

BOOKLET



P4EUCITIZENSHIP

**STUDY ON CIVIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS
FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL
GOVERNANCE**



BOOKLET - STUDY ON CIVIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE



P4EUCITIZENSHIP

18-23 abril 2023

MALTA ISLAND

MALTA

BOOKLET

THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING THAT AFFECTS THEM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION IS A CONCERNING ISSUE

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CARAVELA, APCE

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Despite being one of the largest demographic groups in the EU, young people often do not have a strong voice in policy-making processes. This can lead to policies that do not fully address the needs and concerns of young people.

One factor contributing to this under-representation is a lack of political participation among young people. Many young people do not vote in elections or engage in other forms of political activism, which can make it difficult for their voices to be heard. In addition, there may be a lack of understanding among politicians and policymakers about the specific needs and concerns of young people.

To address this issue, there are several potential solutions. One is to increase opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes. This can be done through initiatives such as youth councils or youth parliaments, which provide young people with a platform to share their ideas and opinions.

Another solution is to increase education and awareness about political participation and policymaking among young people. This can be done through educational programs in schools, as well as through media campaigns and other forms of outreach. Ultimately, it is important for policymakers and politicians to recognize the value of young people's perspectives and actively seek out their input when making decisions that affect them. By working to address the under-representation of young people in decision-making processes, the EU can better ensure that policies are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all its citizens.



MALTA

The under-representation of young people in decision-making processes that affect them is a concerning issue, not only in Malta but also in many other countries in the European Union. Young people often face unique challenges and have different perspectives on various issues compared to older generations, and it's essential to include them in the decision-making process.

One of the ways to address this issue is to create more opportunities for young people to participate in political processes and decision-making. This can be done by creating youth councils or advisory groups, providing education on democratic participation and advocacy, and ensuring that young people are included in consultations and hearings on issues that affect them.

Another critical aspect is to raise awareness about the importance of youth participation and the impact it can have on decision-making processes.

This can be done through campaigns and initiatives that highlight the need for youth representation and engage young people in the political process. Ultimately, it's essential to ensure that young people's voices are heard, and their perspectives are taken into account in decision-making processes that affect them. By doing so, we can build a more inclusive and representative society that values the contributions of all its members, regardless of age. The under-representation of young people in decision-making processes that affect them is a significant issue in Malta. Despite the country's relatively young population, young people are often marginalized and excluded from political and social decision-making.

To address this issue, it is crucial to provide more opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes, such as youth councils, consultations, and advisory bodies. Additionally, it is important to promote youth leadership and advocacy to help young people develop the skills and confidence needed to make their voices heard. By providing more opportunities for youth participation, promoting youth leadership and advocacy, and raising awareness about the importance of youth representation, we can create a more inclusive and representative society that values the contributions of all its members, regardless of age.

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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Our planet is home to the largest generation of young people in history. Unfortunately, 600 million young people live in situations of conflict or instability and an estimated 264 million children, young people are not in school. Recent years have also shown how young people bear the heaviest consequences of crises and instability caused by armed conflicts, growing inequalities and global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation or the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is our responsibility to ensure that young people have the tools and opportunities they need for their full development and participation in everyday life.

They are the adults of tomorrow and we must invest in their present and future. Young people demand – and deserve – an integrated approach for their meaningful, inclusive and effective participation. Young people are empowered when their voices are heard and the inequalities that affect their lives are addressed. We must empower them around the world, to ensure they have opportunities and to promote their effective participation as a right, ensuring that no one is left behind. Together we bear the collective responsibility to build more democratic and equal societies.

The EU is committed to giving more voice and leadership to young people worldwide, especially young women and girls, activists and youth organisations, at all levels of government, from domestic politics to multilateral forums, but also in the context of EU policy-making processes. The Action Plan for Youth in EU External Action will strengthen ongoing initiatives and launch new key initiatives aimed at young people around the world.



HUNGARY

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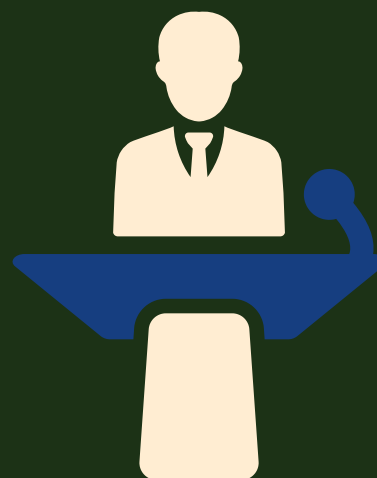
The decisions made by the EU have a significant impact on the lives of young people. Despite this, young people are often excluded from these processes. One major reason for that is a lack of political engagement and representation, many young people feel disillusioned with traditional politics. Besides, young people are not taken seriously by policymakers.

They may be seen as lacking experience or expertise, or their views may be dismissed as naïve or unrealistic. Participation in public life should also be taught from as early an age as possible.

A very useful initiative for this achievement is Model United Nations (MUN) simulations which are popular exercises for those interested in learning more about the UN. Many students worldwide participate every year in MUN at all educational levels – from primary school to university.

KarMUN is a conference that has been organized annually since 2005, hosted by Karinthy Frigyes Bilingual Secondary School, in Budapest, Hungary. The number of attendants for the past two years has been more than 300 students from all over the world. Participants of MUN Conferences can:

- Gain a greater understanding of the UN & diplomacy;
- Gain insight into public relations / international business/ politics and NGO's work;
- Become experts on the issues under discussion;
- Improve their communication, public speaking, debating, and leadership skills
- Practice teamwork by being part of a delegation;
- Be creative in finding innovative solutions to problems (even global ones).



ITALY

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Participation is an essential, if not the most important, principle for democracies. European institutions and their member states as well as non-governmental organisations have repeatedly emphasised the importance of youth participation to foster young people's active citizenship, enhance their integration and inclusion and strengthen their contribution to the development of democracy.

Active participation of young people in decisions and actions at all levels is essential in order to build more democratic, more inclusive and more prosperous societies.

Young people are not “citizens-in-training”, a role where they are often pushed back by education and political institutions.

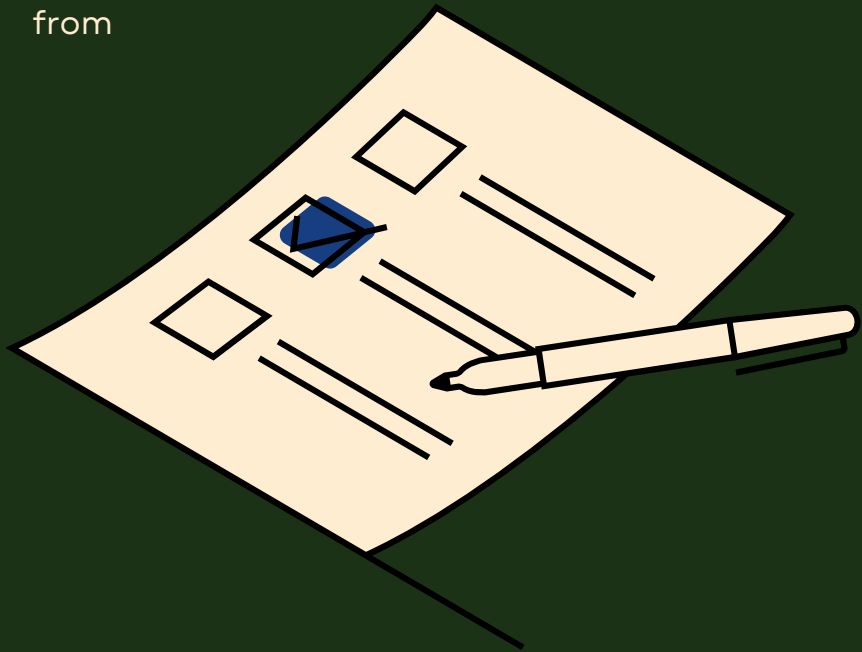
They are actors of today's democracy. Young people have in many ways taken the leading role in initiatives and movements that proclaim the urgent need to deepen and expand democracy. Young people are not ‘victims’ or ‘problems’ as often claimed, but diverse and critical stakeholders in democracy.



PORTUGAL

The under-representation of young people in the European Union's decision-making process can be due to various reasons, such as lack of political participation (voting, joining political parties, participating in elections, etc.). Young people are also often stereotyped as inexperienced or uninformed, which can lead to their views and expectations being overlooked or downplayed in EU decision-making processes. These processes are complex and bureaucratic, which can be a tough challenge for young people, discouraging them from participating.

Perceptions of corruption can also reduce young people's motivation to get involved in EU decision-making. If they believe that decisions are predetermined or influenced by corrupt practices, they may feel that their participation will not make a difference, leading to disinterest.



SPAIN

The under-representation of young people in decision-making that affects them in the European Union is a worrying issue that has generated much debate in recent years. The lack of effective participation and representation of young people in political and decision-making processes can have negative consequences both for them and for society as a whole.

Today, young people make up a significant part of the population in Europe, and as such, they have the right to be heard and to actively participate in decision-making that affects their lives. However, the reality is that your voice is often ignored or underestimated in many cases.

One of the reasons for this under-representation of young people in decision-making is the lack of interest and commitment on the part of young people themselves. Many young people do not feel identified with politics or believe that they have no voice in the current political system. Therefore, they do not get involved in political and decision-making processes.

Another cause of this underrepresentation is the lack of effective mechanisms to guarantee the participation of young people in political processes. Young people often find it difficult to access political decision-making spaces and to be heard by political leaders and decision-makers.

To address this problem, it is important to encourage the active participation of young people in politics and decision-making. This implies creating spaces and platforms for young people to express their opinions and be heard, and to ensure that their interests are considered in public policies.

In addition, it is essential to involve young people in the development of policies and programs that directly affect them. This can be achieved through civic education and the promotion of the active participation of young people in society.

In short, the under-representation of young people in the decision-making that affects them in the European Union is a serious problem that needs to be effectively addressed. It is important to encourage the active participation of young people in politics and decision-making, and to ensure that their interests are considered in public policies. This is the only way to build a more inclusive and democratic society that considers the needs and opinions of all its citizens, including young people.



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P4EUCITIZENSHIP

9-14 abril 2024

RIBEIRA GRANDE

AÇORES

PORTUGAL

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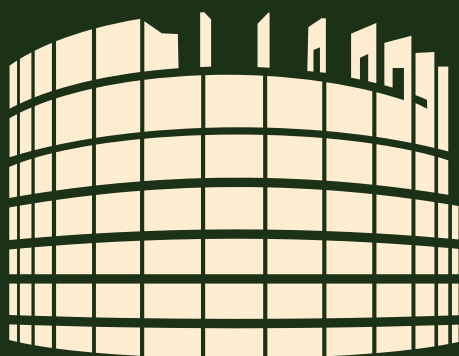
DISTANCE BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EUROPEAN POLITICS
HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE
NEXT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS IN JUNE 2024?

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CARAVELA, APCE

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These are the elections with the highest abstention rate in Portugal, reaching 69.3 per cent in 2019, with young people making up a large proportion of the abstainers. According to Eurobarometer, six out of ten young people are planning not to vote in June 2024. It is therefore urgent to reverse this phenomenon.



In order to combat the distance between young people and European politics, it is necessary to pass on the political, socio-cultural and economic achievements made as a result of the existence of the European Union. On the other hand, literacy in European politics must be increased by integrating it into school curricula and by creating specific programmes that simulate the practices of the European Parliament.

It is also necessary to invest in social media, such as Instagram and TikTok, as these are the favoured means of dissemination for the younger generations. In this way, there is the possibility of transmitting knowledge to a wide universe of users through short and appealing videos, creating engagement and stimulating active citizen participation.

PORTUGAL

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The Distance of young people from European policies is more noticeable in regions further away from the decision-making centres of the EU, although this distance is transversal to the entire EU territory.

This distance can result from several factors, including: Complexity and Burocracy that young people perceive in EU measures; Lack of relevance to their lives; Communication gap between EU institutions and young people; Low trust in EU institutions; Socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, poverty and social exclusion; among others.

Programs such as Erasmus + has helped bring young people to the European Union and to understand its mission and importance for their lives, also contributing to increasing interest in the next European Elections. Using digital platforms and social media can also contribute to reach out to young people, explaining the complex political concepts in a clear and accessible way. Another measure that could lead to greater interest in the Elections 2024, would be the promotion of young people's representation in politics, by supporting young candidates highlighting the voices and perspectives of young activists, entrepreneurs and community leaders.



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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In the last June elections, abstention in the second round set a record, reaching 47.17%. In the first round of local elections as well, there was an abstention of 48% throughout the territory, while in the second, abstention reached 64.84% in the regional elections and 59.29% in the municipal elections. Regarding the 2019 national elections, the participation of young people aged 17 to 24 was only around 25%.

Nevertheless, an encouraging step towards easy and direct contact with the June 2024 elections was announced last week by the government with the introduction of postal voting, aiming to cover the abstention seen in previous contests.

Also, Hellenic Republic, reduced the age limit for youth to vote, to 17yo.

The aims for youth to vote are:

Firstly, it is your way of influencing the future of Europe. Many of the rules that affect us, such as policies on immigration, COVID-19 or climate change, are set at the EU level.

Secondly, using your vote safeguards democracy itself. Democracy has not had a particularly smooth ride lately, either in Europe or around the world. It is our responsibility to keep it alive, not only in Europe but everywhere.

Voting is a key part of this, but it is not the whole picture. It is also about staying informed, making your voice heard in various ways, and raising awareness about issues that matter to us and our future. The freedom to do all this is a precious part of democracy, and it is in our best interest to protect it. Young people are now called upon to decide on their future and their security. EU decisions in the context of the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Israel concern everyone. Environmental and energy policies have become vital issues due to climate crisis, as they can affect the life of every new citizen at any time.

HUNGARY

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The participation rate in the last EU elections was not very high. The EU wanted a higher proportion of participation in the 2024 elections. I think that with many such non-direct campaigns, he aroused the interest of the younger generation in politics and made them aware that they should not let decisions be made over their heads, but rather send MEPs who represent their interests to Brussels with their votes.

Campaigns should be launched on several platforms, the best way to reach young people is to address them through social media, draw their attention, and inform them about the election and the importance of voting.

Organization of events, youth forums, and educational programs to work with schools, universities, and youth organizations to develop educational programs that highlight the importance of European politics and the impact of youth participation.

To draw their attention to the representation of the youth. Promoting the inclusion of young candidates in the electoral process to encourage representation that resonates with younger demographics.

We have already seen posters on the streets, advertisements on online platforms from the YOU EU campaign, in which they developed a clear and attractive communication strategy tailored to the young audience, emphasizing the potential of change and the value of their voice in shaping European policies.

By implementing a combination of these strategies and adapting them to the specific needs and preferences of young people, the distance between young people and European politics can be bridged, ultimately promoting greater participation in the next European Parliament elections.

In addition, a different type of incentive is being implemented in Hungary in order to increase the participation rate, as the local elections in Hungary will be held at the same time as the EU elections.

ITALY

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The distance between young people and European politics is a pressing issue that demands attention. There's a noticeable disengagement among the youth concerning the European Parliament. This disconnection is multifaceted, stemming from factors like complex bureaucratic structures, perceive irrelevance of policies to daily life, and a lack of awareness about the importance of their participation. Fostering young people's participation and involvement in European politics requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including political parties, educational institutions, policymakers, and civil society. By addressing the root causes of disengagement and implementing targeted strategies, we can create a more vibrant and inclusive democracy where the voices of all citizens, regardless of age, are heard and valued. To bridge this gap and encourage young people's involvement in the upcoming European Parliament elections in June 2024, several strategies must be employed.

Many young Europeans aren't adequately informed about the functions and significance of the European Parliament.

Introducing civic education programs focused on the EU's structure, its decision-making processes, and impact of EU policies on citizens' lives, can engage the youngs with EU politics, which should be more accessible and relatable to young people. This involves framing issues in a manner that resonates with their concerns and aspirations, such as climate change, employment opportunities, digital rights, and social justice. Utilizing social media platforms and digital tools for outreach and communication can also help to connect with younger demographics effectively.

More transparency and accountability within the EU institutions: when young people perceive their voices and concerns are being heard, they're more likely to engage in the political process. Implementing mechanisms for meaningful youth participation, e.g. youth councils or advisory boards, can foster a sense of belonging among the younger generation. Political parties and candidates should actively engage with young voters by addressing their issues, involving them in decision-making processes, and showcasing young leaders within their ranks. Encouraging diversity and representation within the political sphere can make it more appealing and inclusive for young people.

Lastly, incentivizing participation through initiatives like voter registration drives, youth-focused debates, and campaigns highlighting the importance of democratic

MALTA

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The current distance between young people and European politics is concerning, with many feeling uneducated with no information about it. To encourage participation in the 2024 European Parliament elections, civic education in schools must be improved. Political parties should address issues relevant to young people, such as climate change and social justice.



Utilizing social media and digital platforms can help reach young voters, while creating opportunities for youth participation in the political process can empower them to take ownership of their future. Bridging this gap is essential for creating a more engaged and informed society. Furthermore, creating interactive and engaging campaigns that resonate with the concerns of young people can inspire them to become active participants in the political process.

Providing opportunities for young individuals to volunteer, intern, or participate in mock government exercises can also help cultivate a sense of civic duty and responsibility. By emphasizing the importance of voting and political engagement in schools and communities, we can empower the next generation to shape the future of Europe. Ultimately, fostering a stronger connection between young people and European politics is crucial for building a more inclusive and representative democracy.

SPAIN

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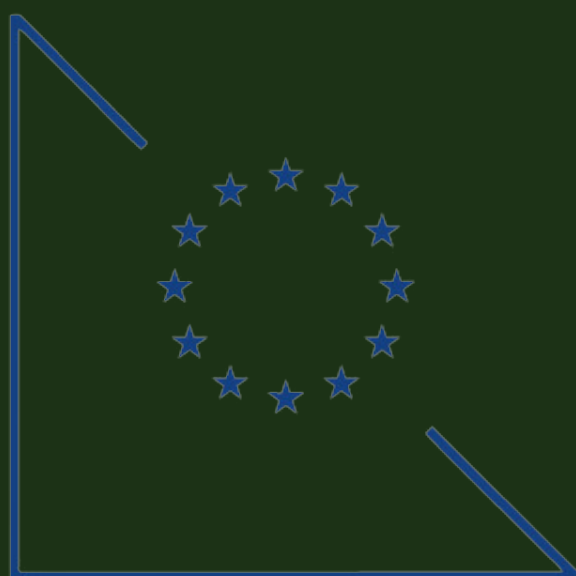
The participation of young people in EU politics is essential for the future of the EU. In recent years, society and particularly young people are distancing themselves from institutions and political class, the continuous cases of corruption, the alliances between political parties with the sole objective of perpetuating themselves in power make society less represented. A radicalization is favoring in some sectors of society that is spreading throughout EU, where populist parties that only seek electoral returns are increasingly abundant. Young people are not only disengaged from the European institutions, but also from local and national institutions because they are not allowed to participate in the development of youth policies, their concerns and interests and their presence in the institutions is anecdotal or null. To encourage participation, the first thing to do is to inform young people about how the EU works, what it is for, how can participate and how it can help as an individual or a group. Training and participation must be reinforced to involve youngest and society in general in programs and projects that promote mobility, knowledge and EU reflection.

These would be some of the initiatives that can improve the feeling of belonging to a EU society and participation in its institutions and electoral processes.

- Training from childhood, the idea of belonging to Europe and what it means for people and society should be integrated into the school curriculum. Educate the population from childhood to promote a feeling of European society, as opposed to the independence movements promoted by populist political parties.
- Promote policies and programs that promote knowledge of Europe among young people, promote labor mobility and training. Organize procedures that allow fluid communication between young people and institutions, events that make it possible to detect the main concerns and interests of young people and make known the responses that the European Union can to their concerns.
- Citizens' access to government bodies must be encouraged. In today's society, Artificial Intelligence is being implemented on a daily basis. We cannot continue with a system in which citizens in general and youth in particular are ignored by political parties. Democracy does not exist within political parties, the candidates, programs and proposals are decided by politicians based on their particular and partisan interests, the opinion of citizens, associations, etc., is ignored and policies are not designed thinking on the people.



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