorica Youth capital in 2028.

Link: Home - Podgorica EYC2028

Q2. What is the 1st step developing this digital approach for the European Youth Card and youth opportunities?

A2. *We are an NGO of national and public interest. The partnership with the public institutions and their voice at the local level was the best added value.*

Closing argument:

Manel Sanchez, EYCA Director, highlighted the importance of developing local partnerships between EYCA, municipalities and the private sector to make the Youth Card more relevant and responsive to young people's needs. Drawing on EYCA's experience in 273 cities, he emphasized the value of locally adapted cards that reflect community priorities and provide meaningful benefits. The recommended approach is to start at the micro level, identify young people's needs, test solutions through local partnerships and successful models, and gradually expand them to achieve broader impact and influence local youth policies.

Panel IV

Romanian youth mobility policies, experiences,

challenges, solutions for youth

28th of October, 14.00 - 16.00

Moderator:

- Andrei Popescu

Guest Speakers:

- Mihai Sebe, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Romania
- Mihai Vîlcea, President of National Youth Foundation/ FNT- Building Romania's youth ecosystem Centre -The Youth
- Marina Corneliu, Founder of the Better Inclusion Association/ B-Inclusive Festival

Presentations:

- Mihai Sebe, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Romania, presented the achievements and good practices in the youth field in Romania.

Summary:

The Romanian Youth Strategy 2024–2027 was developed in collaboration with youth NGOs and young people, focusing on access to education and culture, employability, youth entrepreneurship and opportunities through the European Youth Card.

Key achievements and initiatives include:

- Volunteering: 12,410 young volunteers involved in 307 NGOs (2025).
- Youth funding: 3 million RON allocated to a youth and student project competition; 90 applications received, with 26 projects funded.
- Youth representation: 2 young people as UN Youth Delegate represent Romanian young people's perspectives at the United Nations.
- Partnerships: Collaboration with Romanian Scouts and the Ministry of National Defence, including initiatives supporting disadvantaged groups.
- Youth infrastructure: Support for the national network of 15 Student Culture Houses and youth camps.
- Recognition of youth work: The 2022 Youth Workers' Declaration, launched at the National Convention in Cluj-Napoca, received recognition from the Ministry of Youth. In 2026 there are plans to integrate its principles into the implementation of the National Youth Strategy also in the future and improve them.

Mihai Vîlcea, President of National Youth Foundation/ FNT- Building Romania's youth ecosystem Centre -The Youth

Summary:

Mihai presented the FNT role in coordinating a national network of youth organisations and 24 permanent youth centres. Its approach places young people at the centre of the youth ecosystem, connecting policies, activities, services, funding, youth NGOs, foundations and youth work professionals.

As a member of ERYICA, FNT promotes youth information and access to opportunities. Youth centres are seen as essential spaces where young people can find information, develop ideas, test skills and put into practice what they have learned through mobility programmes.

Key challenges include:

- The limited number of youth centres in Romania compared with other European cities (e.g. Helsinki has around 60 centres for 400,000 inhabitants, while Timișoara has only one).
- Ensuring continuity of activities and services after project funding ends.
- Securing resources for qualified staff, training and long-term involvement.
- Improving access to funding, mobility opportunities and European Youth Card benefits.

FNT also highlighted the potential of a Youth App providing location-based information about activities and opportunities, including for young people who travel or move between communities.

The overall message was that youth centres need sustainable structures, resources and different management models (youth-led, NGO-based or other approaches) to create an accessible and supportive ecosystem for young people.

Round I – one question for each speaker from moderator

Question for Marina, Better Inclusion Association

Q: For a young person with either a visible or invisible disability, what are the main challenges regarding mobility: the information, the application, the journey or the stay?

Summary of the answer:

Marina (Better Inclusion) highlighted the barriers faced by young people with disabilities when accessing youth activities and mobility opportunities. Drawing on her personal experience with hearing loss and caregiving responsibilities, she emphasised that disability is not always visible and that inclusion requires more than simply declaring an organisation open to everyone.

The first and most important barrier is often the lack of an invitation. Youth organisations and centres need to actively encourage participation, assess their accessibility and communicate honestly about the support and accommodations they can provide. Historical buildings, for example, can create significant physical accessibility challenges.

A key message was that mobility starts with an invitation: organisations must be open to dialogue, understand individual needs, provide information and be willing to make reasonable adjustments throughout the participation process.

The answer also highlighted the different challenges experienced by young people with disabilities in rural and urban areas, underlining the need for flexible and context-specific inclusion measures.

Introduction from Andrei, Moderator

Youth Capital and European Youth Village programmes demonstrate how recognition can become a catalyst for long-term community development. Beyond the title itself, their value lies in creating platforms for activities, projects, events and youth policies that bring together young people, organisations and local communities. While these initiatives generate momentum and engagement in both urban and rural areas, the main challenge remains ensuring sustainability: developing youth centres, implementing strategic plans and maintaining regular activities and opportunities for young people beyond the award period.

Question for Mihai Sebe, Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Romania

Q: How can you make the Partial Agreement on the Youth Card to have an impact on the youth in rural areas?

Summary of the answer:

The Partial Agreement brings together 24 countries to share common values, exchange experiences and collaborate on topics such as youth mobility. It provides access to research, data and good practices to expand opportunities for young people in education, culture and other areas. Events like this aim to extend these benefits beyond cities and bring the "magic of the Partial Agreement" to rural communities, ensuring that more young people can access European opportunities.

Question for Mihai Vîlcea, President of National Youth Foundation/ FNT- Building Romania's youth ecosystem Centre -The Youth

Q: You mentioned in your presentation the importance for a city and for its young people to have a youth centre. How to make sure that the young people are heard and involved?

Summary of the answer:

Youth dialogue must be supported by meaningful consultation and active participation, both face-to-face and online. While 14,000 young people have been consulted (in one of our surveys), differences between countries/ organizations remain in how effectively young people's voices are collected and integrated into decision-making at the local level. Schools are important spaces for youth participation, but limited funding means initiatives often rely on young people themselves to train, prepare and engage their peers. Strengthening their skills and providing sustainable support are essential to ensure that youth voices genuinely influence policies and decisions.

Round 2 – cross-cutting questions

Q1. What a youth centre can do to be more accessible and inviting to be youth with disability friendly?

Input from Marina, Better Inclusion

- *Physical accessibility: Provide ramps and accessible facilities for people with reduced mobility.*
- *Accessible communication: Be willing to listen, understand individual needs and adapt communication methods.*
- *Website accessibility: Include a simple form where visitors can ask about available accessibility measures.*
- *Low-cost adjustments: Use captions, ensure face-to-face communication and allow participants with hearing difficulties to sit closer to the facilitator.*

- *Staff training: Train youth centre staff to understand and accommodate different accessibility needs.*
- *Support for blind people: Provide clear information about facilities, including the location and accessibility of bathrooms.*
- *Guide dogs: Ensure that facilities are welcoming and accessible to people accompanied by guide dogs.*
- *Inclusive approach: Recognise the diversity of young people's needs and prepare to work with different groups facing different barriers.*

Q2. Working together (whole panel): What is one thing the ministry and civil society could do together in the next 12 months for young people and youth mobility, and could the European Youth Card in Romania be part of it?

Marina, Better Inclusion – *It's connected with the communication part, we should have a more friendly vocabulary for the young people, create attractive materials (e.g. comics) / resources together with the young people and the communities, for the young people with disabilities include their perspective for ways of communication. Less fancy conferences and more playful formats to meet with young people.*

Mihai Sebe, Ministry – *We don't have a big budget for the people in the Ministry to specifically work in the youth field or to fund a lot of projects and initiatives. But we should use and improve the tools that we have engaging the civil society- national consultative youth council- a mechanism to consult with the NGOs; Youth Card in Romania – NGOs must come closer and spread awareness. I'm not a decision maker, but I would like to have a more practical approach.*

Mihai Vîlcea, FNT- *From my point of view, we must increase the number of young people working in public authorities, to access and increase budgets for projects, to have a European financial framework- we rely on the European money for the sector; make visible how the resources already available can be used by NGOs working with young people. Youth spaces exist more or less- at FNT we repurpose spaces that already exist and upgrade them for youth activities.*

Q&A session:

Question for Mihai, FNT

Q1. What is happening after a young person is included in a mobility – how do you evaluate competences, the mobility and improve the mobility?

Summary of the answer:

At FNT, the initiative encourages young people to move from participation to active involvement by supporting informal groups through four workshops, four mentoring activities and guidance in organising their own activities. Since September 2026, 39 people have been involved, with the Louder activity engaging 20 teenagers and growing in participation. A dedicated mobile app also helps collect data on young

people's involvement and activities, supporting the monitoring of participation and impact.

Question for Marina, Better Inclusion

Q2. Better inclusion are very important words. What does `better visibility` mean to you?

Summary of the answer:

Better inclusion starts with better visibility and awareness of the different challenges people face. As Marina highlighted, visibility means being open to recognising and understanding physical, mental and emotional disabilities, as well as chronic illnesses, which are not always visible. By exposing ourselves to different experiences, listening and acknowledging diverse needs, we can challenge assumptions, reduce stigma and create more inclusive communities.

Question for Mihai, FNT

Q3: What happens with the young person when the ecosystem is changing?

Answer: *the FNT framework and approach could be adopted by a new NGO, a Ministry, recommended by public and private authorities, at local or European level, and the impact on the youth may be the same. The young person still must be in the middle. We develop projects for young people taking into consideration their interest, give them more chances to explore, and opportunities to develop themselves.*

Question for the entire panel

Q4: Is there a platform to collect recommendations from young people with disabilities?

Short answer: *No, we feel there is a gap here, we do not have enough data.*

Q5: Almost 6 mil from the EU - how much money will be directed to the youth sector?

Answers:

- Mihai Sebe, Ministry: *My department doesn't deal with money allocations.*
- Mihai Vîlcea, FNT: *Although significant funding opportunities were initially proposed for youth through the EU Resilience Plan, the final allocation was zero. Other opportunities exist through digitalisation programmes and the European Social Fund, where employment services can apply and NGOs can participate as partners. However, restrictive eligibility and spending conditions may limit NGOs' ability to address essential needs, particularly investments in accessible infrastructure.*

Question for Mihai Sebe, Ministry

Q6: What are the challenges to be addressed in the next Youth Declaration or Youth Strategy in Romania?

Summary of the answer with an intervention from Laura, expert from the General Secretariat of the Government Department responsible with the Youth Declaration and Youth Strategy in Romania.

The next Romanian Youth Strategy will include data from the analysis made in the mid-term and final evaluations of the current strategy, identifying which measures should be continued or adapted. New approaches under consideration include assessing young people's needs at local and county levels to develop tailored interventions, strengthening institutional capacity, introducing early-warning indicators and ensuring continuous youth consultation at every stage of implementation. The aim is to make future youth policies more responsive to local realities and young people's actual needs.

Q7: The themes/ priorities for the Contest of project are recommended by the Ministry or by the young people?

Answer: *in the Strategy we have some general criteria and objectives that we will have to reach with all the youth programs. Some topics are included in the Declaration or the strategy. But there are also given points in the evaluation for different topics and priorities according to the annual priorities and focus connected to the young people.*

The Panel ended with:

1. An invitation for the participants to suggest good practices and stories from their experience on working with young people to be shared on the Day 2 of the event.
2. Administrative details regarding departure for the Cultural Centre – Casa de Cultura a Studentilor, by bus.
3. The reflection of the Day – a Menti collection

Reflection of the Day- summary

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the event's organisation, quality of discussions and the diversity of perspectives shared.

- Excellent moderation and facilitation: engaging, eloquent and dynamic, creating a good balance between formal discussions and informal conversations.
- Well-structured and inspiring event: Participants appreciated the organisation, venue, speakers and the right mix of civil servants and civil society representatives.
- Diverse perspectives and valuable learning: The event provided new insights into youth mobility, inclusion, accessibility and the challenges faced by young people across Europe.
- Good practices and practical examples: Participants valued the examples shared and found them relevant to their own work.

- Youth participation: Having young people at the table was appreciated, although some participants would have liked to hear even more from young people themselves.
- Inclusion and accessibility: Marina's contribution was particularly memorable, reinforcing the importance of discussing needs and vulnerabilities as a starting point for making accessibility work in practice.
- Networking and dialogue: The informal atmosphere encouraged conversations and exchanges between participants.

Points for improvement

- Create more opportunities for young people to express their perspectives and actively contribute.
- Include more practical exercises to help participants translate information into action.
- Consider the geographical accessibility of youth infrastructure, particularly in a country as large as Romania.
- Improve opportunities for interaction and networking from the beginning of the event.
- Maintain a balanced programme, considering the long duration of the day

Informal - Cultural programme at the Cultural Centre for Students Bucharest

The Bucharest Centre for Students has offered a cultural programme, showcasing the artistic skills of young people who benefit from the classes of the centre. Tango dances, folk music and dances, guitar and much more have constituted the evening programme for international participants.

The cultural programme was followed by a reception with traditional food.

Day II, 29th of October

Venue: Youth Centre TEI,

Conference Room

Agenda of the day

- Welcome back and recap of the previous day
- Tour of the Youth Centre TEI- guest speaker Cosmin Bărdălău, Director of CCSS Tei (Complexul Cultural Sportiv Studențesc Tei)
- Storytelling of various experiences on youth mobility- group discussions
- Untapping the potential of EYC in connecting stakeholders and building youth Infrastructure- World Café format
- Closing of the day

Moderator: Andrei Popescu

Conclusion of the recap of the Day I of the Seminar:

- The cultural programme highlighted the importance of celebrating traditions, cultural diversity and young people's creativity, bringing together different identities through both traditional and modern expressions.
- Participants valued the opportunity to connect emotionally with the young artists and to explore different realities of young people across countries.
- The discussions also reinforced the importance of translating these cultural and professional exchanges into concrete actions, supported by Romania's youth strategy and initiatives such as the European Youth Card.

Virtual Tour and presentation of the Youth Centre TEI - guest speaker Cosmin Bărdălău, Director of CCSS Tei (Complexul Cultural Sportiv Studențesc Tei)

Summary of presentation:

The Complexul Cultural Sportiv Studențesc „Tei" (CCSS Tei) is a public institution in Bucharest, under the authority of the Ministry responsible for youth, with a mission to support students and young people through cultural, educational, artistic, sporting and recreational activities.

Its main activities include:

- Non-formal education: workshops, courses, seminars, conferences, camps and educational events.
- Cultural and artistic activities: festivals, exhibitions, competitions and creative workshops.
- Sports and recreation: facilities for football, basketball, volleyball, tennis and other sports.
- Youth participation: encouraging young people to participate in designing and organising activities.
- Support for youth organisations: providing guidance and professional assistance to student and youth NGOs in developing projects and activities.

CCSS Tei is an important example of youth infrastructure, combining physical spaces, educational opportunities, sports and cultural activities in one location. It offers a platform for young people to develop their talents, socialise, exchange experiences and become actively involved in community life.

Q&A session

Participants had different kinds of curiosities on the topics about accessibility, facilities and activities involving young people managed directly by the Youth Centre TEI staff.

- Accessibility: The centre is relatively easy to reach, with public transport providing good connections.

- Accommodation and sports partnerships: The centre hosts athletes in training camps and competitions, providing short-term accommodation in collaboration with Romanian and international sports federations, both public and private.
- Support for performance athletes: The level of support depends on the type and requirements of the sporting competitions they attend.
- Youth and environmental projects: Initiatives for young people include environmental projects making use of the centre's extensive outdoor space.

Storytelling of various experiences on youth mobility- group discussions

Task for the networking session: Participants had 25 minutes to share their stories at the table. They had to focus on the activities they do, the connection that they have with the young people and the youth policies, experience with the youth inclusion and diversity in mobilities.

Untapping the potential of EYC in connecting stakeholders and building youth infrastructure.

Task for the World Café by the moderator:

- Presentation on the Method World café
- Reporters and contributors' roles explained
- Three rounds of sharing and collecting ideas on each table.
- Invitation from the moderator: `Speak from your own experience, not from what you've heard, a rumour`

Working groups on different topics related to youth ecosystems.

1. Accessible and affordable mobility for all: What are the barriers needed to be removed for young people who don't travel today and how to remove them?

Conclusion: Participants identified financial support and equal access to information as key barriers to youth mobility. Priorities include stronger cooperation with authorities, better outreach to rural communities, affordable housing, transport and youth discounts, as well as easier visa procedures for non-EU young people. Attention was given to young people with disabilities, highlighting the need for dedicated funding, accessible transport, appropriate adaptations and additional youth worker support.

2. Youth voice: How is young people's voice heard in general, and how are their needs for mobility and infrastructure considered in the policies made for them?

Conclusion: Participants emphasised the need to move from consultation to meaningful youth participation, ensuring that young people's voices are reflected in policies, including those related to mobility and youth infrastructure. Key priorities include stronger legal frameworks, youth mainstreaming across government and Parliament, better use of social media and information campaigns, youth representation

in decision-making structures, and regular consultations and surveys at local and national levels.

3. Visibility and outreach: What would make mobility visible to young people who never hear about it? How do young people find out about Youth Card offers and opportunities?

Conclusion: Mobility opportunities and Youth Card benefits need to be promoted through a diverse, youth-centred outreach strategy that combines social media, influencers, peer-to-peer communication, schools, local events and partnerships. Outreach should also reach rural communities and involve trusted networks such as parents' associations. Most importantly, young people should be at the heart of visibility efforts—helping shape the message, content and channels so that opportunities feel relevant, accessible and meant for them.

4. Stakeholders and youth infrastructure: Who needs to work together, and how can youth centres become mobility hubs?

Conclusion: Youth mobility requires strong cooperation between government, NGOs, businesses and youth centres, ensuring that disadvantaged groups, including minorities, young people with disabilities and those from rural areas, are represented. Youth centres should become accessible mobility hubs with a clear mission, relevant services, social support and reliable information about local and European opportunities. The European Youth Card can strengthen this role by connecting young people to opportunities through awareness campaigns, digital platforms and interactive maps of youth services, activities, organisations and spaces, while encouraging partnerships between youth centres and companies.

5. Virtual and new forms of mobility: When can virtual or blended mobility open doors for young people who cannot travel, and when does it risk replacing the real experience? What role could the European Youth Card and youth centres play?

Conclusion: Virtual and blended mobility can make learning and international experiences more accessible, particularly for young people facing financial, geographical or personal barriers. Participants highlighted the need for coordinated national or EU-level digital platforms, virtual education, tours, communities and Erasmus+ opportunities, supported by EU-funded digitalisation and an equity-based approach. However, virtual mobility should complement rather than replace physical experiences. The European Youth Card and youth centres can play an important role in connecting young people to these opportunities, promoting access and ensuring inclusion.

Final remarks:

On behalf of the Council of Europe, Natalja Turenne has thanked everyone for their dedication, time and shared knowledge. She's mentioned that in 6 months - 1 year, a follow up survey will follow, as the PA Youth Mobility through the youth card is in a process of better measuring the impact of its activities.

On behalf of the Ministry for Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Mr. Victor Ionescu and Mr. Mihai Sebe have thanked all international guests for traveling to Romania for this event, expressed their gratitude and extended their warm welcome for another time.

On behalf of EYCA, Manel Sanchez has thanked the Romanian EYCA member organisation, as well as to the Ministry, the Council of Europe and all guests who actively attended the event.

The present report was shared with all stakeholders and published.

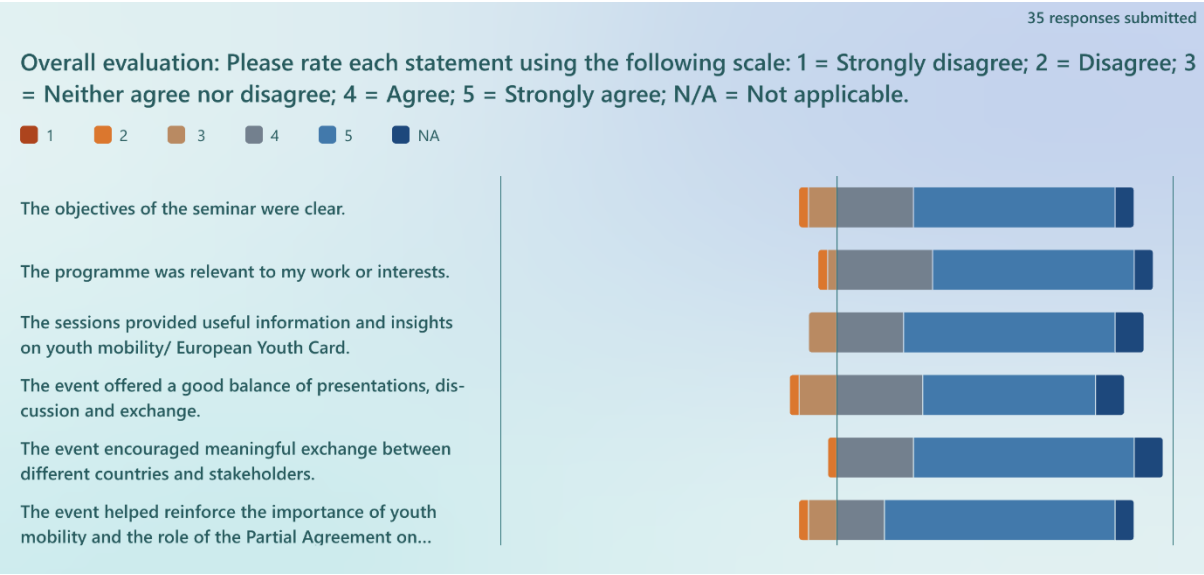
Evaluation form summary

- 35 participants submitted their responses.

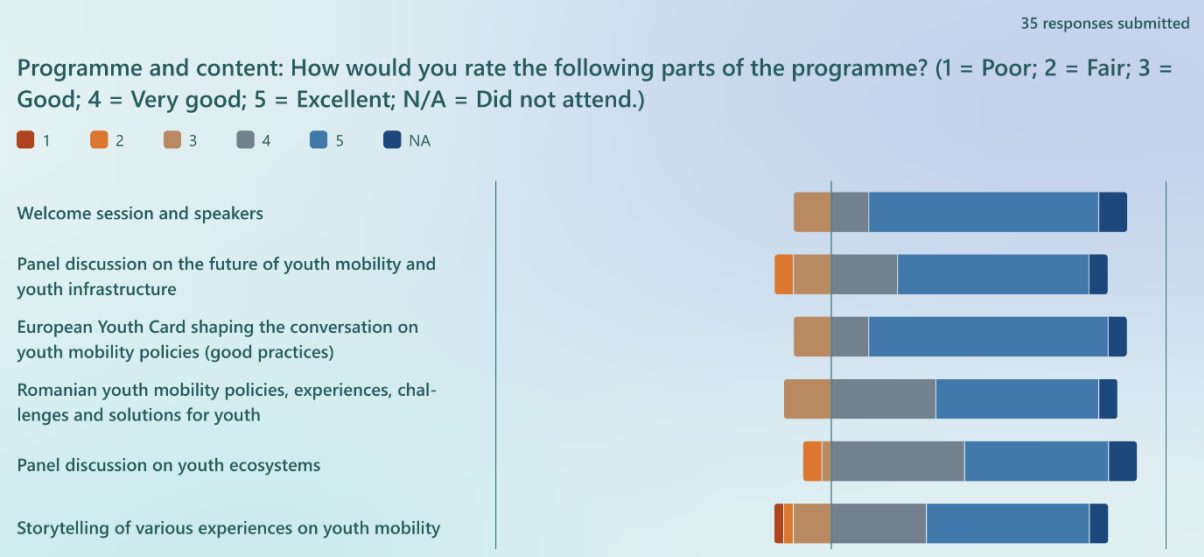
About your participation section:



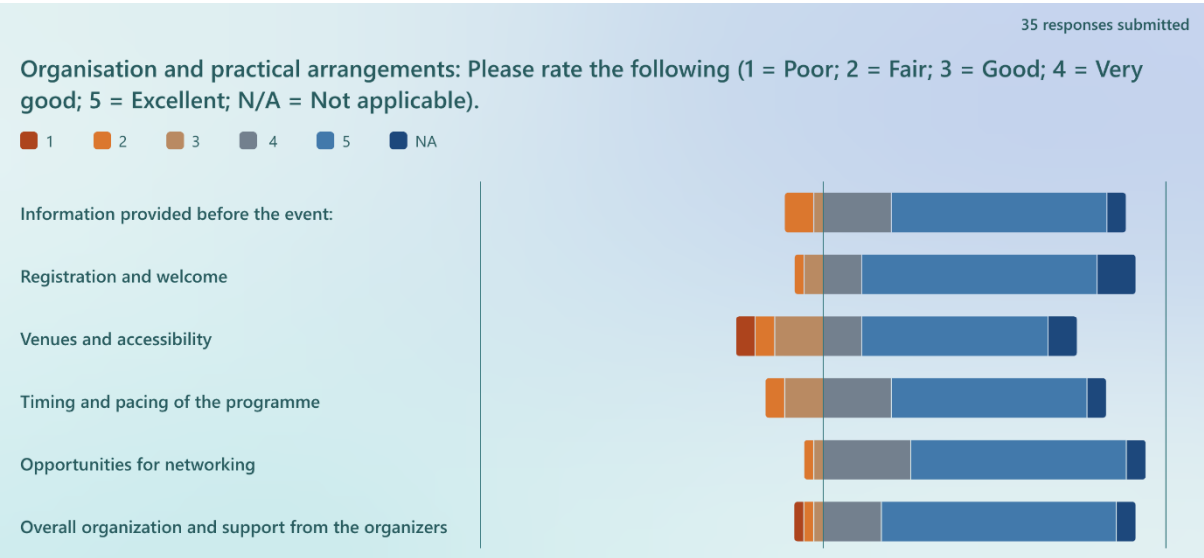
Overall evaluation:



Programme and content:

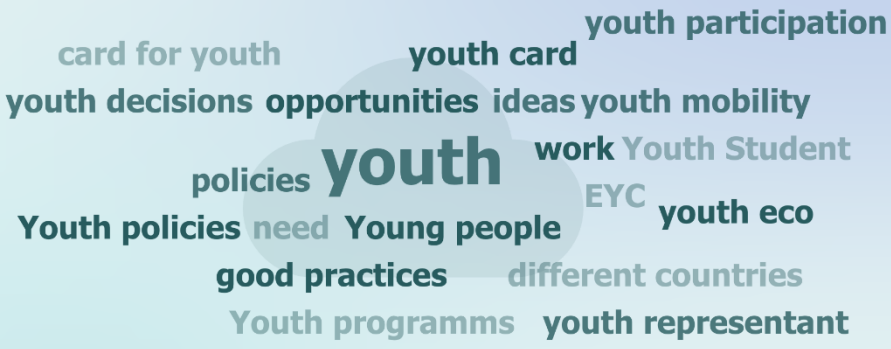


Organisation and practical arrangements:



35 responses submitted

What are the most important ideas, insights or examples you are taking away from the seminar?



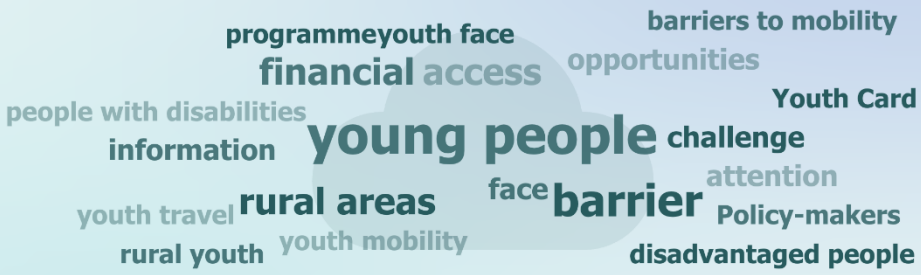
35 responses submitted

What are the most important ideas, insights or examples you are taking away from the seminar?



35 responses submitted

What youth mobility challenge or opportunity should receive more attention from policy-makers and stakeholders?



35 responses submitted

What practical action, collaboration or follow-up would you like to pursue after this event?



35 responses submitted

What topics or formats would you recommend for future events on youth mobility?



Main Conclusions from the

`RENEWING THE COMMITMENT TO YOUTH MOBILITY- PARTIAL AGREEMENT PROMOTIONAL EVENT`

The opening session established several key messages for the seminar:

- Youth mobility must be accessible to all. Financial constraints, housing costs, and other social barriers need to be addressed so that opportunities are not limited to young people who already have sufficient resources.
- Young people must be involved in decisions that affect them. Their participation should be meaningful and continuous, with opportunities to contribute to policy development and decision-making.
- Youth mobility requires political commitment and adequate funding. Cooperation between public authorities, European institutions, and youth organisations is essential to turn commitments into practical opportunities.
- Youth information and support mechanisms are essential. Initiatives such as the European Youth Card and European funding programmes can help young people discover and access learning, mobility, and development opportunities.
- Cross-sector and international cooperation creates added value. Bringing together diverse stakeholders enables the exchange of experiences, the identification of common challenges, and the development of more effective approaches.
- Young people's voices must shape the future of youth policy. Surveys, youth panels, consultations, and participatory initiatives can ensure that policies respond to their real needs and aspirations.

Panel youth infrastructure

Key takeaway: To reach more young people, opportunities must be brought closer to them through peer-to-peer communication, community-based outreach and accessible information channels.

Call to Action from the speakers:

- Effective youth policies and initiatives must be built on the principle of "Nothing for youth without youth." Young people should be actively involved in shaping decisions, designing programmes and evaluating the initiatives that affect their lives. This requires stronger collaboration between youth representatives, organisations, institutions and communities.

- Youth centres can serve as valuable platforms for dialogue, participation and cooperation, while youth mobility offers young people opportunities to develop democratic values, active citizenship and a stronger sense of European belonging.

Cross-cutting Lessons and Recommendations extracted from EYCA panel:

- Communication is essential. Young people need to understand the concrete benefits of the card, both nationally and internationally.
- Build strong partnerships. Cooperation with ministries, municipalities, universities, NGOs and the private sector is crucial for national coverage and sustainability.
- Think beyond discounts. Career development, mentoring, skills recognition and youth participation can significantly increase the card's value.
- Digitalisation matters. Mobile applications offer an accessible way to communicate opportunities and maintain direct connections with young people.
- Involve young people directly. Youth ambassadors and representative panels can help identify needs, gather feedback and encourage participation.
- Start locally and scale up: Developing successful partnerships and initiatives at municipality or community level can provide a model for national expansion.

Overall conclusion from DAY I: The event was perceived as informative, inspiring and well facilitated. It successfully brought together different perspectives, encouraged reflection on youth mobility and inclusion, and offered valuable, good practices. The main expectation for future events is to move further from information-sharing towards practical application, stronger youth participation and concrete follow-up actions.

Conclusion from the World café session, Day II:

- Mobility cannot be truly accessible without concrete financial commitments, targeted support and coordinated action to ensure that no young person is left behind.
- Young people should not only be consulted but also represented and actively involved in shaping the decisions that affect them.
- Young people should be at the heart of visibility efforts, for the Youth Card or Youth opportunities — helping shape the message, content and channels so that opportunities feel relevant, accessible and meant for them.
- Youth centres should become accessible mobility hubs with a clear mission, relevant services, social support and reliable information about local and European opportunities.
- The European Youth Card and youth centres can play an important role in connecting young people to these opportunities, promoting access and ensuring inclusion.

Annexe:

- Quality Label: Educational Forum for youth centres of the Quality Label network - Youth
- EYCA - About Us - Member organisations | European Youth Card
- European Youth Card in Romania - Cardul European de Tineret
- EYCA Youth Panel : Your voice, our 2030: Collecting messages from young people directly | European Youth Card, Apply for the 5th edition of the EYCA Youth Panel | European Youth Card
- Master Presentation- PA seminar_Master presentation.pdf