

THE YOUTH STRATEGY "TAKING ACTION FOR A YOUTH APPROPRIATE SOCIETY"

Youth is a highly formative phase of life in its own right with specific challenges. This conviction leads to the approach of the **Independent Youth Policy** that the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has been following for some years. This Independent Youth Policy, which cannot be included alongside matters pertaining to children and families, brings the interests and needs of those between the ages of 12 and 27 to the fore in political actions. The guiding principle of the **youth strategy** of the BMFSFJ is **"Taking Action for a Youth Appropriate Society"**. The aim is to create a society which involves the young generation in all decisions that affect them and which offers good conditions to all youth and young adults for coping with the challenges they face in the youth phase of life. Participation in ongoing political and social dialogue about "youth" is imperative in order to both shape this phase of life and engage young people.

The BMFSFJ is working together with many partners of the youth strategy on various projects that are oriented towards the [Independent Youth Policy](#). At its core, the youth strategy comprises four central fields of action:

- **A policy for, with and by the youth: effective youth participation,**
- **Between requirements and needs: time and (free) spaces**
- **Policies for the future for all: social perspectives and social participation,**
- **Youth images: depiction and perception of the diversity of young people.**

MEASURES AND PROJECTS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE YOUTH STRATEGY

► Central organizational partner of the BMFSFJ with regard to implementing the youth strategy is the [coordination office "Taking Action for a Youth Appropriate Society"](#), a project of the Child and Youth Welfare Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ). Its central tasks are the nationwide dissemination of the Independent Youth Policy, the networking of the stakeholders on a federal level as well as youth conferences and public relations for the youth strategy.

► The municipal level is one of the most important domains for implementing the Independent Youth Policy. Since 2015, 16 reference municipalities throughout the entire federal territory take part in a process called ["Youth Appropriate Local Municipalities"](#). Essential elements of the process are peer-learning seminars in which the municipalities meet to exchange experiences and ideas with each other as well as with external experts. The sixteen "Youth Appropriate Municipalities" are joint projects of youth, experts, politicians and public administrators, working together in municipal networks to develop binding youth policy frameworks. The coordination office has also developed a toolkit called ["Doing Youth Justice"](#) which contains numerous practical items aiming for a greater level of local youth appropriateness.

- ▶ The **Youth-Check** is an effective instrument for auditing and raising awareness for the concerns of youth in an ageing society– in terms of generational equity, appreciation of young people and sustainability. The BMFSFJ has been developing the Youth-Check together with experts in a cooperative and transparent process. The "[Competence Centre Youth-Check](#)" (**ComYC**) implemented by the German Research Institute for Public Administration (Deutsches Forschungsinstitut für öffentliche Verwaltung) performs this Youth-Check on draft laws and shows the effects of planned federal regulations on the young generation.

- ▶ The working group "**Youth Shape the Future**" connected the youth strategy of the BMFSFJ with the demographic strategy of the entire Federal Government. This working group focused on rural regions. Being assembled by representatives from federal, state and municipal bodies, social partners and associations, the economy, science and civil society, the working group aimed at the consideration of young people and their interests in the demographic policy of the Federal Government and at giving youth a strong voice. The working group discussed demographic policy challenges, described measures and implemented specific participation projects with young people. Their proposals are incorporated in recommendations which were submitted on the Demographic Summit in March 2017.

- ▶ With the [publication "Enabling youth! Youth Brochure on the 15th Child and Youth Report"](#), the BMFSFJ wants to stimulate a wide-ranging discussion with and about youth, about their living conditions and their activities, about requirements for youth appropriate policies and a youth appropriate society. It also wants to encourage the perusal of the report itself. An editorial team from Germany's youth-owned youth media organisation, Jugendpresse Deutschland, has edited the brochure and created a comprehensible edited version of the central themes.

- ▶ "**jugend.beteiligen.jetzt – for practical digital participation**" is a cooperative project of the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring), the German Children and Youth Foundation (Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung) and IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany (Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland). The platform, which can be accessed via www.jugend.beteiligen.jetzt, provides expertise on processes and tools and offers skills training. It demonstrates best practice and interlinks selected youth participation projects. Many of the tools are available in several languages.

- ▶ The aim of the project "**Workshop for Participation**" of the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring) is to anchor effective and sustainable youth participation processes in various political areas. Youth participation is being implemented on federal level and the participation of young people is being strengthened throughout Europe, ("Structured Dialogue"). In addition, the "Workshop for Participation" further develops youth participation, works on quality standards and provides information on innovative forms of participation. The project also strengthens the professional exchange and skills training in the field of youth participation within a nationwide network.

► In the **workshop series "Youth and policy"**, experts meet on an irregular basis in the BMFSFJ to discuss new trends in youth policy and developments as well as challenges with an open approach regarding the results. The main topics covered to date are "Youth and voting", "Youth and political parties", "Participative youth research", "Latitude and Spaces" and "Representative participation formats on a municipal level".

► **Initiative of the European and International Youth Policy of the BMFSFJ ["Creating opportunities through exchanges and encounters"](#)**

- **Initiative 1:** "Why not? Study on international youth exchange: access and barriers" (2016-2018)
- **Initiative 2:** JiVE. Jugendarbeit international – Vielfalt erleben (International youth work – experiencing diversity) (2015-2017)
- **Initiative 3:** Funding for youth initiatives and peer-to-peer projects for the further development of European and international youth work (KJP innovation fund – funding phase 2017-2019)
- **Initiative 4:** Youth meetings, youth conferences, youth parliaments (2016-2017)

► The **innovation fund for further development of the Independent Youth Policy**, supports 40 projects in different fields within topics of political education, youth associations, cultural education, international youth work and youth social work. Moreover, the project **"Independent Youth Policy in the Innovation Fund"** of the Child and Youth Welfare Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ) connects all fields of action and communicates the beneficial contribution of the projects to the Independent Youth Policy. It promotes exchange and makes the developments and results visible to the public.

► The BMFSFJ's **JugendPolitikTage 2017** ("youth policy days") took place in May 2017 as part of the European Youth Week. The central partner for content and organisation was Germany's youth-owned youth media organisation, Jugendpresse Deutschland. Approximately 450 youths and young adults between 16 and 27 years from all federal states took part. They represented youth parliaments, youth forums, youth councils, youth associations, youth party organisations or pupil and student representations. The 15th Child and Youth Report of the Federal Government formed the central themes for the discussions.

► Collaboration between the **Independent Youth Policy and the [implementation process of the EU Youth Strategy](#)**: The planning committee of the coordination centre and the Federal-State working group on the EU Youth Strategy follow a common agenda and a joint annual programme of work.

► Funding of **youth-vote projects** for people under 18 years: [U18-Wahl](#) of the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring) and [Junior Election](#) of Kumulus e.V.

► **"Youth Mile"** as part of the annual open days of the Federal Government in front of the BMFSFJ building in Berlin with information campaigns and promotional offers in the context of the Youth Strategy