



BOOK OF  
POSSIBILITIES

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Listen to people from other countries, listen to their opinions, hopes, plans about youth and their lives!

Young woman / Latvia

Being a part of something bigger and having the feeling that you are actually able to influence it with your presence is something extremely important.

Young woman / Germany

You can only be surprised how much positive energy and power there is in the air when more than 100 young people from all over the Baltic Sea Region gather together. And you can also be surprised how many things they have to speak out about.

Civil servant / Sweden

Why am I involved in all this? Because I can? No. On a more serious note, because I care. Baltic co-operation is more important to me personally than travelling to remote events in Bolivia, Turkey, Uganda or any other of those fancy places. Especially when it comes to youth co-operation and the youth policy field. If we still have trouble on the home front, so why go play in other peoples' sandboxes?  
Get the idea?

Young man / Estonia

I don't want to be involved by someone. I want to make the decision myself!

Young woman / Estonia

The best part was definitely meeting with the politicians! It was so interesting!

Young man / Sweden

"I had many interesting discussions with many new people."

Young man / Latvia

**BACKGROUND!**

## YOUTH ARE NEXT IN BUILDING THE FUTURE ...

Young people are the most valuable resource the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) possesses. Realizing this was the starting point for building a network of cities in different countries whose goal is to concentrate more on youth concerns. The initial youth conference took place in 2003 in Kalmar / Sweden. Two years later the loose network was upgraded to a Commission on Youth Issues (COYI). Today the COYI belongs to one of 11 commissions of the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC). Currently 100 member cities agree there are common tasks in developing the Baltic Sea Region...

## THE BALTIC SEA REGION NEEDS YOU ...

How can solutions on general issues be found without asking young people for their input? What is your perspective on your social environment? What would you do in a completely different way? And how?

Come and find out! This book displays the answers that young people of the Baltic Sea Region found, exploring the possibilities within the Different History – Common Future Project between 2007-2008 among 200 young people...

...explored how different being young feels in the countries of the BSR

...exchanged plans for life and their perspectives on how to live it.

...expressed their hopes and visions

...and voiced them out loud in international conferences, in talks & meetings with politicians and civil servants, in their communities, to their friends...

**This is a book on how you can bring your energy and ideas into developing your community into a place where you can thrive.**

More than that: be part of the BSR community! Find friends from other countries and discover the possibilities to create your Baltic Sea Region.

DO YOU FEEL INVOLVED INTO WHAT IS GOING ON IN TOWN?

ARE THERE THINGS THAT URGENTLY NEED TO BE CHANGED?

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

## You can!

Get ready to change things!  
Get the information you need to get started ...

## Where?

### AT YOUR LOCAL YOUTH CENTRE:

Check out the possibilities your local Youth Centre offers. Beside the pool table and school band is there a possibility to get active in town affairs? With a youth council in town? Or a youth organization to join? Why not try to change things from there? Make yourself heard by the local civil servants and politicians.

Meet them and tell them what you always wanted to get off your chest.

### AT VIRTUAL MEETING SPACES:

Different History – Common Future. Find ideas and exchange ideas with others on the web. Visit us at: [www.underthesurface.eu](http://www.underthesurface.eu)

- Explore what the youth initiative does in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.
- Browse around the chat forums ... you will meet peers where you can discuss with them whatever you are passionate about.
- Drop by for an online-coffee with politicians ... ask your local youth centre for the next scheduled coffee-hour.
- Click to complete our online survey on living in the BSR and see the results immediately.
- See the picture gallery of the latest events.
- E-mail the decision makers of the UBC board.
- Find links on possibilities to go abroad.
- Post your message to the bulletin board or put your questions in the post box.
- Upload/Download docs that might be interesting to all.

Expand your horizon. You'll be amazed what you discover.

# GET INFORMED!





## COYI – COMMISSION ON YOUTH ISSUES

... your instrument to place youth concerns at Europe's political level.

Visit COYI website and get an insight into the international perspective. Find out what they do and what opportunities their platform offers you to promote your view and visions to a bigger audience.

- Get ideas at international Youth Conferences and hear what solutions others have found.
- Participate in the international meetings and put your issues on the agenda.
- Travel to the hot spots of Baltic Sea Region and get first hand experience on history, culture mix and different ways of life.
- Exchange ideas with peers from other countries.

Get connected: [www.ubc-youth.org](http://www.ubc-youth.org)

## EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Virtual is good but somehow you want to get first-hand experience? Then why not change the perspective? Use the European Voluntary Service to find a place somewhere in Europe to discover how different life feels there. Thousands of young people do this every year.

Check out what they experienced on their weblog at: [www.myevs.net](http://www.myevs.net)

## What municipalities & NGOs can do for us:

### Inform us!

on ongoing activities & possibilities to join initiatives via Internet & Newsletters

### Meet us where we meet!

Both at virtual and real spaces

### Invite us!

to political consultations



### Ask us!

We'd like to take part in matters that affect us. We've got our own perspective on things.

Let us take our matters into our own hands!

## ... make your mark...

### YOUTH PARLIAMENTS/COUNCILS

Want to change the world for the better? Youth parliaments/councils are a way of getting involved – a voice, which is heard and listened to by decision makers, providers of services for young people and other agencies who have an interest in the views and needs of young people.

Youth parliaments are run by young people for young people. You decide on the issues and set on the agenda. Check out at your local youth centre or check with the municipality if there is a youth parliament/council in your area.

### YOUTH UNIONS

Ever thought about meeting other people with similar beliefs and getting something done together?

A youth union is the place to be if you want to give your energy and passion to a special issue. You'll find youth unions on all possible matters:

- Environment
- Charity
- Culture
- Politics
- Faith
- Ethnicity
- ...

They are often linked to NGOs, political parties or religious communities.

### YOUTH CENTRES

You probably know of them. There are youth centres in nearly every town. If you discovered that this place rocks, fine! If you didn't, why not check out what they do there? Or is your youth centre the last place you would go to? Nothing fun to do there?

Well, it is your house. Why not get your friends together and make it a house of your fancy? Contact your civil servants on the opportunities they offer to support you.

### NGOs

NGOs are strong campaigners to place the topics usually on the verge of world politics. Non-Governmental Organizations are normally non-profit organizations, independently organized and run. The international Red Cross is possibly the most famous NGO. Every country has its own NGOs – associations, agencies, trade unions, even sports clubs, while other NGOs are global players. They are engaged in environment protection, animal welfare, education, human rights, social work, etc.

They thrive on young people with passion and energy. Like you maybe?

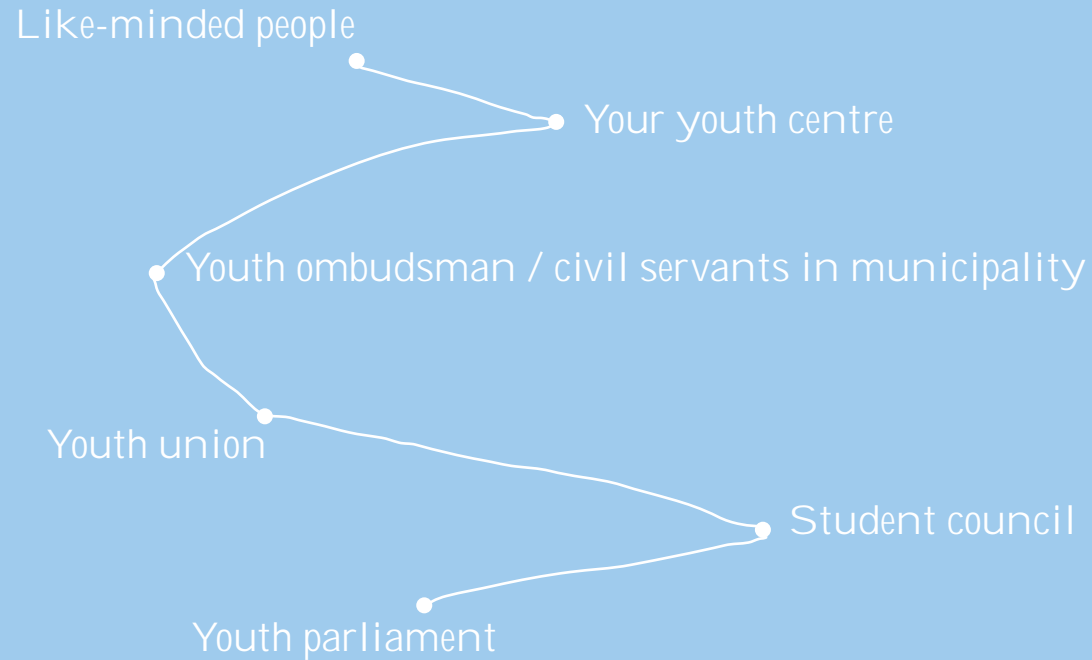
Find NGOs to get involved at: [www.underthesurface.eu](http://www.underthesurface.eu)

**GET  
ORGANIZED!**



## NETWORK

Networking is the basis for everything. In school just as well as in life at large. Hardly anyone can make a difference without others. So get connected and then stay tuned.



## Small guide to having a say:

- ⊙ Come together, develop ideas, make proposals
- ⊙ **Be positive!** Criticism must be constructive! Don't only think about what, but also why and how something should be done in a better way
- ⊙ Work together **with people who can change something** and teach others to take responsibility
- ⊙ Find ways to **work together with the council**
- ⊙ Participate in the board of pupil democracy
- ⊙ **Choose a youth coordinator**, take contact with the local municipality & communicate your issues
- ⊙ **Make the idea of a student council popular to others**, among students & civil servants

**GET  
INVOLVED!**



**No idea how?  
Here is what others did...**

## Shadowing Day

Be a shadow for a day! Pupils all over Latvia do this.

### HOW?

Every pupil accompanies an official, a chairperson of a company, a politician of their interest on their working day. This way they get to know their everyday activities and experience how decision making works.

Usually pupils choose a person that works in a domain that is of interest to them. Pupils' councils prepare a list and negotiate possibilities for arranging "shadowing" activity. The event usually attracts wide interest of mass media.



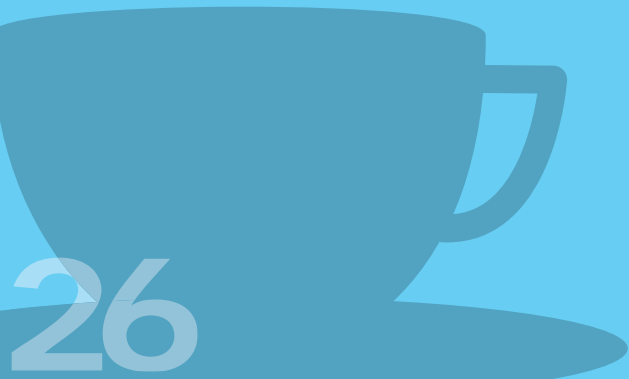
## Coffee with politicians

Never told a real politician your ideas? Why not arrange a coffee break together?

### HOW?

Arrange a meeting with your politicians at their meeting/conference venues or else to drink a cup of coffee together during the break. You will be amazed how inspiring an exchange of views can be. Just sit in small groups of 2 to 3 with one politician. Now you have the chance to ask what you always wanted to know and tell your ideas on the matter.

We regularly do this in Västervik / Sweden and think it's a good method, stimulating both youngsters and politicians.



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## Youngsters for Parliament!

Take part in decision making! In Kuressaare/Estonia we do.

### HOW?

We have got a Youth Council in town! Our members participate in the Town Council Commission meetings and vote on the matters of concern in education, culture and citizen affairs.



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## Ambassador crews

Difficulty in spreading the information to your peers? Here is a good idea from Bergen / Norway on how to manage this:

### HOW?

Bergen has 8 large suburbs. In each suburb there are ambassador's crews. They come from different organisations, schools and youth centres. They keep connected to the people and events in city hall and inform on possibilities for youths to participate in City Hall.

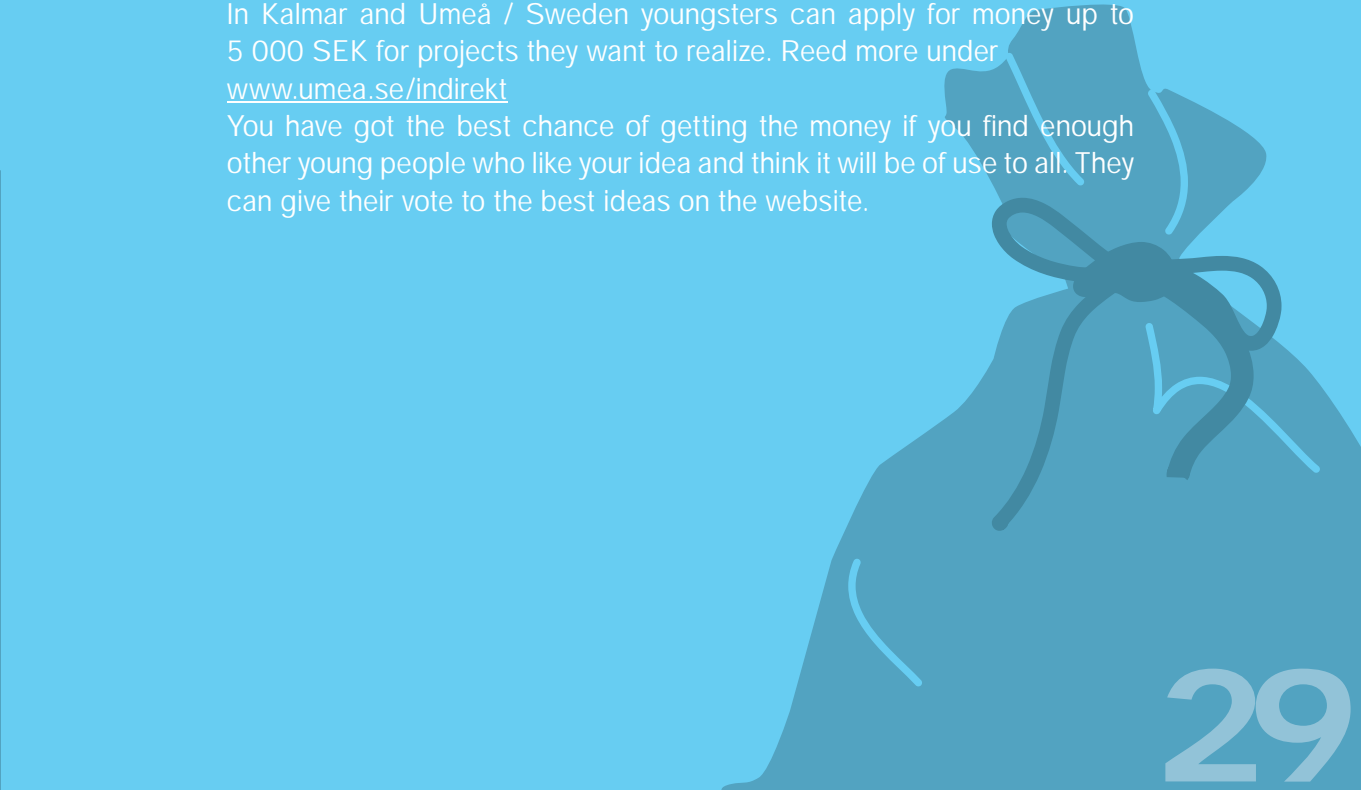


## Bag of money

Always wanted to have a bag full of money to make your ideas come true? Perhaps this works in your town too.

### HOW?

In Kalmar and Umeå / Sweden youngsters can apply for money up to 5 000 SEK for projects they want to realize. Read more under [www.umea.se/indirekt](http://www.umea.se/indirekt)  
You have got the best chance of getting the money if you find enough other young people who like your idea and think it will be of use to all. They can give their vote to the best ideas on the website.





## Youth Ombudsman

If there is no youth council start with a Youth Ombudsman:

### HOW?

In Umeå / Sweden we have a Youth ombudsman in City Council. Being a youngster him- or herself this person connects young people with politicians/decision makers and civil servants in town. The ombudsman brings the voice of young people into city affairs. They share what they learn. They educate other young people, teaching them the tools they need to actively influence their lives in the surroundings they live in.

### What municipalities can do for us:

- Start a dialogue with us on our issues.
- Support us in getting an insight into the municipality's work and planning
- Integrate us in the planning process and projects of our concern
- Support us in installing a youth ombudsman, a youth council or youth parliament
- Let's develop a youth policy together.
- Integrate our networks in other networks & committees
- Integrate youth parliament representatives in city council meetings

### What NGO's can do for us:

- Come to where we are! Make project days/weeks in schools / youth centres
- Make high-publicity events! So we can see what you do.
- Show us what groups are able to achieve together

Make your matters meaningful to us!

## HOW ABOUT A TRIP TO THE HOT SPOTS?

COYI sends youngsters to the intercultural hot spots of the Baltic Sea Region to investigate the life of minorities. It is a trip about involvement and exclusion, cultural differences, prejudices and stereotypes.

How do minorities cope with their situation? What problems do they face? And what has history got to do with it? How can we all live together in one Europe? These and other questions are put on the table when discussing with local peers and experts.

A tolerance trip leaves you thinking about prejudices and stereotypes not least in your own mind.

Visit: [www.underthesurface.eu](http://www.underthesurface.eu)

Ask your city council or youth organisations if they do/could organize such a trip to dig under the surface.

## INTERCULTURAL LEARNING & INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Want to discuss youth concerns with young people from around the Baltic Sea? Change your perspective and broaden your mind at one of the regular youth conferences.

Check websites for the next scheduled conferences.

- UBC Youth Conference: [www.ubc-youth.org](http://www.ubc-youth.org)
- Youth and the city: [www.youthandcity.com](http://www.youthandcity.com)

Find information on other opportunities to participate in international youth initiatives at: [www.salto-youth.net/participation](http://www.salto-youth.net/participation)

Find youth lobbyists and campaign together to be invited to the regular Baltic Sea Region conferences. Bring the youth perspective to the Baltic issues!

**BREAKING  
STEREOTYPES!**



## WANT A CHANGE OF SCENERY? GO ABROAD VOLUNTARILY

No idea what to do after school? Bored with your life? Want to see something different?

Then why not go abroad and dip into a different way of life. Discover firsthand how people live and work in other countries: what their daily life looks like, who they are, what food they eat, what their culture is all about.

With The European Voluntary Service (EVS) it is possible for young people from 16 to 30 to visit another country of Europe. People spend between 2 and 12 months in a country of their choice to volunteer in working fields like social work, culture, environment or sports.

Inquire EVS opportunities coming from

Denmark	<a href="http://www.cirusonline.dk">www.cirusonline.dk</a>
Estonia	<a href="http://www.eurodesk.ee">www.eurodesk.ee</a> , <a href="http://www.euroopaliikumine.ee">www.euroopaliikumine.ee</a>
Finland	<a href="http://www.cimo.fi">www.cimo.fi</a> , <a href="http://www.maailmalle.net">www.maailmalle.net</a>
Germany	<a href="http://www.go4europe.de">www.go4europe.de</a>
Latvia	<a href="http://www.eurodesk.lv">www.eurodesk.lv</a>
Lithuania	<a href="http://www.lijot.lt">www.lijot.lt</a>
Norway	<a href="http://www.eurodesk.no">www.eurodesk.no</a> , <a href="http://www.ungieuropa.net">www.ungieuropa.net</a>
Poland	<a href="http://www.juventude.gov.pt">www.juventude.gov.pt</a>
Sweden	<a href="http://www.ciu.org">www.ciu.org</a> , <a href="http://www.mytellus.com">www.mytellus.com</a>

## DO YOU WANT TO GO BEYOND EUROPE'S BORDERS?

There are a large number of NGOs who offer voluntary work placements to set off and see the world from the inside perspective. Volunteering help you open up a wider horizon and is a valuable personal and professional experience. In most cases no special skills are required; all you need is a willing spirit and an open mind.

Inquire about voluntary work opportunities at international NGOs:

The International Volunteer Programmes Association provides an extensive database at: [www.volunteerinternational.org/therightprogram.html](http://www.volunteerinternational.org/therightprogram.html)

The European Youth Portal lists various volunteer organisations at: [http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering\\_-\\_exchanges](http://europa.eu/youth/volunteering_-_exchanges)



## STUDENT COUNCILS – TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP

Student councils are run by students for students at schools and universities. They represent the students' body and mostly offer a variety of services in programming, funding and advocacy.

The student council is involved in school/university boards and acts for the interests of the students. This instrument has turned out to be very effective in creating an inspiring social environment for the target group of the institutions – the students.

Have you got a student council at your school/university?

If yes, then why not use the opportunity to get involved? If no, here is the 5-W Guide to install student councils:

The 5 W's are: Why? Who? What? When? Where? Discuss them with a representative group of people: current students, and former students, head masters, teachers and staff.

### INFO

#### Why?

Why do we need a student council? How will it serve our goals? What do we want to accomplish in the short-term and the long-term?

#### Who?

Find other students who want to get active and are willing to take up the initiative. Form a group and get into dialogue with teachers/staff and head masters.

#### What?

If you do not know already, find out the needs, concerns and interests of students by doing some type of needs assessment, interview or survey. Decide which issue is the most pressing to the students and plan your meeting around that topic.

#### When?

Once you know the purpose of the student council you can determine how often and when would be the best time to schedule the meetings.

#### Where?

Last question to clarify before starting your first meeting: Location? Where will you meet? Will someone need to reserve a room? For how many people?

See? It's easy. All other things will result from the process you started. It's always helpful to exchange with other student councils. Maybe there is one close-by. Get in touch.

# EDUCATION!



## PLAY TO LEARN

There are various simulation games on decision-making in EU and global scenarios. Why not put yourself in the role of the parliamentarian who has to decide on the Baltic Youth Policy or the researcher who tries to find ways to protect people against the next tsunami?

Build a task force, defend your position, build coalitions and decide on the best way to achieve your aims!

Here are examples to download from Internet:

UNESCO Simulation Game "Constructing Open Learning Communities to Inspire a Changing World".

Download all material at: <http://portal.unesco.org/education>

United Nations / International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Play this computer game at:

<http://www.stopdisastersgame.org/en/playgame.html>

## What civil servants and politicians can do for us:

- Come to our schools and get in touch with us. **Are you interested in our point of view?** We'd like to organize speed datings and hearings with you.
- Give us access to a wider perspective on the European level by providing educational tools like simulation games, interactive material, etc.
- Connect us to **young people from other countries** to exchange ideas with
- **Inform us on European youth activity programmes** and initiatives
- Invite us to your conferences and **give us the opportunity to take part!**
- Give us the facilities and the chance to learn!

**MONEY!**



## Money makes the world go round ...

### MICRO PROJECTS

Got an idea and want to make it come true? Now you need some resources beside the enthusiasm of all involved. There are funds available from different sources:

- EU Youth in Action Programme at: [www.salto-youth.net/aboutyouthinitiatives](http://www.salto-youth.net/aboutyouthinitiatives)
- Initiative "Different History – Common Future" at: [www.underthesurface.eu](http://www.underthesurface.eu)
- At your municipality?
- Contact your town representative.

The first step is always to put it down on paper. Usually there is an application required. Check the websites to get the application forms, ask your municipality for support and then find the right words and figures to explain your proposal.

### GETTING AWAY

There are even funds available if you want to see the world. Check the websites of European Voluntary Service and other Voluntary Services (see page "Breaking stereotypes" of this booklet). You usually get free board and lodging plus allowances depending on the country you come from and go to.

What civil servants and teachers can do for us:

- Post information on opportunities to **participate in town affairs on youth websites.** Use websites and platforms that we use.
- **Give us skills!** Train and advise us how to manage our own projects
- **Form youth-adult partnerships** with us!
- Provide opportunities for **networking with you!**
- **Support us with resources** to initiate our own projects!
- **Give us responsibility and let us learn!**



TO GET  
ACTIVE!



# CHECKLIST TO GET ACTIVE

- Send an email to your municipality to address problems or discuss issues of concern to you?
- Inform yourself on news and youth issues at your municipality's website or at youth NGOs websites.
- Get in contact with the youth department or any other department of your municipality to demand the participation of youngsters in decision-making processes and city planning.
- Take contact with NGOs that could support your ideas?  
Contact youngsters that share your ideas and get organised to speak for all with one voice.
- Develop concrete project ideas. Did you participate in competitions to make use of existing funding sources for your project?
- The European Union supports projects initiated by young people such as yourself within the programme "Youth in Action".
- You have the opportunity to go abroad for 2 to 12 months and work as a volunteer in another country. This can be financed by the European Voluntary Service.

- You learn a lot about yourself and cultural differences when you travel or stay abroad for a while.
- The Union of the Baltic Cities has a Commission on Youth Issues since 2005 that makes young voices heard in cities of the Baltic Sea Region and you can get involved in from your city. Contact your municipality/department for youth affairs.

## WHAT ABOUT...

- Organizing a coffee break with youngsters, politicians and civil servants in your municipality in between one of their meetings to get hold of them and discuss issues of concern to you?
- Organizing hearings with politicians and civil servants.
- Starting a youth initiative yourself by finding other people who want to do something about youth involvement in school/town.
- Getting in contact with other youth initiatives/unions to exchange with and learn.
- Asking your teachers/youth leaders to help you acquire skills in project management.

# CHECKLIST TO GET ACTIVE

## What teachers, civil servants and politicians can do to support us:

### INVOLVE US!

- Get into contact with us! Inform us on matters that relate to our social surrounding and youth affairs in general!
- Listen to our perspective within municipal planning processes by organising open hearings or letting youth council representatives participate in the city parliament!
- Install a youth ombudsman who we can contact on matters of our concern!
- Help us to organise settings to get into dialogue with you!
- Show us our opportunities to take self-responsibility and let us take an active role in school/city affairs!
- Let us be a real partner! Value our participation and take us seriously!

### EDUCATE US!

- Help us acquire skills. Provide training and include room to learn and grow!
- Organise tolerance trips to other countries to learn more about intercultural matters and history!
- Let us decide what is of interest to us, where we want to be involved!

### SUPPORT US!

- Support us by providing funding / pocket money for mini-projects that we initiate ourselves!







**CITY OF KALMAR**  
Vice chair  
Commission on Youth Issues



**TALLINN / ESTONIA**  
Chair  
Commission on Youth Issues



**UNION OF THE BALTIC CITIES**  
**GENERAL SECRETARIAT**



**BALTIC SEA WORKING**  
**GROUP ON YOUTH AFFAIRS**



**CITY OF LIEPAJA / LATVIA**



**CITY OF KOLDING**  
Ungdomsskolen Kolding / Denmark  
c/o Chair of Youth Commission



**BALTIC SEA**  
**SECRETARIAT**  
**FOR YOUTH**  
**AFFAIRS**

Text:  
Animare projektmanagement  
tourismus



Layout:  
LevelSeven / Kalmar



Founded by the EU programme  
Youth in Action

**kumulus**

