

Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes

RAY TRIANGULAR SUMMIT

CONCEPT NOTE

UPDATE_210926



1. CONTEXT

In 2008, the RAY Network¹ was founded with the aim to contribute to quality assurance and quality development in the implementation of the European Union's Youth in Action Programme (2007–2013). To that end, the initial network partners developed a framework for the first and core research project of the network: standard surveys for project participants and project teams. These standard surveys were further developed at the start of the next programme generation, Erasmus+ Youth in Action (2014–2020), resulting in this core research project on the research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+ Youth in Action (RAY MON), and subsequently to the research-based analysis and monitoring of the European Solidarity Corps (RAY SOC). The monitoring surveys are still the core research undertaken in the RAY Network, they were further developed in the ongoing programme generation (2021–2027) and are conducted and implemented in cooperation with currently all 34 RAY partner countries.

Over the past 15+ years, more than 125.000 project participants and close to 30.000 project team members have participated in the surveys and given voice to their experience.² These monitoring surveys are complemented by thematic research projects, which RAY uses to dive deeper into specific aspects of the programmes with a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative research instruments (case studies, focus groups, interviews) with additional quantitative research instruments (usually small-scale thematic surveys).³

The research shows in many different ways that the European youth programmes work really well. They reach their intended objectives and empower young people as active citizens, critical thinkers and life-long learners. Secondly, the research frequently discovers aspects and areas for improvement, which helps National Agencies in finetuning the implementation of the European youth programmes, the SALTO centers in focusing their work in support of the programmes, and the European Commission in iterating the frameworks for the programmes' implementation.

The RAY Network is currently running the second survey cycle in the ongoing programme period⁴. The surveys have been launched in autumn 2025 and key insights and findings will be communicated throughout 2026, with the RAY Triangular Summit as main space for disseminating and discussing newest findings.

The RAY Triangular Summit brings together policy, practice and research to foster an informed discourse between these stakeholders. Is designed as dissemination, policy and advocacy conference. The discussions aim to determine how evidence-based research can contribute to the further development of the ongoing and new generation of the European youth programmes (2028-2034) (both for the regulation and operational specifics). Furthermore, the discussions aim to determine how evidence-based research can contribute to youth policy development and relevant strategies and policies, especially the EU Youth Strategy (post-2027).

The RAY Triangular Summit is co-organised by the RAY Network Coordination (at the Finnish National Agency) and the RAY Transnational Research Team (at Youth Policy Labs) together with the hosting National Agency from Ireland and other co-hosting National Agencies. The Summit is officially implemented within the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

¹ www.researchyouth.net/network

² Reports and summaries: www.researchyouth.net/mon/, www.researchyouth.net/soc/

³ RAY research projects: www.researchyouth.net/projects/

⁴ First survey round in ongoing programme period was conducted between 2021–2023, findings available here: www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/RAY-MON_Research-Report_20212023.pdf, www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RAY-SOC_Research-Report-20212023.pdf.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. OVERALL AIM OF THE CONFERENCE

The aim of the RAY Triangular Summit is to bring together policy, practice and research to explore most recent research findings and to discuss what these fresh findings mean for the current and future generations of the European youth programmes and European youth strategies.

2.2. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

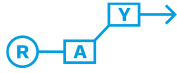
The key objectives of the RAY Triangular Summit are

- to discuss the most recent findings of the RAY Monitoring surveys for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, conducted with beneficiaries, project participants and project teams as well as the most recent findings of RAY thematic research strands
- to discuss essential insights from other European studies related to youth
- to determine how evidence-based research can contribute to the further development of the current and upcoming generation of the European youth programmes
- to determine how evidence-based research can contribute to the further development of current and upcoming European youth policy strategies and frameworks
- to illustrate the impact and showcase the outcomes of the European youth programmes
- to foster an informed discourse between stakeholders from policy, practice and research

2.3. PARTICIPANTS OF THE SUMMIT

The RAY Triangular Summit involves 160 participants, including researchers, practitioners and policymakers from all over Europe from the fields of youth, European youth work and European youth policy. National Agencies of the European Youth Programmes were responsible for selecting the participants for their national delegations in cooperation with the preparation team of the Summit. The selection of the participants was finalised in mid-April 2026. 28 National Delegations as well as 25 European stakeholders will attend the Summit

Participants: National Agencies, RAY Network researchers, youth work organisations, platforms and institutions, institutional stakeholders at European, national and local level (e.g. European Commission, Council of Europe, EU-CoE partnership, National authorities, National Ministries, Regional bodies, Local authorities), Members of the European Parliament and Youth Working Party, civil society stakeholders at European and national level (e.g. European Youth Forum, National Youth Councils) as well as research stakeholders from the youth and similar fields.



3. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. DATE AND TIME

The RAY Triangular Summit takes place from 21-23 October 2026

(arrival on 21 October in the afternoon; departure on 24 October, the programme ends on 23 October in the late afternoon).

3.2. PLACE AND LOCATION

The RAY Triangular Summit takes place in Dublin, Ireland.

3.3. HOSTING AGENCIES & PREPARATORY TEAM

The RAY Triangular Summit is co-hosted by the National Agencies of the European Youth Programmes from Ireland (Host) & Finland (RAY) and Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Czechia, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain (Co-hosts). The RAY Network Coordination (at the Finnish National Agency) leads and coordinates the preparation process and the implementation of the conference in cooperation with the RAY transnational research team.