



EUROTOWNS POSITION PAPER

EU YOUTH STRATEGY 2019-2027

SUMMARY

Medium-sized cities represent a significant part of the EU urban fabric. Youth participation is very important in medium-sized cities. Through a close connection with its youth groups and institutions, many medium-sized cities engage the youth through democratic processes, such as youth councils, and can include the needs and challenges of young people into its policies and programmes.

Medium-sized cities foster active youth participation by being close to its citizens.

INTRODUCTION

The **Eurotowns network** was established in 1991 as the Europe-wide network for towns and cities with populations between 50,000 and 250,000. Today it represents 17 cities across the continent.

Eurotowns is working towards a more sustainable future for the citizens of Europe. Its mission is to foster collaboration among EU medium-sized cities, and to help shaping their policies according to EU values and objectives.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Working areas:

- Engage:
 - Youth participation is very important to medium-sized cities. We offer various ways for young people to participate in the democratic process such as youth councils.
 - **Participation lives on young people speaking up for their opinion locally.** Therefore, we welcome the encouragement of member states and the recommended actions.
 - Eventually, it all comes down to the National Action Plans. We hope to be involved in the making of these plans and will try to include engaging actions at the local and regional level.
 - Furthermore, we welcome the important role of the Erasmus+-Programme.
 - **A lot of medium-sized cities have to deal with social inclusion.** In Sindelfingen, for example, more than 50% of the inhabitants have a migration background which makes Sindelfingen such an international and diverse city. Therefore, we would like to emphasize on the inclusion and diversity strategy under Erasmus+ mentioned in the EU Youth Strategy.

- Connect:
 - Connecting youth across Europe is very important to improve employability and make them understand what European values and culture is all about.
 - We support the “European Youth Together initiative” connecting youth to participate in democratic processes, supporting disadvantaged young people and connecting youth organisations.
 - For us, it is important to provide access to exchange programmes for all youth, especially youth representing the rural areas of Europe.
- Empower:
 - The EU Youth Strategy is a huge chance for youth work across the EU. It focusses on improving the quality of youth work and provides support to adapt to digital opportunities. Moreover, it calls upon member states to promote the recognition of youth work.
 - In medium-sized cities, youth work is essential part of the non-formal education and urban culture. Often, however, committing to youth work needs to be recognized so youth workers can use their skills in official ways.

SUMMARY

Eurotowns strongly supports the proposal by the European Commission on a new European Youth Strategy 2019-2017 and calls on the Member States to actively engage medium-sized cities in the development process of their national action plans. Especially, the youth in medium-sized cities shows a strong ownership to its city and is therefore an important partner in developing future strategies and policies.