



GENERALIST YOUTH INFORMATION IN EUROPE IN 1997

Presentations

of 17 national systems and situations

at the end of 1997

Study
conducted by the

European Youth Information and Counselling Agency

with financial assistance from the European Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment in 1986, the **European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA)** has been working with its national partners, now numbering 45 organisations in 30 European countries, to develop “generalist” youth information both at the national level and in its European dimensions.

One of the strong points in the European co-operation which has developed over the years has been the constant interest in exchanging ideas and methods, at the level of national structures and networks, as well as between individual youth information workers. This interest, and the arrival of new partners who are in the process of initiating youth information services, has led to increasing demands for more detailed information about how generalist youth information and counselling are organised in different countries.

It was with the intention of meeting this need that ERYICA, with the help of national partners in the countries concerned and with financial assistance from the European Commission, conducted in 1997 a study of national approaches to generalist youth information in 16 countries.

The results of that study are presented, on the basis of a chapter (updated in December 1997) about each of the following countries: **Austria, Belgium** (separate chapters on the Flemish Community, and on the French and German-speaking Communities), **Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain** and the **United Kingdom**. These texts, in English and French versions, can be found on (and downloaded from) Internet, at the ERYICA Web-site (www.eryica.org) in the “Documents” area.

Each chapter includes information about the following aspects:

- when and how “generalist” youth information originated in the country
- aims and principles of “generalist” youth information
- profile of the national network
- national co-ordination
- how youth information is financed (at national and local level)
- how pluralism and quality are guaranteed
- co-operation with other services
- specialised information services for young people.

These 17 chapters therefore constitute a sort of “**photograph**” of generalist youth information and counselling in those 16 countries which at the end of 1997 were all operating national networks in this field. These networks, which have more than doubled in number since 1986 when their local centres and relays did not exceed 500, today count more than **6,291 centres and relays in 24 countries** --- see the sheet presenting a breakdown (dated June 1999) of the number of centres by country which follows this Introduction.

More recent information about these national networks can also be found on the ERYICA Web-site, in particular in the “Member Organisations” area.

What is “Generalist” Youth Information?

Since "youth information" is a term which can describe a range of different activities by a wide variety of "information actors", it is perhaps useful to outline the specific character of "generalist" youth information. It is the approach adopted by ERYICA partners, one which has been tried and tested since the late 1960s in a number of countries.

Essentially, it is a **user-centred approach**. That is to say that the youth information centre or service adopts as its starting-point the questions and needs of the young people who use it. As these cover a wide range of issues and problems, the centre is organised either to respond directly on a large number of topics (hence the term "generalist", as opposed to other "specialised" information services on careers, health, etc.), or to refer the user to another service which is competent in the desired area.

The centre may provide other services which are complementary to, and not contrary to, its basic information and counselling role (eg. youth card, cheap transport or accommodation, rooms or equipment for youth activities, help in organising youth projects). It may also make available information from a wide range of sources (official administrations, associations, commercial services) which promotes activities and opportunities aimed at young people. But in its contact with each individual user, the primary concern of the centre or service is to respond to the question or need raised by the user, irrespective of any other external interest. It seeks to do this in a way which enables the user to have a maximum of choice, and which respects her/his autonomy and anonymity.

As a “transmitter” of information on a wide range of topics, the centre (or its national structure) is in regular contact with bodies which are the sources which provide the information (or information materials ready to distribute). As a focal point for information which is relevant to young people in its locality, the centre maintains a close collaboration with other youth-related services, both as sources of information and as services to which a user may be referred.

In general, "generalist" youth information and counselling centres and services have the following characteristics, which are based on the **European Youth Information Charter** or on a national set of standards or charter where these exist:

- they are specifically designed to respond to the needs of young people
- they are open to all young people, without the need for an appointment
- they provide information on a wide range of subjects, in a variety of forms, prepared both for young people in general and for groups with special needs
- the information provided is practical, pluralistic, accurate and regularly updated
- they operate in a way which personalises the reception of each user, respects confidences, provides a maximum of choice and promotes his / her autonomy
- when necessary, they refer the user to a specialised service.

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Published by **ERYICA** (non-profit association)
101 quai Branly, F-75740 Paris Cedex 15, France
E-mail: SGeryica@aol.com

**NUMBER OF GENERALIST YOUTH INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING CENTRES,
POINTS AND SERVICES IN EUROPE (June 1999)**

<i>Country + National Network or Co-ordinating Body</i>	<i>Number of Regional Centres or Services</i>	<i>Number of Local Centres or Services</i>	<i>Number of Other Centres, Services or Points (most being local)</i>	TOTAL NUMBER of Centres, Services or Points
A AUSTRIA - ARGE	7 centres	1 centre	1 federal centre	9
AND ANDORRA (no national network)	--	1 centre	--	1
B BELGIUM - IN PETTO	--	14 centres	21 points	35
- Fédération Infor Jeunes	--	11 centres	23 points	34
BH BOSNIA HERZ. - DIA / YIC	--	14 centres	--	14
CH SWITZERLAND (no national network)	--	48 centres	--	48
D GERMANY (no national network)	--	25 centres	--	25
DK DENMARK (no national network)	--	1 centre	--	1
E SPAIN - INJUVE	19 centres	2,440 centres and points		2459
F FRANCE - CIDJ (CIJ Network)	32 centres	1,424 centres and points		1456
FIN FINLAND - ALLIANSSI	--	25 centres	90 points	115
GB UNITED KINGDOM England: - NYA	--	286 centres	--	286
- Youth Access	--	163 centres	--	163
Northern Ireland: - NYCI	7 centres	15 centres	100 points	122
Scotland: - CLS	--	32 centres	--	32
GR GREECE - GSY (no national network)	--	2 centres	--	2
H HUNGARY - HAYICO	--	22 centres	8 points	30
I ITALY (no national network)	--	700 centres	--	700
IRL IRELAND - NYIMC	--	28 centres	--	28
L LUXEMBOURG - CNIEJ	1	2 centres	15 centres	18
N NORWAY - Forum UNGINFO	2 centres	11 centres	--	13
NL NETHERLANDS - SJN	10 centres	160 centres and points		170
P PORTUGAL - IPJ	1	18 centres	--	319
RO ROMANIA - INFOTIN	5 centres	42 centres	23 points	77
- IFINET	--	7 centres	--	
RU RUSSIA - State Committee on Youth	37 centres	48 centres	--	85
S SWEDEN - UNGINFO, Eskilstuna (no national network)	--	8 centres	--	8
SLO SLOVENIA - MISSS	--	9 centres	--	9
SQ SLOVAKIA - ZIPCeM	9 centres	13 centres	10 points	32
TOTAL				6.291