



MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉDUCATION
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"BRINGING EUROPE TO LIFE: FOR AND WITH YOUNG PEOPLE"

SEMINAR ON THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EUROPEAN PROJECT

09 – 10 JUNE 2022, STRASBOURG FRANCE



**ANNÉE
EUROPÉENNE DE
LA JEUNESSE**

Organised by

The French Ministry of Education and Youth in the Framework of the French Presidency
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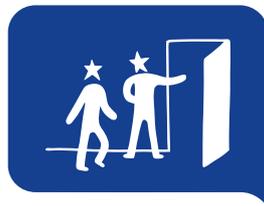
Report by Dr Dan Moxon and Neringa Tumenaite, People Dialogue and Change

INTRODUCTION

European cooperation in the youth field aims to **'encourage the participation of young people in democratic life'**, in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

The EU-Youth Dialogue (EUYD)¹ is the European participatory process, which drives the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. Through 18-month cycles on a priority theme, it allows **the participation of young people in the European decision-making process in the youth sector through a dialogue between young people and decision-makers.**

From July 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021, the trio of German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies made the participation of young people a major challenge of the 8th cycle EUYD, whose theme was 'Spaces and participation for all' and made recommendations to improve this participation, particularly in the framework of the EUYD².



The 9th cycle of the EU-Youth Dialogue takes place from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023, under the trio of presidencies France-Czech Republic-Sweden. Building on the experience of previous cycles and paving the way for subsequent cycles, the theme of this round is **'Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe'**. One of its objectives is to strengthen the dialogue as a youth-led process and to ensure meaningful youth engagement throughout the process.



In addition, the **Conference on the Future of Europe**³, a major citizen'' consultation at European level, gives a prominent place to the voice of young people, by involving them closely in the reflections through the European panels and, at national level, via a consultation dedicated to 'words to young people'. Furthermore, **2022 has been**

1. Previous called Structured Dialogue.

2. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42021Y1214\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42021Y1214(01)&from=EN).

3. <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=fr>.

designated by the European Commission as the European Year of Youth⁴, shining a light on the importance of European youth to build a better future – greener, more inclusive and digital.

Within this context, the seminar '**Bringing Europe to life: for and with young people**' was organised by the Ministry of Education and Youth of France in the framework of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. **It brought together nearly a hundred experts, ministerial representatives and European Institutions, as well as youth associations and youth delegates from the various Member States.**

The seminar aimed to enable them to:

- >** Reflect and enhance new forms of participation and inclusion of young people in EU decision-making processes;
- >** Share experience on the participation of young people in the work of the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- >** Follow-up the 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue on the European Youth Goal #9 'Space and participation for all'.

The seminar created a space **to discuss, in a concrete and pragmatic way, the different ways in which young people can be heard and can influence the European project**, such as through the European Union's youth dialogue, or through citizens' consultations such as the Conference for the Future of Europe. Overall, the seminar went beyond the mere observations, and sought **to identify good practices and concrete actions to enable all young Europeans to become active and committed European citizens.**

This report contains an overview of the discussions and concrete recommendations created as a result of the discussions.

4. https://europa.eu/youth/year-of-youth_fr.

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OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SEMINAR AND WELCOMING REMARKS

Speakers:

- **Séverine Origny-Fleishman**, Head of unit, Directorate of Youth, Informal Education and Voluntary Organisations, Ministry of Education and Youth of France
- **Biliana Sirakova**, EU Youth Coordinator, General-Directorate for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture (DG-EAC), European Commission
- **Marie Farigoules**, Executive Director of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg

Séverine Origny-Fleishman welcomed the 100 experts (representing local, national and European institutions, civil society organisations and youth delegates) from 10 European countries to the seminar. It was highlighted that the French Presidency focused on four priority themes:

- **the mobility of young volunteers;**
- **strengthening European citizenship through voluntary commitment and cross-border mobility;**
- **the commitment of young people to environmental protection;**
- **the promotion of new forms of civic participation.**

It is in the context of the latter theme that this seminar should be seen. Séverine stressed that young people have been severely affected by the pandemic and have shown incredible resilience and willingness to be active citizens. Unfortunately, many young people still remain on the margins of the EU-wide debate, and more should be done to integrate the voice of young people in all activities at all levels of the EU.

Biliana Sirakova congratulated the French Presidency for successfully advancing the EU Youth agenda in difficult times and shared some promising statistics from the [Flash Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), which has shown a growing youth engagement: **today, a majority (58%) of young people are active in the societies they live in and have participated in one or more youth organisations over the last 12 months (marking a 17% increase since the last [Eurobarometer in 2019](#)).**

Biliana highlighted that young people are likely to trust organisations when they are heard by decision-makers. She advocated to include youth participation and engagement within all EU policies, including reinforcing and strengthening youth engagement where it is already happening, and increasing participation of non-active youth.

Marie Farigoules highlighted a best practice example within the Council of Europe - namely, the co-management system implemented within its youth sector (where young people set youth sector priorities through the Joint Council on Youth). Marie also presented the newly launched '**Democracy Now**' campaign, which focuses on:

- access to human rights,
- meaningful youth participation,
- the impact of digitalisation as factors of democratisation.

PLENARY ROUND TABLE: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN PROJECT AND NEW WAYS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Round table 1: General overview of youth participation within the European project

Speakers:

- **Lana Pasic** - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership
- **Biliana Sirakova** - EU Youth Coordinator

Lana Pasic gave a research-based overview of the ways young people engage in political participation across Europe. She emphasised that participation was both part of young people's human rights and a way of making more effective policy.

Lana argued that **participation is not declining but changing**. Participation, understood in its broadest sense, has increased in Europe over the last two years. The more optimistic statistic indicates that 87% of young people engage in youth participation activities. Young people are increasingly discussing political issues with their peers and families, and some of the most important issues to them are climate change and employment. However, **conventional youth participation in institutional structures is becoming less popular, and unconventional 'Do-it-yourself' politics and social movements are growing**.

During the panel, there was debate about the role of youth organisations within this - on the one hand they can be considered institutional structures, but on the other hand they are catalysts for unconventional forms of participation.

Young people's engagement varies with socio-economic exclusion and gender. We see more women represented in unconventional forms of participation, and more men represented in parliaments and institutional structures, and patterns of engagement often reflect patterns of socio-economic exclusion.

The context and type of democratic environment also plays a role.

Factors that encourage young people's participation include:

- **Transparency and accountability;**
- **open communication channels;**
- **power-sharing; material;**
- **non-material support.**

Biliana Sirakova outlined that **youth participation could be understood as ‘youth voice and involvement in decision making’ and ‘civic action and youth activism’**. EU Flash Eurobarometer data⁵ indicated that 39% of young people are not involved in any form of participation, although the figure has declined since 2014.

The European Union has a wide legislative framework to promote youth participation, the most important element of which is the EU Youth Strategy. There are a wide range of projects and programmes which aim at young people to influence policy at the European level, these exist within the youth sector (under DG-EAC) but also in other policy areas and Directorates. There are also many smaller projects and initiatives coming directly ‘bottom-up’ from young people. **The Youth coordinator role acts as a single point of coordination to enable the voices coming from both dimensions to connect to policy making**. There is a need to work cross-sectorially and enable the voices and messages coming from youth sector programmes to connect to the other policy areas outside of youth policy and other EU Directorates.

Within the debate, several concrete proposals were made:

- **Peer-to-peer young voter awareness campaigns** - supporting young volunteers to mobilise other young people to vote, through peer-to-peer approaches such as the Lithuania young ambassadors’ network. This was said to have been employed successfully within the last EU election and could be replicated in future.
- **Youth policymaker led cross-sectoral policy dialogues** - the issues raised by young people, through youth sector participation initiatives, very often relate to policy areas outside of youth policy. When receiving the results of participation initiatives, there is a role for youth policy makers to act as a bridge to other areas of policy. This can be done by organising cross-sectoral policy dialogues such as the EU Youth Policy Dialogues organised by the Youth coordinator with EU Commissioners outside of the youth field.
- **European/National actors building stronger partnerships with local actors** - There is a need to raise the visibility of the national and European participation work, especially the European Union Youth Dialogue (EUYD) EUYD. This means breaking out of the ‘Brussels bubble’; and creating stronger links and partnership between National actors (who have European links) and local youth participation.

5. Flash Eurobarometer 502, Flash Eurobarometer 455, Flash Eurobarometer 408

Round table 2: Examples and experience sharing

Speakers:

- **Désirée Ristorto** - National Youth Council (France)
- **Maxime Michaud** - Provox Delegate for the National Youth Council (France)
- **Martina Schiattarella** - Provox Delegate for the National Youth Council (France)
- **Sakiye Boukari** - National Youth Council (Germany)
- **Antoine Chavanne** - National Youth Council (Belgium)
- **Moritz Wille** – Meet UE

This roundtable focused on the experiences of young people, with a particular focus on EUYD.

Désirée Ristorto, Maxime Michaud and Martina Schiattarella outlined the development of the EUYD within France and the two youth delegates shared their experience of the EUYD.

This EU level process has now been **embedded at national and regional level through a collaboration between the National Government, the National Youth Council and with a national working group** with various youth organisations. It is established in France under the name of 'Provox' and has its own charter/visual identity. The process was first developed at national level, and then **territorial (regional) structured dialogue grew out of this**. As a result, there is now a French system which is impactful, working efficiently, and has a wide diversity of young people participating.

One of the best practices shared included the participation of young delegates from the EUYC to the Informal Ministerial meeting, as a concrete way to foster the direct dialogue between young people and decision makers). However, there is still a need to go further to include more young people and more decision makers.

Sakiye Boukari gave an overview of the EUYD implementation within Germany.

Core elements include, **firstly, the 'Jump' team**, made of 12 young people based across the regions of Germany who conduct consultation with other young people. Secondly, **'Youth Dialogue Events'** which bring national and local politicians into direct dialogue with young people. Finally, **'Youth Dialogue Projects'** which support the implementation of consultation outcomes at national and regional level.

Antoine Chavanne drew on his experience of the Belgian implementations of EUYD to identify areas for development within the EUYD process. To increase the effectiveness of EUYD at involving young people in the European project there is a need to:

- 1. Increase the political impact of EUYD and demonstrate its relevance to young people.** Young people need to see the outcomes and changes that occur as a result of EUYD. This needs to show the relevance of the process to young people's lives at local level and show connection between the European institutions and young peoples' day-to-day realities.
- 2. Ensure continuous visibility of EUYD.** This can help demonstrate its relevance and also promote diversity of participants. Continuous visibility can help the process reach out beyond the 'bubble' of the current voices involved.

Moritz Wille went on to outline the Meet-UE project.

This project is **focused on connecting people of all generations to engage in dialogue**. It uses debates, events and resources produced for teachers. Events are transnational and based on issues that directly connect to participants' lives. Through this 'bottom-up' approach, they open up the dialogue between Europeans, in order to bring Europeans together. The project is not formally linked to political institutions, but Members of the European Parliament and other decision makers are regularly invited to participate in debates.

Within the debate, several concrete proposals were made:

- **Creation of national and/or regional legislation to support EUYD.** This will increase its political impact and embed the process fully into national and local youth policy.
- **Ensure there is an effective Europe-wide common multilingual website and a continuous social media promotion campaign for EUYD.** This will improve continuity between EU Council Presidencies, enable linkages to national platforms, and raise visibility of the process overall including of the Youth Goals.
- **Develop a process for assessing the impact of EUYD** and the extent to which EU Youth Goals are being achieved. Developing both quantitative and qualitative indicators to track the impact of EUYD will help with demonstrating the outcomes and relevance to young people. It will enable the delivery of feedback to young people on the achievements of EUYD.
- **Link EUYD topics more closely to themes young people perceive as relevant to their lives,** such as the environment, travel and sport.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: FOCUS ON THE EU YOUTH DIALOGUE

Panel 1: How can the EU Youth Dialogue be extended to a much larger proportion of the youth population in an inclusive way?

Speakers:

- **Ann-Kathrin Fischer** – Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)
- **Dr Dan Moxon** – Researcher of the 9th Cycle of EUYD
- **Maëlys Garcia** – ATD Fourth World
- **Marine Siva** – Permanent Representation of the European Commission in France

Ann-Kathrin Fischer gave an input on behalf of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian TRIO Presidency of the Council of the European Union, who led the 8th Cycle of EUYD.

She outlined the **need for EUYD to be led in a participatory way**, placing young people and youth organisations at its centre of its governance and leadership. This requires close cooperation with National Youth Councils and the European Youth Forum.

Then, to work effectively as a means of participation, EUYD should **use qualitative, meaningful, engagement with young people, and to create spaces of ‘eye-level’ dialogue between young people and decision makers.**

In addition, there is a **need to implement the recommendations and suggestions** that come from EUYD at national level as ‘youth actions’.

However, **this requires a realistic approach.** For example, within the 8th cycle, there was a call for lowering the voting age to 16. Whilst such reform as this cannot be implemented within the cycle, ‘steps -towards-implementation’ could still be taken. To enable ‘Youth Actions’ the 8th cycle produced implementation toolkits and used the outcomes of EUYD to inform the council conclusions at European level.

Dan Moxon addressed **the need to increase the proportion of the youth population that EUYD reaches.**

Data indicates the outreach and consultation activities at national level reach a diverse and representative cross section of society. However, it engages less than 1%⁶ of the youth population in Europe. Most national methods and activities used are based on small group discussion and events which reach less than 100 people per activity. The resources required to dramatically increase this style of activity to reach many thousands of young people would be unrealistic. Therefore, there is a need to **develop methods that can reach very large numbers of young people, without requiring very substantial resources.**

Some opportunities for this could lie in digital outreach campaigns and embedding EUYD within the formal education system.

There is also a need to reduce 'frequent fliers' - young people who repeatedly participate in EUYD activities each cycle - in order to create **space for new participants** and increase numbers of participants overall. However, it is important to **protect a space for National Youth Councils.** Young people in these situations have a specific insight and mandate, and their repeat participation is important to EUYD.

Maëlys Garcia addressed **the lack of inclusion and diversity within EUYD Youth Conferences at European level.** She identified that **language barriers, complex communication, lack of support, and the short timeframes** of EUYD was something which excluded marginalised young people.

More broadly, **young people from poverty often do not see themselves represented in European processes** and will engage only when someone they trust invites them to. It is necessary to take time to prepare them, explain the relevance of European institutions to their lives, and provide follow-up and debriefing on a one-to-one level. **A trusted, well trained support worker** with existing relationships with marginalised young people can provide this.

Marine Siva outlined the results of a project between the French National foundation for Political Science and Permanent Representation of the European Commission in France, **exploring how to involve French youth in EU wide discussion.**

Many young people cannot identify what impact Europe has on their lives. Whilst the EU conducts many youth engagement activities, other than ERASMUS+, they are not well known.

EU communications methods like the Youth Portal and ERASMUS+ applications are difficult to understand and often not friendly from a user perspective. The detailed information within is not always multilingual - but we do not have the financial resources to resolve this.

6. EUYD typically engages between 12,000 and 50,000 young people each cycle.

The project worked with young people to develop **three project concepts to address these issues:**

- **EU-MATCH** - An app through which young people identify their interests and are directed to specific EU programmes based on these.
- **ERASBUS+** - An electrical bus which could drive to rural areas to deliver information and promotional activities about the EU.
- **« Emilia in Europe »** - a humour-based Instagram account, inspired by a popular television series, within which an EU character finds herself in situations related to Europe. The personified character is used to promote EU institutions.

Similar versions of these projects are already being implemented by organisations such as Eurodesk.

Within the debate, several concrete proposals were made:

- **Youth action toolkits** - Following each EUYD cycle, action toolkits can be produced to support the turning recommendations and suggestions coming from EUYD into 'Youth Actions'. These can help actors take 'steps toward implementation' of the various EUYD outcomes.
- **Digital visibility initiatives** - online tools and social media outreach campaigns to promote access to the various EU participation programmes. Such tools need to be highly user friendly and multilingual.
- **Development of large-scale methods for EUYD** - such as digital communication campaigns and embedding activity within schools and formal education, which can aim to reach thousands, rather than hundreds of young people with one activity.
- **Targeted support projects to prepare young people from marginalised backgrounds to become involved in EUYD.** These should be run by local NGOs or other actors with an existing relationship with marginalised young people. They should be tailored to the specific groups needs on a case-by-case basis. Projects should provide simple communication tools to explain EUYD and European institutions in a relevant way and provide a trusted support worker throughout the process. They should run on a long-term basis within communities and spaces that are already familiar to participants, rather than requiring participants to attend institutions.

Panel 2: How to use the ERASMUS+ programme to increase the impact of EU Youth dialogue?

Speakers:

- **Jérémy Trémolières** – French National Agency for ERASMUS+ Youth & Sport (AEFJS)
- **Alexandre Fonseca** – Salto Participation & Information Resource Centre
- **Djilali Kabeche** – Association Migration, Solidarity and Exchanges for Development (AMSEED)

Jérémy Trémolières highlighted the recent increase in finance in the **ERASMUS+ budget, and the various possibilities to fund youth participation projects under the scheme.**

A new learning mobility action for youth participation has been introduced to further enhance this. The programme provides a high degree of modularity, projects can last between three months and two years and a wide range of youth participation activities can be funded.

The scheme also allows for **application from informal groups** of young people working outside of organisations. There are challenges in encouraging application from these groups. ERASMUS+ application forms have an 'institutional vocabulary', and it is **necessary to provide support and coaching for non-organised groups to relieve support and coaching** to learn this vocabulary.

Alexandre Fonseca outlined the role of the SALTO Participation and Information to support participation within the ERASMUS+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programmes.

The link between information and participation is important. Information and media literacy skills enable citizens to be informed and to think critically. Participation cannot occur without access to information.

SALTO Participation and Information's work includes the **development of a youth participation strategy for ERASMUS+ Youth and ESC, a toolkit, a participation resource pool and various training and events.**

The strategy is overseen by a co-steering group made equally of young people and stakeholders. Important factors to running a **co-steering group** successfully are taking **a long-term approach, as well as providing support and follow up to young people involved.** Transparency is also key - it is important to be clear about what recommendations from the co-steering group SALTO Participation and Information is able to implement, and to provide clear feedback on other recommendations that may fall outside of SALTO's mandate and influence. The model can serve as an example of good practice to be replicated across National Agencies within the ERASMUS+ programme.

Djilali Kabeche talked about how to use **ERASMUS+ projects to overcome the gap between Europe and the day-to-day reality amongst young people.**

Many young people are not aware of how to engage in European democracy even though they care deeply about many political issues. **AMSED uses targeted support projects to enable young people to take part in dialogue activities.** These take place in settings that are familiar to the young people and are supported by youth workers or social workers who are skilled in non-formal education, as well as through peer-to-peer approaches. Projects need to be supported by communication tools (both online and offline). **To engage young people effectively it is important to listen to them to understand what the barriers are and then act to remove these.**

All speakers emphasised that **one of the main roles ERASMUS+ projects can play relating to EUYD is to support and fund outreach activities.** These activities can run on an ongoing basis as a permanent approach to engaging young people in both EUYD and other forms of institutional participation. Several features were needed in the projects for them to run successfully.

- **Trust** - projects should be delivered by actors with a credible relationship with young people;
- **Accessible communication and information** - making clear the relevance of Europe to day-to-day life using both online and offline approaches;
- **Time** - a long-term approach is central, young people, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds require time to engage effectively;
- **Feedback** - ensuring feedback is received on the policy recommendations and ideas coming from projects.

It was identified that successfully engaging marginalised groups was primarily down to prioritising the implementation of this work. The methods and tools for inclusive participation are well established. To apply them requires prioritising both the resources and the needed time for these approaches. This means prioritisation both at the project level and also at the structural level through long term investments in inclusion organisations. Like any form of prioritisation, this also requires making choices to de-prioritise other goals.

Within the debate, several concrete proposals were made:

- **Prioritising funding and resources for marginalised groups to engage in EUYD and other forms of institutional participation.**
- **The establishment of co-steering groups within National Agencies for Youth** - to ensure the programmes themselves in a participatory manner.
- **Funding peer-to-peer approaches** through ERASMUS+ to engage young people in institutional participation.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: FOCUS ON OTHER FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Panel 1: The voice of youth in the Conference on the Future of Europe

Speakers:

- **Lauren Mason** – European Youth Forum (YFJ)
- **Inês Gouveia da Silva** – European Parliament
- **Sofia Carballo** – European Youth Event Young Delegate (Spain)
- **Hannah Schlattmann** – EUROpinions project, supported by the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ)

Lauren Mason, who participated to the Conference on the Future of Europe, shared several successful partnerships, including one with the European Parliament, called the 25% campaign⁷. **The campaign (named after the percent of young people in Europe) aimed to involve a wide range of actors in the preparation for the Conference on the Future of Europe**, especially international organisations working with under-represented youth, such as Rural Youth Europe, Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, European Disability Forum, and Roma network Phiren Amenca. They discussed climate change, justice, equality and quality of education.

Lauren also highlighted the **need for youth participation strategy to have a cross-sectoral approach**, and presented the **EU youth test, which is designed to evaluate the impact that any new proposals may have on European youth**.

Inês Gouveia da Silva and **Sofia Carballo** spoke about the European Youth Event⁸ (EYE) **in October 2021** that was also included in the framework for the Conference for the Future of Europe due to time overlap. Within the project, which was run in-person and online, youth chose topics to be debated for one hour, and voted on best ideas to be presented at the closing ceremony. Presenters highlighted that within the discussions that climate change and nuclear energy received a lot of attention. Notably, young people were willing and ready to participate in European politics and held highly technical and specialised discussions.

7. <https://the25percent.eu>

8. <https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/fr/>

Hannah Schlattmann shared the project **EUROpinions**, aimed to inform people about European institutions, policies and directives as well as to discuss how they are adopted.

The project, funded by the French German Youth Office (OFAJ), includes podcasts and interviews, targeting young people between 16-30 years old. Among the examples was a discussion on the EU Green deal, where young people from France and Romania were invited to discuss it during an interview. This gave an insight on how there are significant differences on political priorities, as well as sustainable modes of travel within European countries, and the challenges it poses on the objective to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Based on the experience of the Conference on the Future of Europe, several concrete proposals were made within the debate:

- **All key European participation events should make proactive efforts to engage under-represented youth.** Access and reach are important aspects to consider. Sports can be used to reach young people not involved in political organisations.
- **Institutional inclusion strategies should tailor communication messages** to reach more young people in their local realities. There need to adapt communication to national context as there are differences across the European Union. EYE is a good example of this. It combines people who are heavily involved in European projects and those who are visiting the European Parliament for the first time.
- **Dedicated funding should be set aside to enable ‘unusual suspects’** to join the high-profile events.
- **European participation events for young people require a cross-sectoral approach.** Youth policy areas are not the only policies young people care about or have an opinion on. Within the Conference on the Future of Europe young had a lot to say about employment, climate, etc., but did not always have good access to the spaces where these issues were discussed.
- **All key European participation events require documentation and follow-up.** The EYE has shown a successful example how youth ideas were quite well represented in the final recommendations/report of the conference on the Future of Europe. However, clear follow-up is needed from any recommendations generated through participation events.

Panel 2: How can the voice of young people from overseas and rural territories be better heard at European level?

Speakers:

- **Nicolas Honorine** – Mission Locale Sud, La Réunion (online)
- **Olivier Gineste, Alissone Frandemiche & Clara Noll** – Maisons Familiales Rurales (MFR)

The panel started with an energiser quiz on countries connected with land borders to the EU. The varying responses showcased that the EU is connected to countries and regions further away from the continental mainland than many would immediately guess (e.g. the EU has a land border with Brazil).

Nicolas Honorine joined via a pre-recorded video from La Réunion and **called for the ERASMUS+ mobility programme to be more inclusive of youth living in the EU outermost regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)**. There is a need to allow them to fully benefit from the opportunities that the EU provides for the young people based in continental Europe.

Nicolas highlighted the importance of the European identity of those living in the overseas territories being recognised. The regions should be more visible within the European programmes. Relevant issues such as unemployment, brain drain and inflation in overseas territories of EU Member states should become part of the agenda of discussions in participatory European events.

As of now, there is a **lack of budgetary resources allocated to other young people from overseas territories to participate in European training and conferences**. Whilst the organisations are eligible for ERASMUS+ programme, they are not sufficiently represented compared with the large number of potential beneficiaries (participation rate is twice as low as their demographic weight within the UE⁹).

In addition, the regions have **internal logistical issues which limit international mobility** - despite geographical proximity, flight costs are not affordable for most (i.e., a flight between the islands may cost the same as an intercontinental flight to Europe).

Additional input shared by fellow attendees on behalf of a young person based in one of the countries overseas agreed that young people there often feel in the margins of activities happening in the continental Europe (*"Many people don't feel French, and they feel European even less"* - Youth participant). They added that there is a lack of youth participation mechanisms in general, i.e., only a few of EU overseas countries have national youth councils.

9. https://stgfelis.com/files/2019/08/octa-rapport_2019-en-web.pdf

Olivier Gineste, Alissone Frandemiche and Clara Noll presented the work of MFR and shared several best-practice examples.

During the European Development Days¹⁰(JED), MFR a reçu des subventions pour engager et parrainer des jeunes de La Réunion pour venir en Europe, ainsi que des jeunes des zones rurales pour venir partager leurs expériences.

By using a digital approach to outreach to young people who do not have access to information and offer space to have challenging conversations, MFR successfully engaged young people through quizzes on Instagram, and digital surveys on sustainable development. This was done so that young people would gain knowledge already before joining the in-person activities. However, a workshop within the framework of EDD, 'Digital Inclusion within development actions in post-COVID times' has raised prominent questions, such as 'are our actions really (digitally) inclusive?'. It highlighted the **need to address the digital divide to be able to not leave anyone behind within the global digital ecosystem. Overall, the presentation highlighted how solutions to issues experienced by young people can be found at the local level.**

Within the debate several concrete proposals were made:

- **Developing strategies and processes to provide follow-up from government-led consultation processes.** There is often a lack of knowledge on whether any concrete action occurs as a result of participation processes. Filling this knowledge gap in the follow-up would actively support youth empowerment and trust in the value of consultative processes.
- **Evaluating youth participation processes to address youth-washing and the tokenization of women in the framework of governance.** This could include stakeholder evaluation on the quality of engagement in policy and decision-making processes.
- **Ensure there is adequate budgetary allocation to involve young people from OCTs and ORs in the European level events.** This would help tackle Eurocentrism, improve/establish quality dialogue, support fair access, representation, and engagement of young people from Europe's overseas territories in the building of the European project.
- **The issues in overseas territories, such as unemployment, inflation and brain drain in overseas territories of EU Member states should become part of the agenda of discussions in Europe as well.**
- **Strengthening the international (extra-EU) dimension of ERASMUS+ to include mobility between OCTs and the countries in their geographical area.**
- **Increasing capacity building and EU awareness-raising in the overseas and outermost regions to enable and encourage more youth organisations and young people to participate in the European programmes.**

10. <https://eudevdays.eu>

ROUND TABLE: WHEN EUROPEAN METHODS AND TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION INSPIRE THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

Speakers:

- **Elisabeth Laverne** – Directorate of Youth, Non Formal Education and Voluntary organisations, Ministry of Education and Youth (France)
- **Désirée Ristorto** – National Youth Council (France)
- **Ann-Kathrin Fischer** – Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)

Elisabeth Laverne noted that **youth should be placed at the centre of economic policies, and that all public players should use a structural dialogue process** on a yearly basis to give voice to young people and co-construct public policies.

As a good case practice Elisabeth presented territorial structured dialogue (Le dialogue structuré territorial¹¹) in France, which aims to promote youth participation in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Désirée Ristorto added that **territorial structured dialogue is a way to discuss concrete issues that affect young people**, promotes youth citizenship participation and helps decision-makers to re-establish the like with young people. Process, which involves surveys, working groups, training sessions, and so on, continues until a political result is reached. It is currently gradually deployed in French territory, and workshops are run for associations and public authorities on how to run and participate in the dialogue.

Ann-Kathrin Fischer presented the **'Take Five - #CreateYourEurope'** initiative, which is run by five Federal States in Northern Germany.

The initiative is co-organised by Regional Youth Councils, NGOs & Regional Youth Ministries, and is co-shaped by young people. Notably, it **involves dialogue with politicians and decision-makers at all levels** (local, national, European) and **aims to transfer local issues to European level** (as well as the other way around). The outcomes of the discussions feed into regional policy processes and the EU Youth Dialogue and (i.e., outcome of dialogue in July will contribute to Youth Goals #10 and #3). By now it is a well-established and known cooperation practice, making it easier to reach out to decision makers and involve them in the process.

11. <https://provox-jeunesse.fr/propos-du-dialogue-structure>

Within the debate, several concrete proposals were made:

- **Streamlining EU consultative processes.** This is essential to ensure that different structures are complimenting each other, instead of competing. Five ingredients are necessary for an efficient territorial dialogue: 1) Co-steering of the process, 2) Defining the expectations/aims, 3) Defining the subject/theme precisely, 4) Having a cyclic agenda and 5) Having relevant work methods.
- **Development of regional structured dialogues.** These should be flexible and implemented based upon local context (e.g., priorities can be given to different themes, depending on the specific needs of the region, such as tackling unemployment, brain-drain etc.).

ROUND TABLE: THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH 2022: AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN AND MAKE MORE VISIBLE THE EU YOUTH DIALOGUE CYCLE AND TO REINFORCE CITIZENS' INITIATIVES FOR EUROPE?

Speakers:

- **Jasna Maric Krajacic** - General-Directorate for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture (DG EAC)
- **Sébastien Gonzalez Hajdu** - European Committee of the Regions
- **Kristof Papp** - European Youth Forum (YFJ)
- **Mohamed Mahamuud** - Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (Netherlands)

Jasna Maric Krajacic outlined the impact of EUYD at European policy level. Major outcomes so far have included the creation of the EU Youth Guarantee and the EU Youth Goals.

The process for creating European youth policy impact is complex. Results of the EUYD go to the EU Youth Working Party, which prepares items for discussion for the EU ministers for youth. Creating agreement across 27 member states is challenging, especially as youth is a competence of the Member States. However, all decision makers at this level are committed to finding agreements that work for everyone, and lead to the better use of resources and policy to support young people. As a result, change at the European level happens over long-time scales and occurs incrementally.

Once European policy is created, the Member States then consider how they might implement this within their national reality, as can currently be seen within the uptake of the EU Youth Goals.

The Year of Youth has the potential to draw attention and visibility to this process, and to demonstrate the impact of EUYD and EU youth policy to young people. One of the major legacies of the year of youth could be building trust in the EU institutions amongst young people.

Sébastien Gonzalez Hajdu outlined the way the Year of Youth has influenced the work of the European Committee of the Regions around youth participation.

A rapporteur has been appointed to prepare an opinion on youth and the youth in the future of the European Union. Various participatory projects to engage young people have also been developed. This includes the online tool 'Liquid Democracy', co-created with the European Youth Forum, which addresses issues relating to social media and democracy. Finally, the outcomes of the EUYD are being used to inform the opinions drafted by the European Committee of the Regions.

Kristof Papp outlined the **YFJ proposals for an EU Youth Test**, which they hope will become a legacy of the Year of Youth. This is an impact analysis tool to identify how upcoming policies may affect young people. It also includes a participatory element; the impact analysis should be informed by meaningful and qualitative consultation with youth organisations and young people.

A further legacy of the Year of Youth could be the increased visibility of EUYD and other citizen participation initiatives. The year can be used to draw attention to the impact of EUYD and the direct engagement between policymakers and young people it enables. This can help make the impact of EUYD more visible to young people and bridge the gap between Europe and day-to-day lives. **National Youth Council and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations have an essential role to play in this process.**

Mohamed Mahamuud emphasised the need to **support both established structures for participation** such as National Youth Councils **as well as bottom-up approaches to work with non-organised youth.**

He outlined a 'Brussels by Bike' project which enabled two young volunteers to cycle from the Netherlands to Brussels, conducting consultation activities with 826 young people along the way. A key part of this project was engaging with young people outside of major cities. The findings were presented to various decision makers at the European Parliament and European Commission.

There is a **need for policy makers to regularly engage with young people on an informal level** in this way. The geographical location of this is important; engagement needs to occur not only in capital cities, but across each country.

Within the debate, several recommendations were made:

- Political institutions and decision makers should **engage informally with the results of youth participation projects** conducted **outside of capital cities.**
- **Communication and visibility** work conducted through the **Year of Youth** should be used to **draw attention to youth participation processes.**
- **Development of an EU Youth Test** - to assess upcoming policies for the impact they will have on young people and future generations. This should include an element of meaningful qualitative participation.

OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE SEMINAR

Speakers:

- **Anders Lindholm** – Upcoming Chair of the EU Youth Working Party on behalf of Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- **Christophe Castell** – Deputy director for the Directorate of Youth, Non Formal Education and Voluntary organisations, Ministry of Education and Youth (FRANCE)

Anders Lindholm gave a commitment, as the final member of this TRIO presidency, to take forward the ideas from this seminar and the EUYD cycle as whole. There is a need to address the 'black box of youth dialogue'. It is known what messages from young people go into youth policy making, but what comes out of policy making needs to be clear and well communicated.

Anders also reminded the participants that **the EUYD is quite well-functioning and quite unique.** Comparing it to other policy areas, there are no other ongoing dialogue processes in the EU system that occur in a cycle and build on past experiences. This allows the process to make incremental improvements and steps each cycle. This uniqueness is something that we as a policymakers and as a community can be proud of, whilst still recognising there are things which can be improved. But of course, there are things that can be improved.

Christophe Castell closed the event thanking all contributors for their inputs. He emphasised that thirty speakers from across ten countries demonstrates the commitment and ownership to youth participation that Europe has. There are challenges for all institutions and Governments; building trust is essential to increase youth participation. There is a **need to renew the tools and processes used for democracy.** Not enough young Europeans know about youth dialogue, we need to use all tools to be able to disseminate the information. **The inclusive character of youth dialogue is essential, all young Europeans must feel involved.** We need to engage with those furthest removed from European issues such as those in rural and remote areas and those who are marginalised.

It is important to recognise that the **'Europe of tomorrow is today'**. Whilst legacy is important the action we take here and now must also be meaningful. **As the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union draws to a close, they are proud of the progress that they have achieved to support and promote young people's voices** and would like to thank all stakeholders for their support throughout the Presidency.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR

Rapporteurs

- **Dr Dan Moxon** - Researcher of the 9th round of the EU Youth Dialogue, People Dialogue and Change
- **Neringa Tumenaite** - Researcher of the 9th round of the EU Youth Dialogue, People Dialogue and Change

With input by Youth rapporteurs

- **Maxime Michaud** - Youth Delegate National Youth Council (France)
- **Martina Schiattarella** - Youth Delegate National Youth Council (France)

Within the European project, it is clear there is a **desire to mainstream youth participation at all levels**. Decades of institutional commitment to promoting the involvement and active participation of young people across Europe show the clear support that shows little sign of fading. Much of that political commitment was, at first, underpinned by a concern about the political disengagement of young people. However, **it is now understood that young Europeans are strongly political**; the most recent data even indicates there has been an increase in youth participation in the most recent years. Furthermore, they are concerned with policy areas far beyond the traditional topics of youth policy- motivated by issues such as climate change and social justice. Nevertheless, **the nature of young people's relationship with 'Europe' as a political and social project and as a set of institutions is lacking in quality**. Many young people do not trust political institutions and 'Europe' and 'European issues' feel disconnected from their day-to-day realities and lives.

Currently, **there are a wide number of European programmes to engage young people in European policy and democratic life as a whole. Yet, outside of ERASMUS+ many of these remain unknown to many young Europeans**. For those that are engaged in European youth participation projects, such as EUYD, the lack of transparency in the 'black box' of European policy making can be a mystery. Understanding the connections between the voices of young citizens and policy making across, and between, 27 Member States is challenging. For those that support young people's participation at the local level, building connections to European initiatives and making Europe relevant to the day-to-day lives of young people is also challenging. **Although many European initiatives, such as EUYD, have demonstrated the ability to engage young people from a diverse range of backgrounds, there is still a commitment to go further**. All young people across Europe, including those in poverty and those from the Outmost Regions and Overseas Territories must see themselves reflected in the 'European project.'

Many of the elements required to achieve this goal are already in place. It is clear that there is political support for youth participation, good resourcing, a wide variety of effective engagement methodologies, and the ability for the European level participatory processes to impact upon policy making. Some elements still require development.

From the seminar it is understood that visibility and transparency of European policy making, and European participatory processes is a key area for development. There is also a need to further prioritise youth participation projects targeted at marginalised groups.

The concrete proposals developed during the seminar can be grouped into several main areas:

- 1) **Monitoring the impact of participation initiatives on policy, and providing feedback** to participants, as well as the wider youth population. It is clear that youth participation initiatives can lead to change, but this is rarely shared with participants, or with young citizens as a whole. Monitoring and feedback processes will increase the transparency of European decision making and avoid issues such as 'youth washing'. 'Youth policy' or 'youth issues' is not the only policy areas young people care about. Therefore, any approach to monitoring policy impact needs to be cross-sectorial, and extend beyond youth policy to other areas.
- 2) **Implementing continuous visibility campaigns.** This is needed both to enhance outreach, as well as to support follow-on and feedback on the outcomes of participation initiatives. Large scale communication campaigns are required to begin increasing the numbers of young people aware of youth participation initiatives such as EUYD, as well as to demonstrate the relevance of youth participation to young people's day to day lives. Most likely this requires digital or social media-based approaches but utilising formal education systems may also play a role. It is important to take into account the 'paradox' of social media. Whilst social media may be an effective channel for communication, it has many downsides in relation to democracy such as the proliferation of 'fake news'. Effective branding and user-oriented approaches are needed for any digital method employed. Whilst many online European platforms exist, there is a need to optimise them, make them user friendly, and ensure multilingualism.
- 3) **Resourcing targeted support projects to underrepresented groups in European participation initiatives.** The methods to engage young people from marginalised backgrounds are well understood. They require relationships of trust, clear communication, effective support and extended time. Peer-to-peer and youth worker led approaches can both be successful, and there are many locally based organisations with the skills to implement these. Increasing the engagement of underrepresented groups within the European projects therefore requires the prioritisation of this issue, and the prioritisation of resources dedicated to this goal.
- 4) **Infrastructure and resources to link local youth participation actors to the European level.** Localised youth participation programmes are often grounded in the day-to-day reality of young people's lives and also well placed to engage diverse participants. There is a need to connect these actors directly to National and European actors, who are often well engaged in European programmes. Doing this provides the potential to enhance inclusion and outreach, and well as further showing the relevance of Europeans to young people's lives. Local actors are able to work in spaces and places that are familiar to young people; there is potential

for outreach to spaces such as hospitals, prisons, remote areas and other locations that are not normally connected to. By building partnerships with National and European actors both can more effectively engage young people.

- 5) Mainstream youth participation across all relevant European Union policy fields,** to ensure that a youth perspective is brought into all policy making fields. It is clear that young peoples are interested in topics far beyond youth policy. The youth field remains well placed to support and develop young people's participation. However, youth policy makers and other youth sector actors may need to act as bridges to other areas of policy making, to ensure that the voice of young people is widened to other sectors.

Taking into account these suggestions, **moving forward the issue of young people's engagement in the European project now requires a strategic approach at both National and European level.** Many of the core building blocks to engage young people effectively are already in place. The final steps require a more complex coordination and strategic development to achieve. It is now important to move beyond the level of discussing project methods and pedagogies, to consider how European structures and processes function together as a whole system.

However, these challenges are not necessarily youth specific. We should also ask 'How open are our European structures for democracy altogether?'. **Building democratic societies and re-evaluating how the current political system works is an issue that affects all citizens and not just the young.**

ANNEXES

PROGRAMME

9

JUNE

TIME	SEQUENCE OF THE EVENT
From 13:00	<i>Welcoming participants at the European Youth Center</i>
14:00-14:20	Official opening of the seminar and welcoming remarks Emmanuelle PERES, Interministerial Delegate for Youth & Director of Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary organisations Biliana SIRAKOVA, EU Youth Coordinator Marie FARIGOULES, Executive Director of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.
14:20-15:35	Plenary round table: General overview of youth participation in the European project and new ways of youth participation <i>Speakers :</i> <i>Ann-Kathrin FISCHER - Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)</i> <i>Biliana SIRAKOVA - European Commission</i> <i>Lana PASIC - EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership</i> <i>Sakiye BOUKARI - National Youth Council (Germany)</i> <i>Antoine CHAVANNE - National Youth Council (Belgium)</i> <i>Désirée RISTORTO - National Youth Council (France)</i> <i>Moritz WILLE – Meet EU</i>
15:35-16:00	Coffee break

16:00-18:15 **Panel discussions**

Focus on the EU Youth Dialogue - Panel 1: How can the EU Youth Dialogue be extended to a much larger proportion of the youth population in an inclusive way?

Speakers :

Maëlys GARCIA - ATD Fourth World

Dr. Dan MOXON – Researcher of the 9th round of the EU Youth Dialogue

Marine SIVA - Permanent Representation of the European Commission in France

16:00-17:00

Focus on other forms of participation - Panel 1: The voice of youth in the conference on the future of Europe

Speakers :

Inês GOUVEIA DA SILVA and Sofia CARBALLO - European Parliament and Young Delegate (Spain)

Hannah SCHLATTMANN - “EUROpinions” project supported by the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ)

Christiana XENOFONTOS - European Youth Forum

17:00-17:15 Coffee break

Focus on the EU Youth Dialogue – Panel 2: How to use the ERASMUS+ programme to increase the impact of EU Youth dialogue?

Speakers :

Djilali KABECHE - Association Migration, Solidarity and Exchanges for Development (AMSED)

Alexandre FONSECA - SALTO Resource Centre participation & information

17:15-18:15

Jérémy TREMOLIERES – French national Erasmus + Youth & Sport Agency (AEFJS)

Focus on other forms of participation – Panel 2: How can the voice of young people from overseas and rural territories be better heard at European level?

Speakers :

Olivier GINESTE - Rural Family Houses

Nicolas HONORINE - Mission Locale Sud, La Réunion

18:15-18:30 Closing of the first day

18:30-21:00 Cocktail reception

TIME	SEQUENCE OF THE EVENT
From 08:30	Welcoming participant
09:00-09:10	Opening of the second day
09:10-10:10	<p>Round table: When European methods and tools for participation inspire the national and local level</p> <p><i>Speakers :</i></p> <p><i>Ann-Kathrin FISCHER - Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)</i></p> <p><i>Elisabeth LAVERNE - Ministry of Education and Youth (France)</i></p> <p><i>Désirée RISTORTO - National Youth Council (France)</i></p>
10:10-10:30	Coffee break
10:30-11:30	<p>The European Year of Youth 2022: an opportunity to strengthen and make more visible the EU Youth dialogue cycle and to reinforce citizens' initiatives for Europe?</p> <p><i>Speakers :</i></p> <p><i>Jasna MARIC KRAJACIC - European Commission</i></p> <p><i>Sébastien GONZALEZ HAJDU – European Committee of the Regions</i></p> <p><i>Kristof PAPP - European Youth Forum</i></p> <p><i>Mohamed MAHAMUUD - Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (Netherlands)</i></p>
11:30-11:45	Coffee break

Restitution and pooling of work and exchanges

Speakers :

Maxime MICHAUD - Youth Delegate National Youth Council (France)

11:45-12:45

Martina SCHIATTARELLA - Youth Delegate National Youth Council (France)

Dr. Dan MOXON - Researcher of the 9th round of the EU Youth Dialogue

Neringa TUMENAITE - Researcher of the 9th round of the EU Youth Dialogue

12:45-12:55

Conclusions and official closing of the seminar

13:00

Group photo

13:10-14:30

Lunch (optional, upon prior registration)

SPECIAL THANKS

To all the speakers

To the researchers : Dan Moxon and Neringa Tumenaite and young rapporteurs : Martina SCHIATTARELLA, and Maxime MICHAUD.

To the Conference facilitators: Clara DRAMMEH and Alexandre BEDDOCK

The European Youth Center and all the organising team

Report written by Dr Dan Moxon and Neringa Tumenaite, researchers at People Dialogue and Change, for the Directorate of Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisations at the French Ministry of Education and Youth.

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The statements transcribed in this report are the sole responsibility of the speakers of the seminar and do not necessarily reflect the position of the French Ministry of Education and Youth.



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