



Guidelines for a new youth policy

Our society needs the youth. Young people make essential contributions for the development and innovation of society. Our youth needs a society where they can implement their interests and fulfil their wishes. Additionally, young people are facing ever greater challenges; because of demographic trends the young generations of today and tomorrow grow to be even more significant.

Youth is an independent phase in life in which young people take important steps towards their independence: they develop own identities and values; they search for a place in society. Young people gain important experience, try out various ways of life and decide about their future. At the same time they find themselves confronted with a multitude of expectations regarding learning and performance. They need support and recognition as well as sufficient space and time to be able to become responsible and socially competent persons.

For giving all young people the best possible start we intend to draft a new youth policy as a novel, holistic political approach that strikes a balance between the requirements of society towards youth and young people's needs and interests. Everyone dealing with issues that are relevant for youth has to take their views and interests into account effectively. In all processes shaping our society, attention has to be paid to the interests of young people. A new youth policy follows these guidelines:

- A new youth policy refers to all adolescents and young adults. It opens up attractive prospects and opportunities to participate in society, so that young people can shape their lives and look confidently ahead to the future.
- A new youth policy has preventive and balancing effects; it ensures equal opportunities for all young people, regardless of their background. It offers particular support for young people who are living in difficult situations or who are not yet able to cope with the requirements of society.
- A new youth policy promotes suitable methods and structures like self-organisation and associations to enable young people to enforce their interests. Young people have to have a say with regard to the shaping of their environment and future. They are experts for their own interests and needs and make essential contributions to socio-political topics.
- A new youth policy is a task for the society as a whole and can be only successful if all relevant stakeholders (e.g. school, youth services and welfare, politics, civil society, business, media, science, and the young generation itself) act together. This shared responsibility for youth policy should become visible through an "Alliance for Youth".
- A new youth policy uncovers the potential and opportunities provided by youth for the society, makes them visible and tangible. Young people's commitment is appreciated and their positive image is publicly promoted.