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JUGEND-CHECK

Documentation of the

**International Conference
on Regulatory Impact
Assessment for the
Young Generation**

June 2022

International Conference on Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Young Generation

09 May 2022 in Berlin

The Competence Centre Youth-Check's international conference brought together different actors in the field of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for young people on 09 May 2022 in Berlin. The conference gave participants the opportunity to get to know best practice examples of RIA for young people, created networking opportunities and encouraged the debate on the importance of young people's perspectives in the law-making process. The presented approaches to RIA for young people differ in how and by whom they are executed, their legal embedding in law or other regulations and the degree to which they are mandatory. However, they are united by the same goal: to make legislation more youth-friendly and to raise awareness for the concerns of young people.

Speakers from Germany, Austria and Flanders were invited to talk about RIA procedures and youth-checks in their respective countries. Their presentations were complimented by a key note speech by Moritz Ader, policy officer from the OECD, who gave a general overview of young people's attitudes towards politics and the development of youth-friendly policies across the OECD member states. A diverse audience of stakeholders from the fields of public administration and youth policy were invited to participate in the conference, ask questions and get involved in a "fishbowl discussion" on the highlights and challenges of implementing regulatory impact assessment for young people. Ultimately, the opportunities of exchange that arose during the conference laid the foundation for continuing international networking on youth-specific impact assessment in the future.



Welcome and Opening Remarks

Prof. Dr. Jan Ziekow and Bettina Bundszus

Welcome

Prof. Dr. Jan Ziekow, Director of the German Research Institute for Public Administration

The conference was opened by a welcoming note from Prof. Dr. Jan Ziekow, Director of the German Research Institute for Public Administration. He is an expert on RIA procedures and has been guiding the work of the ComYC since its very beginning. The ComYC is a project run by the German Research Institute for Public Administration. Prof. Ziekow reported that the idea for the International Conference came up after the OECD 2020 mentioned the German youth-check in its publication “Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice” as an important tool for evidence-based policy making: “We wanted to bring together different perspectives on regulatory impact assessment for youth and their integration in their respective national RIA systems. From our point of view, it is inevitable for countries to consider young people more systematically in legislation.”



Opening Remarks

Bettina Bundszus, Head of Department for Children and Youth, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

In her opening speech, Bettina Bundszus illustrated the current situation of young people: “Young people have suffered especially in the last two years. We know that many of them suffered from massive physical and mental stress.” Besides the pandemic, the war in Ukraine also triggered fears in young people, she stated. “We know, that youth is a highly formative stage of life. Therefore, we follow the concept of independent youth policies.” This also includes youth-specific regulatory impact assessment, Bettina Bundszus emphasised. She then made it clear how important this is for political decision-makers: „We could see that the youth-check is a valuable tool that helps policy makers to consider the effects of legislation on the young generations. It contributes to better youth-friendly regulations.“ She also emphasised the Ministries support for the youth-check in Germany: „ We highly value the youth-check and are looking forward to strengthening the instrument in the future.“



Key Note

“Young people at the centre of policymaking”

Moritz Ader, policy analyst, OECD



In his keynote speech „Young people at the centre of policymaking,” Moritz Ader gave a wider overview to broaden the participants’ perspective. He pointed out: Young people’s satisfaction with their governments has declined in OECD countries since the Covid19 crisis. Many young people felt that their concerns and problems had not been adequately addressed in the crisis management process. In contrast, he stated, studies have shown that involving young people in a national youth strategy can increase their satisfaction with political decisions. It is therefore important to place young people at the centre of policy making, he added. Moritz Ader made it clear that youth-specific impact assessment could contribute to this – after all, young people bore the consequences of today’s political decisions the longest. Furthermore, he emphasised: “Young people have specific needs, specific perspectives that need

to be fully reflected”. This, he stressed, makes youth-specific impact assessment so important.

Overview of youth-specific impact assesment

Starting from the countries and regions present at the conference, Moritz Ader gave an overview of youth-specific impact assessment within OECD countries. The OECD had highlighted in its 2020 report [“Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for all generations?”](#) that only four of its member countries conduct youth-specific impact assessment. He then presented differences between the implemented youth-checks that reveal different approaches. For example, they differ in the age groups considered, the legal basis, the position in the legislative process, and the type of publication, among other things.

Different RIA Procedures – different Youth-Checks

For the first time, the conference brought together representatives from several nations or regions that conduct youth-specific regulatory impact assessment. An important part of the event was the presentations on the different impact assessments and how they fit into the country's or region's system of regulatory impact assessment. This provided an overview of the approach, its similarities and differences.

The youth-specific regulatory impact assessments and their respective embedding in the context of RIA were presented by the following speakers

Germany

Sophie Brandes, Research Associate, Competence Centre Youth-Check

Stephan Naundorf, Head of Better Regulation Unit, German Federal Ministry of Justice

Flanders

Joost van Haelst, Policy Officer for Children's Rights, Integrity and Sexual Violence, Youth Unit, Department for Culture, Youth and Media of Flanders, Belgium

Leen Ackaert, Policy Advisor, Flemish Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner

Austria

Christian Köttl, Head of Division for General Issues, Coordination and Law, Austrian Ministry of Finance

Dr. Ewald Filler, formerly Head of Department for Family and Child Rights' Policy, Austrian Federal Chancellery



The example of Germany, Austria and Flanders

With this table we provide an overview of the youth-specific impact assessments presented at the conference.

	German Youth-Check	Austrian Youth-Check	Flemish JoKER (Child and youth impact report)
Exists since	2017	2013	2008
Age group	12 – 27 years	0 – 30 years	0 – 25 years
Kind of bills	mainly draft bills from the government	all federal regulatory projects and projects of eminent financial relevance	draft bills (not executive orders of the government or parliamentary proposals) with direct relevance for persons under 25 years
Stage in legislative process	pre-parliamentary phase	pre-parliamentary phase	policy makers are formally obliged to hand in the JoKER with any draft Act which falls under the JoKER-obligation
Responsible institution	ComYC (external, project of the German Research Institute for Public Administration)	the lead ministry (of the Federal Government) responsible for the draft law	the lead ministry (of the Flemish Government) responsible for the draft Act
Legal basis	project-based, funded by Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; youth-check is mandatory for draft bills from the German Ministry for Youth. Draft bills are forwarded to ComYC from Ministry for Youth. Youth-check is not mandatory or integrated in RIA-system	mandatory, integrated in RIA-system	mandatory by law (Flemish Parliament Act of 2012, preceded by earlier Act of 2008) and executive order of the government
Basis for compilation	based on a standardised assessment tool and a two-stage assessment process	every proposal has at least to be checked for possible impacts in eight policy areas; impacts on children and youth are among them	manual / JoKER guidelines
Publication	forwarded to responsible ministries; publication at jugend-check.de	preparation of draft legislation incl. RIA to be submitted to public consultation	annexed to documents for advisory boards, government and parliament

Fishbowl Discussion

„Accomplishments and Challenges”



Pictured, from left, are: **Prof. Dr. Jan Ziekow**, Moderation, Director, German Research Institute for Public Administration; **Dr. Ewald Filler**, formerly Head of Department for Family and Child Rights' Policy, Austrian Federal Chancellery; **Immanuel Benz**, Policy Officer for Youth Policy and the German Youth Strategy, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; **Moritz Ader**, Policy Analyst, OECD; **Rebecca Romes**, Deputy Head, Competence Centre Youth-Check; **Leen Ackaert**, Policy Advisor, Flemish Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner

After the presentations of the different youth-checks, the fishbowl discussion gave the speakers the opportunity to enter into a dialogue about common experiences. The participants unanimously reported that they consider youth to be a politically little considered life phase compared to other stages of life: “We have to pay special attention to this age group”, stated Immanuel Benz. Instruments such as youth-checks can help to change this situation, according to the consistent reports. The speakers also reported that the implementation of youth-checks had led to a perceptible sensitisation of politics and administration for the concerns of young people and hence to better legislation. It also became clear that young people are affected by decisions in all political fields. „No decision behaves neutrally towards children and young people,” Leen Ackaert summarized this finding. A youth-check can be a building block for

identifying such undesirable side effects even before a law is passed. Moritz Ader made it clear that from an OECD perspective he would be interested to see the youth-specific impact assessments that have existed so far placed side by side in a comparative study: „We can look at what works well and what we can learn from each other. The question of how to integrate the youth-checks into the RIA system is particularly interesting – many countries still need to find an answer to this.“

Challenges in daily work

During the discussion round, the participants looked not only at the big picture, but also at the daily work, which can be challenging. „Time is always an issue in the legislative process. The time to carry out a youth-check can be very limited. We won't be able to overcome that,



but it would be helpful if we had some kind of binding commitment that all draft bills are forwarded to us at a certain point in the legislative process," says Rebecca Romes. Leen Ackaert would like to see a larger youth-related scientific database to draw from: "This would help to make the impact of political decisions on young people much more visible."

Different reactions to the introduction of youth-specific RIAs

The discussion panel looked back together to the time of the introduction of the youth-specific RIA. In Flanders the introduction of the „JoKER“ was welcomed across party lines, Leen Ackaert said. It came at a time when society and politics were particularly sensitive to the protection of children and young people. In contrast, the youth-check in Germany first had to overcome some prejudices in politics and administration and show that it was not about rating legislative projects as youth friendly or unfriendly as Rebecca Romes reported: "Since then, the youth-check has been able to overcome many prejudices and is welcomed by many as a contribution to evidence-based policy-making. Nevertheless, the youth-check is still project funded and not mandatory." Ewald Filler explained that there had been an element of surprise in the introduction of

the Austrian Youth-Check, as it had been introduced together with a number of thematic RIAs: "The youth-check was an innovative idea with even experimental character. I could observe a positive reaction, because politicians got a new basis for policymaking."

Forming an International Youth-Check Network

In his summary, Immanuel Benz looked back on the conference day. „Even though the approaches to youth-specific impact assessment presented today are very different, they are united by a common goal: we want to enable politics and administration to take into account the impact of their decisions on young people.“ It remains helpful for achieving the common goal to be in contact with each other.

Therefore, in her Closing Remarks, Dr. Anja Kettgen-Hahn, Head of ComYC, took up the suggestion to transfer the contacts made during the conference into an international „Youth-Check Network“: „We can not only support each other, but also countries or regions that are at the beginning of this exciting journey.“

The ComYC would be delighted if the International Conference on Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Young Generation could be the starting point for this.

The Competence Centre Youth-Check

The Competence Centre Youth-Check (ComYC) carries out the youth-check, a regulatory impact assessment that analyses the impact of federal legislation on young people aged between 12 and 27 years in Germany. Currently, it is the only accompanying regulatory impact assessment (ex-ante assessment) that is carried out by a scientific institution in Germany for all federal government bills. The ComYC is a project initiated and run by the German Research Institute for Public Administration. It receives funding from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

For more information on the ComYC and the German Youth-Check visit

<https://www.jugend-check.de/english/>



Imprint

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