

# Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
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## Report on the Seminar on Young People's Political Participation

**European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 10-11 October 2023**

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## Executive summary

The Seminar on Young People's Political Participation was held at the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France, on 10 and 11 October 2023. The seminar brought together participants from the youth sector triangle of research, policy and practice. Its aim was to stimulate discussions on trends related to youth political participation and to provide a space for sharing updates about relevant policy processes and youth work initiatives in this area.

During the seminar, key institutional initiatives were presented. The EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership conducts research on various topics related to youth political participation, including research on youth participation and spaces, anti-democratic trends, human rights erosion and the impact of crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and explores new forms of youth political engagement. The studies on digital participation emphasise the potential of the digital tools for broadening inclusive youth engagement, but also caution against increasing offline inequalities or exposing young people to hate speech and cyberbullying. Research on young women's participation highlights barriers to women's engagement, ranging from issues such as gender violence, stereotypes, digital divides and domestic responsibilities, to parental control and gender roles.

The EU promotes youth engagement in democratic processes through initiatives such as the EU Youth Dialogue and emphasises the involvement of young people in the 2024 European Parliament elections. The European Youth Forum (YFJ) implements targeted initiatives to support the 2024 European Parliament elections: advocating lowering the voting age to 16, facilitating youth candidacy in elections, simplifying voter registration processes and enhancing citizenship education in schools. Additionally, the YFJ supports the implementation of the EU Youth Test and introduces the Youth Progress Index as a crucial tool providing data on global youth quality of life. Based on the aforementioned background of institutional initiatives, and building on the experience and expertise of stakeholders gathered at the seminar, the following key reflections summarise the debates that took place in Strasbourg.

First, participants elaborated on the overlooked arena of individualised and lifestyle politics, an emerging domain intersecting both in-person and digital youth involvement. This discussion emphasised the often unnoticed political undertones embedded within young people's daily decisions. It probed the extent to which these choices resonate with democratic values. Moreover, the discussion addressed the challenge for policy makers to comprehend and actively engage with these messages from young people, calling for innovative methodologies within youth research to effectively explore and communicate this aspect of young people's realities.

Second, the seminar highlighted the tension between the creation of new support mechanisms and the need to overhaul existing political participation structures. While efforts are directed towards innovating new tools for fostering youth involvement and conducting corresponding research, a growing realisation emerges that the overarching social reality needs to be transformed as well. This becomes particularly evident in terms of the engagement of young women and individuals experiencing cumulative disadvantages. The debate reaches beyond the typical youth policy areas, touching upon elements such as socialisation and cultural frameworks, which significantly influence the success of youth political participation engagements.

Third, the deliberations explored the significance of democracy in-between elections, advocating the implementation of ongoing deliberative and participatory democratic mechanisms. While elections occur periodically, sustaining lively democratic engagement is dependent on ongoing efforts to counter the democratic deficit triggered by inadequate representation of young people in politics. The

discussions focused on establishing channels for efficient dialogue between policy makers and young individuals. Such dialogue would foster an open, respectful environment of policy co-creation. This proactive approach aims to enhance the responsiveness of policy making across sectors, pre-emptively addressing potential challenges before they escalate, thus advancing the well-being of both young people and society as a whole.

Fourth, the seminar addressed the critical need to cultivate constructive deliberative spaces, both online and offline, to counter the shrinking civic spaces. It is vital to ensure safe and open arenas for discussions, free from echo chambers and misinformation. The challenge of finding a balance between inspiring debates and the establishment of safe, respectful spaces was identified. Furthermore, the discussion probed the role of the media in preserving objectivity, critical thinking and unbiased reporting, crucial for fostering informed democratic deliberations.

Fifth, the debate delved into the future of democratic participation mechanisms, contemplating potential shifts in suffrage. Key considerations included the introduction of a universal vote-at-16 rule across Europe. Furthermore, support mechanisms for this transition and structural adaptations within governance systems to accommodate broad-based youth participation were debated. The citizens' panels and advisory bodies were recognised as mechanisms that empower young people to represent their interests across various policy fields and governance levels. The discourse also touched upon platforms that facilitate collaborative policy creation between young people, politicians and experts, supporting dynamic youth engagement in policy-making processes.

Sixth, the seminar participants debated broadening youth policy topics beyond traditionally considered domains, recognising the interconnectedness of broad contemporary issues with youth political participation. This expansion calls for nuanced and comprehensive research methodologies that encompass domains extending beyond conventional youth policy spheres: emerging ones as well as those traditionally unrelated to youth policy.

Seventh, the debates highlighted the imperative for adaptive methodologies and theoretical frameworks within youth political participation research. This includes revisiting the methods used to explore various forms and content of youth political and civic engagement and engaging with diverse stakeholders. Moreover, the seminar participants underscored the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives into youth political participation research. This holistic approach involves examining the perspectives of policy makers, understanding their preparedness to engage with young people meaningfully and navigating the obstacles politicians face in bridging the gap between policy decisions and the lived experiences of young people.

Last, the seminar emphasised the need to keep new developments in youth political participation aligned with democratic values and standards. While it is crucial to advocate the incorporation of youth voices into policy processes, it is equally important to recognise the significance of established democratic processes. This calls for efficient expectation management around the integration of innovative mechanisms within democratic frameworks, fostering a balanced and participatory democratic environment.

All in all, the seminar created space for important discussions on different perspectives of youth political participation. These insights underscore the pressing need for sophisticated research methodologies, comprehensive policy frameworks and a proactive approach to address the challenges and opportunities shaping the evolving landscape of youth engagement in political spheres.

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## Introduction

The [Seminar on Young People's Political Participation](#) was held at the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France, on 10 and 11 October 2023. The seminar brought together 44 participants from various backgrounds representing the youth sector triangle of research, policy and practice:

- representatives of state bodies (ministries, regional office representatives, municipality representatives);
- representatives of transnational and international bodies (such as the EU and the Council of Europe);
- representatives of national youth councils;
- representatives of various youth organisations at national and international levels;
- youth researchers.

The seminar was an occasion to build on the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership's existing knowledge and to share new research on the topic of youth political participation, including topics such as the shrinking space for civil society, gender aspects of participation, digitalisation in youth participation, new forms of participation, climate movements, the EU Youth Dialogue or the impact of Covid-19 on youth spaces.

Its aim was to stimulate critical discussions on trends related to youth political participation and provide space to share updates about relevant policy processes and youth work initiatives in this area. The methodology consisted of presentations and keynote speeches and participative methodology such as group and plenary debates and reflections.

## Getting started: opening of the seminar

The seminar was opened by:

- Mr Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the [Youth Department, Council of Europe](#)
- Mrs Vesna Batistic Kos, Head of the [Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe](#)
- Mr Nicholas Kujala, Board Member of the [European Youth Forum \(YFJ\)](#).

**Mr Tobias Flessenkemper**, the Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, welcomed the participants and pointed out the deep roots of youth political participation in European history. The powerful switch from the mentality of adversity and competition represented by wars and struggles of the first half of the 20th century, to the co-operation and solution seeking leading to the creation of the pan-European institutions in the second half of the 20th century, showcases the importance of young people's engagement in democratic developments in Europe and beyond. A concrete development that illustrates the support that young people started to receive in their efforts to play a key role in shaping the future can be seen in the building of the [European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France](#). The European Youth Centre was created as a space to support young people in their political work, but also to offer opportunities for meetings, training, intercultural exchanges and, overall, facilitating the spirit of active participation and co-operation of young people across Europe. Support for young people's political participation was based on a simple premise: countries cannot do democracy alone, they need to be co-created by people of all generations and based on democratic values. Therefore, young people's political participation as a democratic process based on rule of law and human rights became key to not only seeking future solutions but also to further developing and sustaining democracy itself. Democracy is about advocating changes without being threatened by the very regime young people are trying to refine. Therefore, youth political participation is just as

important today as it was in the past, and the European Youth Centre is also a highly relevant venue for deliberating on youth political participation, a place that has been supporting such participation for decades.

**Mrs Vesna Batistic Kos**, the Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe, welcomed the participants, pointing out that the seminar includes a large proportion of young people. Young people should be engaged in public matters via all possible democratic processes, such as being part of governments and of civil society organisations. To that end, the EU employs various specific initiatives, such as the [EU Youth Dialogue](#), but it is important to also keep in mind the key general democratic processes, such as the European Parliament elections in 2024. Taking part in the European Parliament elections enables young people to vitally influence a wide range of important domains: housing, climate change solutions and many other things. At the same time, voting in European elections enables young people to influence the composition of the European Parliament (for example, in terms of the diversity of elected officials). The European Parliament is one of the leading European bodies and its stance on different contemporary topics, as well as its reactions when facing various crises (such as war and a pandemic), helps to set the tone for international and worldwide deliberations, and therefore the more it reflects the views and values of young people, the more comfortable young people will be with the world that is being co-created every day via the work of these international institutions. The European Parliament elections are therefore a key opportunity for young people to counter the rise of hate, populism and extremism and to steer Europe's future to be in line with democratic values and principles. These key values, as shown by the results of Eurobarometers, for example, are shared across generations: democracy, free speech, inclusion and other things are appreciated by both young people and people of other generations. There are, however, matters that are specifically important to young people, such as tackling the climate crisis and generally making changes happen that accommodate the emerging needs of young and other generations. It is important to also acknowledge and support the variety of ways that young people engage in democratic processes beyond elections, be it unconventional participation processes, online engagement or other means. Young people should be able to creatively participate in dealing with public matters via channels they feel comfortable with.

**Mr Nicholas Kujala**, a Board Member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), stressed that 25% of the European population are young people and that YFJ is an important advocacy platform for young people, underlining the role of national youth councils and civil society organisations, including those operating internationally. YFJ has 105 member organisations from all across Europe, and through those organisations it reaches out to 10 million young people, with the activities of YFJ taking place in various locations across Europe. Some 60% of young people in Europe are members of youth organisations and that presents an unprecedented level of activity in comparison to other places in the world. Despite that, voter turnout levels are rather low in the youth age group, with research suggesting that in European Parliament elections in 2019, young people mostly experienced practical obstacles: living away from home, the need for voter registration and other things. Nevertheless, there is a worrying trend among young people as well: while democracy is still globally the most favoured way of government, young people are showing much higher support for autocratic ideologies (such as army rule or the rule of one person) than their counterparts from other generations (Open Society Foundations 2023: 17-19).

The distrust in democratic institutions can be one of the causes to look for other forms of engagement in public affairs than voting. Boycotting (the intentional avoidance of certain products), "boycotting" (intentional purchase of certain products because of their positive environmental or social impact), online behaviour (such as expressing support for a cause via online publishing), avoiding fast fashion

choices (low-cost fashion, produced with little regard for environmental impacts, which can be quickly replaced when new fashion trends come in) and other forms of individualised and lifestyle politics are all widely used by young people. Young people consider these approaches as effective because they put them in charge of the impacts they wish to see in the world around them. Individualised and lifestyle politics can also be a reaction to shrinking civic spaces generally: governments of different countries have recently taken action to suppress the work of the national youth councils, including cutting funding or even threatening legal action. Two out of five youth organisations in Europe do not speak up for fear of retribution from their government.

YFJ is also implementing several initiatives in the field of youth political participation in order to support young people to have their voices heard. In order to remove obstacles to voting, YFJ runs [campaigns on lowering the voting age to 16](#) (for example the [BeSeenBeHeard petition](#)), arguing that since 16 year olds are already eligible to have other responsibilities in society, they should also be eligible to vote. YFJ is also trying to support young people to run for office, including in the case of European elections, and it furthermore supports removing practical obstacles to voting, such as simplifying voter registration processes, boosting citizenship education in schools or establishing postal voting or e-voting opportunities. To support youth mainstreaming, YFJ promotes the establishment of the [EU Youth Test](#) as a dedicated tool to enable *ex ante* impact assessment of EU policies across all domains, introducing three key pillars to such a process: meaningful engagement with relevant youth stakeholders; impact assessments of draft proposals; and preparation of mitigation measures to address impact assessment findings. Furthermore, the Council of Europe Reykjavik Declaration (Council of Europe 2023: 8) was outlined as an important step in bringing the youth perspective to the Council of Europe processes as well as potentially utilising the Council of Europe co-management expertise in other sectors.

The [Youth Progress Index](#) was also introduced, providing a valuable source of evidence for various youth political participation activities and initiatives. The Youth Progress Index provides data on young people's quality of life on a global scale, based on a wide variety of indicators. In this context, the [work of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership in the field of youth research](#) has been also been highlighted as an example of good practice for providing the youth field with much needed analyses and findings.

### Exploring the context: EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership contributions to the deliberations on young people's political participation

**Mrs Clotilde Talleu**, a manager of the [EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership](#), thanked all participants of the seminar for their efforts to support meaningful youth political participation and provided an overview of the work of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership in this domain, most notably studies and research on youth civil society, gender and participation. [Youth participation and youth spaces](#) research focuses on anti-democratic tendencies, the lowering of the human rights standards and the impacts of crises such as Covid-19 pandemic, and also emphasises the risks connected to the [shrinking civic spaces](#) within the youth political participation domain which can lead to fear of retribution and to difficulties in expressing young people's voices at the level of youth organisations. Informed and meaningful digital youth participation is also an important topic as it is often cheaper to facilitate online events and has the potential to work as an inclusive measure. At the same time, challenges can be seen as digital divides in terms of hardware, software or skills exist for young people. Hence it is important to ensure that digital tools do not enhance offline inequalities or harm young people via hate speech, disinformation or cyberbullying. Contemporary forms of young women's

participation (Lavizzari and Yurttagüler 2023) are explored in light of gender violence and persistence of gender stereotypes and barriers that prevent young women from participating fully in various social domains, such as gendered domestic workload, digital divide, parental control of digital devices and gender-based violence, including sexual violence. New forms of youth political participation (Crowley and Moxon 2017; Bárta, Boldt, Lavizzari 2021; Yurttagüler and Pultar 2023) are a long-standing topic of research conducted by the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, seeking answers to questions such as: How do young people interact with the current political system? The research shows that despite the fact that young people do not favour conventional political participation methods, they are highly interested in political matters and they tend to engage in social movements, petitions, boycotts and buycotts and generally prefer short-term engagements with concrete results. The research also highlights that many young people believe they are not able to participate in public matters or that their voice does not count in political debates.

An immediate round of reflections from the participants in the seminar mentioned that one of the strengths of the European Parliament elections is highlighting the current political debates as well as voting as a key democratic process. The EU Youth Test was appreciated by the participants and avenues for further development were outlined: ensuring that new policies have the right timespan before being re-thought, ensuring that emerging topics are dealt with in new policies and that they also become reflected in relevant established policies, if need be. Research into the spatial and emotional aspects of youth political participation was suggested to see how online and real-world participation differs and to point out occasions when it is safe to hold youth political participation events online and when it is much more beneficial to hold them in person. Lowering of participation thresholds was also stressed as an area in need of further exploration: how can the thresholds be kept low while not compromising on the independence of youth organisations? As an example, governmental subsidies lead to this dilemma: while the subsidies enable organisations to keep membership fees at a minimum, they also give the state a high level of influence over any national youth council or similar body. At the same time, availability of resources is a primary precondition for any youth political participation initiative: time, finances, know-how and human resources. Last, it was pointed out that young people cannot look for opportunities they do not know exist at all. The question of raising the general awareness of different youth political participation options among young people was therefore posed, as that is a key step for any young person who would like to learn more about how to engage in public matters.

### [Diving deeper: keynote speech on contemporary forms of youth political participation](#)

**Dr Tomaž Deželan**, a member of the [Pool of European Youth Researchers](#), co-ordinated by the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, and a professor at the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), spoke about current trends in youth political participation and what these trends can reveal about potential future scenarios in this area. The keynote speech was based on findings and data from the following key sources: the research report on the impacts of Covid-19 on youth participation and youth spaces (Deželan 2022), the Youth Knowledge Book no. 29 on youth political participation (Deželan, Bacalso, Lodeserto 2023), the guidelines on young people’s participation by the Council of Europe Joint Council on Youth (2023), the study on political participation patterns of young people (Deželan and Moxon 2021), the [European Values Study](#) and the European Parliament Youth Survey (Ipsos European Public Affairs 2021).

It is important to distinguish between political participation of young people and their civic engagement or other forms of general public participation. When it comes to the political participation



styles of young people, the general trend points towards decreasing participation in institutional politics and distrust in political institutions. The disengagement of youth from institutional politics leads to well-established dangers: a lack of democratic representation and an increasing democratic deficit among young people. This adverse trend in turn leads to the creation of policy landscapes that are less and less reflective of the needs of young people, further fuelling the vicious circle of political disengagement and democratic deficit. Young people, however, do vote, and they do so especially when they recognise particular elections as being important and having an impact. This leads to an important question: What elections do young people consider important and why?

Areas in which young people are more active than their counterparts from other generations are petitioning, boycotting, protesting and online participation (such as social media posting, using hashtags, etc.). This in turn is reflected in the citizenship forms young people take up, which are typical in the following aspects: putting more emphasis on protest and self-expression; the important role of peers and social networks in shaping the political beliefs of young people; the importance and depth of networking among young people; and appreciating social order, solidarity and self-expression. It is also vital to be aware of the key concerns that shape actions and capture the imagination of young people: environmental and humanitarian crises of today as well as matters of poverty, inequality and inclusion.

As much as the youth political participation trends are clear and visible in available data, an important question should be asked: What forms of political or civic engagement are not measured by contemporary research tools? Currently used data-collection tools are often rather narrow and outdated, and it is important to review the tools and methods used in youth political participation research in order to capture the dynamic and ever-changing reality of the participation landscape, its participants, forms and aims, as well as the preferences and skill sets of the young people who engage. Young people with different skill sets may prefer different participation mechanisms or invent new ones.

The influence of ICT on the youth political participation domain is potentially crucial, but also largely unexplored by research. It is apparent that online tools influence the participation of young people, since they serve as their main source of information (social media, news websites or the internet generally). This change, however, puts enormous power in the hands of private corporations, who use algorithms of their choice, often without general transparency or accountability to any governments. The ICT tools can have positive impacts, for example in the domain of strengthening political literacy. Nevertheless, their adverse effects also need to be taken into account, for example in the areas of mental health and physical development and well-being.

The general trend of shrinking civic spaces especially affects young people and development of their political skills. This negative trend became more pronounced as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic hit young people and the youth field, when youth organisations that often operate as safeguards of youth civic spaces proved to be more vulnerable than others. Vulnerability of these safeguards stems often from their most basic characteristics: these are frequently voluntary organisations with project-based funding that operate in complex areas where showcasing impacts can be highly demanding. It is critical to support these safeguards of youth civic spaces to ensure young people can make use of physical youth participation activities, keeping in mind that in-person events and mechanisms provide very different opportunities in comparison to online spaces.

In conclusion, the idea of young people as “radically kind citizens” was presented, emphasising that a vast majority of young people are engaged in one or several youth political participation opportunities, and they care about the public good. At the same time, however, young people also require systemic

and radical changes in the areas that are most important to them: environmental and humanitarian crises, and matters of poverty, inequality and inclusion.

### Reflection and exchange: upcoming and emerging topics in youth political participation

Following the keynote speech, participants reflected on their experiences with youth political participation and main challenges. Protecting civic spaces was highlighted as a key area of concern and action. NGOs and youth organisations, who are seen as safeguards of youth civic spaces, should be supported in terms of:

- obtaining funding;
- capacity building (such as administrative and strategic skills);
- fulfilling their own priorities while still responding to current policy needs and objectives;
- professionalising in terms of inner structural development of the organisations (establishing accounting departments and teams of other key specialists who are necessary for administering funds, for example);
- monitoring and measuring the impact created by these organisations (by dedicating a portion of each funding to monitoring and evaluation exercises, for instance);
- covering the day-to-day operations of youth organisations beyond concrete project activities (e.g., via flat rates).

Participants highlighted the need for funding aimed at youth organisations to have reasonable administrative standards. For example, youth funding should not be more complicated to administer than university research grants. The funds aimed at the youth sector should also not be allocated to large consultancy agencies, but rather devoted to some of the aforementioned support areas to make youth organisations more resilient.

A paradox of disengagement from institutional politics was also debated: young people hope for fundamental changes, yet they do not engage in the most crucial representative democracy mechanism – voting and standing for elections. It was recognised that a high level of competence and knowledge is required to enter institutionalised politics, and to allow young people to gain such competence and knowledge it is vital to provide them with appropriate and accessible learning opportunities and information sources. At the same time, it is crucial to keep developing measures to assess and recognise policy success: it is possible that monetary aspects are not the only important criterion (for example GDP) and that new measures need to be expanded, such as those concerning solidarity, well-being and other relevant factors, as is the case with [., Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index](#), for instance (Monaco 2016). Such measures could contribute to maximising accountability and minimising lack of trust between governments and young people. It is therefore important to work towards increasing the political efficacy of young people internally (the self-confidence of a person to understand and be able to participate in politics) and externally (the belief that governments will react to proposals put before them).

The need for young people to use forms of participation that differ from the established mechanisms of institutional politics should be taken into account. Participatory democracy mechanisms such as the representation of various groups in democratic processes in-between election, co-creation and co-management of (youth) policies, regular consultation opportunities, inclusion of youth organisations in policy making, participatory budgeting and many other mechanisms should be available for young people. These mechanisms should be inclusive, accessible, well-advertised and transparent.

## Expert panel: how are the European institutions promoting youth participation?

An expert panel presented the European institutional approaches to supporting youth political participation. The panel consisted of the following experts:

- Mr Babis Papaioannou, policy officer at [DG EAC, European Commission](#)
- Dr Liliya Elenkova, member of [the European Steering Committee for Youth \(CDEJ\), Council of Europe](#)
- Mrs Julie Verney, administrator responsible for communication and events of the [Directorate-General for Communication \(DG COMM\), European Parliament](#)
- Mrs Anca-Ruxandra Pandea, project officer for the [Democracy Here | Democracy Now](#) campaign at the Council of Europe.

**Mr Babis Papaionnaou**, a policy officer at DG EAC, European Commission, presented the current and future initiatives of the European Commission in the domain of youth political participation. The [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#) is the guiding policy in the youth field at the EU level, and through its pillar “Engage” it sets the framework for youth political participation work in the EU. The EU Youth Strategy also features the results of the EU Youth Dialogue processes: the [European Youth Goals](#). The [interim evaluation of the current EU Youth Strategy](#) is currently underway and should be completed in 2024. At the same time, the [interim evaluation of the current Erasmus+ programme together with the final evaluation of the former Erasmus+ period \(2014-2020\)](#) are also ongoing with results expected by the end of 2024. All of the evaluations also include a public consultation component, which is open to all citizens, including young people. After the evaluations are concluded, an update to the aforementioned implementation tools is planned.

The [Erasmus+](#) and the [European Solidarity Corps](#) programmes as well as the [EU Youth Dialogue](#) are the key mechanisms dedicated to implementing the EU Youth Strategy. Within Erasmus+, several mechanisms are available to support youth engagement in democracy processes, including the [Youth Participation Activities](#), the [European Youth Together Activities](#), which support networking at regional level, and the Youth Participation Strategy, developed by SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre. Furthermore, the Strategic National Agencies’ Co-operation [Democracy Reloading](#) focuses on supporting youth engagement in local democracy processes. Related to all the aforementioned initiatives, the [European Youth Portal](#) is a key information gateway for young people. The EU Youth Dialogue consists of wide youth consultations and the EU Youth Conferences, and it is co-ordinated by the European Steering Group (ESG), consisting of the European Commission, the Trio of the Council of the EU Presidencies and the [European Youth Forum \(YFJ\)](#). Furthermore, the European Youth Work Agenda is one of the priorities of the European Commission’s DG EAC (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture 2020: 22), as well as of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, and hence support of youth work, networking and civic spaces created herein is also foreseen.

The year 2022 was the [European Year of Youth](#), with youth participation as a key theme of many of the activities that took place. As an example, the [policy dialogue with commissioners](#) was held, with 300 young people visiting Brussels and deliberating with various European Commissioners on different topics. A Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022 was published in January 2024 (European Commission 2024)). Last but not least, the [EU Visitors Programme \(EUVP\)](#) allows young people and young leaders from all over the world to come together, visit the EU institutions and start long-term partnerships and networking.

**Dr Lilya Elenkova**, a member of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) of the Council of Europe, shared the news on the [Guidelines on young people's participation](#) (Council of Europe Joint Council on Youth 2023) adopted by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) on 25 October 2023. The guidelines are intended to support implementation of Resolution 152 (2003) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe 2015) and Recommendation Rec(2006)14 on citizenship and participation of young people in public life (Committee of Ministers 2006).

The guidelines outline how to ensure quality participation in different countries and settings, aiming to broaden meaningful youth participation by developing, introducing and maintaining environments that support free and critical engagement of young people and their democratic citizenship. The guidelines aspire to support all stakeholders while focusing on key processes clustered around the development of youth participation, including participation in institutional politics, but also taking into account the impacts of web-based tools and the need to combat the negative trend of shrinking civic spaces. The guidelines were prepared in collaboration with the [Advisory Council on Youth](#), the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the European Youth Forum.

The Reykjavik Declaration of the Council of Europe (2023) has also been mentioned, as it is one of the latest documents that explicitly states the commitment of the Council of Europe to include young people on a continuous basis in both deliberative and decision-making processes in order to increase effectiveness of public policies and further develop democratic mechanisms (ibid: 8). The declaration also explicitly acknowledges the role of the youth field in the human rights and environmental protection agendas (ibid: 20), and also explicitly commits to continuous engagement of young people in pursuit of further measures to protect the earth against pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity (ibid: 21).

It was also noted that history teaches us an important lesson: democracy is not always considered convenient, fast or practical, but it is the one system which is transparent and safe for everyone. While further developments in the implementation of the democratic ideals together with young people are necessary, the importance of this history lesson needs to be highlighted time and time again.

**Mrs Julie Verney**, an administrator responsible for communication and events at the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM), European Parliament, shared information on the [Together for Democracy](#) platform. The platform focuses on creating a community of people committed to voting in the 2024 European Parliament elections as well as encouraging others to cast their votes. The aim of the platform is to ensure high voter turnout and therefore support the strength and mandate of European democracy. This initiative is co-ordinated together with the [Youth Outreach Unit](#) of the DG COMM, and it also offers resources for download, lists events happening in various EU member states (policy hackathons, simulated elections, etc.), and even provides information on training taking place all across Europe. The platform currently has about 130 000 registered users and about 10 000 active volunteers, with members receiving regular e-mail updates containing actionable ideas to be implemented at the local level, the sharing of success stories with the community and even getting rewarded for their successes.

The [Euroscola](#) initiative was also introduced, which brings together students from all across Europe to try out parliamentary democracy processes, acting as members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg (France). The [European Parliament Ambassador School Programme](#) (EPAS) supports awareness-raising efforts on the role of the European Parliament and on parliamentary democracy generally, working with teachers and students in different roles, providing interactive educational

materials and even networking opportunities. The [European Charlemagne Youth Prize](#) was first awarded in 2008 and focuses on recognising projects run by 16 to 30 year olds that aim to improve international co-operation in Europe, while also providing the winning teams with additional funding to support their projects further. The [European youth seminars](#) take place in European Parliaments in Brussels (Belgium) and Strasbourg (France), or also online, and they allow classes or groups of young people to meet their peers from other European countries while deliberating on various contemporary issues. Similarly, the [Europe Experience](#) centres in various cities around Europe provide educational space for people of all ages to use interactive tools while discovering European processes to tackle various contemporary challenges. The [Digital Journey to the European Parliament](#) offers a virtual tour of the European Parliaments in Strasbourg (France) and Brussels (Belgium), and it also provides a virtual reality experience in which young people can try out being a member of the European Parliament by virtually spending a day in the European Parliament office. It also allows young people to undergo a virtual tour of the House of European History, or to play a virtual role-play game to better understand the deliberative and decision-making processes of the European Parliament.

It is also possible for young people to visit the [European Parliament in Strasbourg](#) and the [European Parliament in Brussels](#), but also use the opportunity to visit [Parliamentarium](#) and the [House of European History](#) and use the services of the [Info Hub](#), all of them located in Brussels. Moreover, the [European Youth Event](#) is held bi-annually as a both a hybrid and an in-person event in Strasbourg, bringing together thousands of young people and hundreds of speakers to enable the sharing of ideas on the future of Europe and the world.

All of the above-mentioned opportunities have been designed to support young people in their public engagement and political participation at the European level. This could help overturn the unfavourable trend shown by research: 70% of young people did not vote in the last European Parliament elections and 55% do not understand the EU (Deželan 2023).

**Mrs Anca-Ruxandra Pandea**, project officer at the Council of Europe, presented the [Democracy Here Democracy Now](#) campaign, which is based on the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy for 2030 (Council of Europe 2020). The priorities of the strategy are revitalising pluralistic democracy, supporting young people's access to rights, ensuring peaceful and inclusive societies and positively influencing youth work and youth policy development. The concrete objectives of the campaign are to restore mutual trust between young people and democratic processes and institutions, to uphold and expand standards of democratic youth participation, to support activities for democratic citizenship and human rights education and to raise awareness of the barriers to youth participation. The campaign went through preparatory stages in 2020 and 2021, which focused on mobilising partners and resources, and it has employed various [campaigning methods since 2022](#), such as a media campaign and a youth engagement campaign. The campaign included a variety of capacity-building activities, co-operation with the Democracy Reloading initiative and development of various resources. One of the outcomes of the campaign is a document (in French; Council of Europe 2022) with 50 calls for action to revitalise local democracy.

Furthermore, the seminar "[Let's get political!](#)" (27 November to 1 December 2023) covered the engagement of young people in political life, mapping barriers and obstacles, reflecting on the stigmas connected to political engagement and exploring the roles of political youth organisations.

It is also important to notice that a network of [schools for political studies](#) exists, holding annual seminars and conferences on various youth political participation-related topics such as democracy or human rights.

## The virtual role-play game: step into the shoes of a member of the European Parliament

A [virtual role-play game](#) is available at the Youth Portal and is designed to provide young people with the experience of taking up the role of a Member of the European Parliament (MEP). The game features a facilitators' guide and its target audience are groups of young people aged 14 and over. It can be used in different settings: in schools, at non-formal education workshops or at community centres, for example. The game itself provides a digital story which invites young people to dive into a given topic, think about arguments for and against a certain proposal and then negotiate with others from the perspective of an MEP. The combination of virtual and in-person experiences allows young people to learn about proceedings at the European Parliament, and at the same time develop their soft skills, such as communication, presentation or negotiation.

## Diving deeper: thematic parallel sessions

Two parallel sessions were held that allowed participants to exchange in more detail on two topics: contemporary forms of young women's participation and youth participation and digitalisation.

[Contemporary forms of young women's participation: priorities, challenges and ways forward](#)  
**Dr Laden Yurttagüler**, a researcher focusing on gender aspects of political participation, led a debate on how young women participate in the contemporary world, building on the [paper](#) she co-authored with Anna Lavizzari (2023).

One of the key findings of this literature review and the data from the Youth Partnership's [survey on youth participation](#) is the absence of young women in youth participation, with topics related to gender differences in youth participation underexplored in both scientific and policy literature. Hence, further research is needed into the role of gender in youth political participation and into the opportunities and challenges linked to young women's political participation (taking into account the intersectionality of being "young" and being "women").

While young women do participate, available data suggest they do so differently from young men. While their voting turnout during the European Parliament elections in 2019 was comparable to men's (65.7% and 66.2%, respectively; Ipsos European Public Affairs 2021), larger differences can be seen in young women's participation in institutionalised politics, with less than 1% of national parliamentarians being young women (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2021). Young women tend to be highly interested in social and political issues such as human rights, health and mental health, and they are comparably more interested in these topics than men. Young women tend to participate in social movements related to these topics, in particular those on reproductive rights or on sustainability matters, but their roles are often those of volunteers and not those of decision makers within the movement structures.

There are some potential hypotheses that can be explored and that are connected to the available data. Is gender discrimination at play? Do young women participate in institutionalised politics less because they are put off by their male counterparts or by older politicians? Is there glass ceiling? Do young women participate less because at some point the opportunities are not suited to their needs, do not fit their expectations or do not offer them the support they would need? Are there further social obstacles? Do young women participate less because of general obstacles such as safety concerns in online (such as cyberbullying) and offline environments (safety of public transport when

attending late evening meetings, for instance), because of expectations put on women in other areas of life (in the role of carer in families, for example), because of the complexities of intersectionality (young women from Roma backgrounds with disabilities, young women migrants with minority sexual orientation, etc.) or even because of general differences between the socialisation of women and men?

Moreover, highly critical questions should also be asked about the role of youth work and the youth field more broadly in supporting young women's political participation. To what extent is that happening, what tools are used and how effective are the measures currently in place? Generally speaking, are youth organisations providing the necessary stepping stone for women to engage in political participation later on in life? What does gender-balanced participation look like? What ratio of different genders should be sought, in what roles are we to pursue these standards and through what mechanisms (such as quotas or positive discrimination)?

### Young people's participation and digitalisation

**Dr Demet Luksulu**, a professor at the Yeditepe University (Türkiye) elaborated on the specifics of digital youth political participation.

Youth participation has been an important topic for the youth field for several years, covering conventional and unconventional types of participation. Within this context, the digital participation shifted from a new and innovative form of participation to a ubiquitous element of contemporary youth political participation together with mechanisms such as boycotting and "boycotting" or engagement in social movements. Youth political participation research reflects this shift in taking into account everyday activities, such as daily internet use (96% of young people use the internet daily), connecting such activities to the participation domain.

Contemporary youth participation research focuses on exploring the positive aspects of digitalisation as well as adverse trends. Among the positives, several concrete impacts can be identified. Online tools and platforms make it easier for young people to organise various initiatives and reach large audiences, and it also lowers costs related to political participation. Online tools also offer possibilities to join political participation events from different locations, enabling some young people to attend events from spaces they consider to be safe, and in that way one of the barriers to political participation can be overcome: the need to travel to attend certain events. Digital youth political participation opportunities can give space and voice to those groups of young people who may have lower participation rates in traditional participation forums.

When it comes to the challenges and limitations of digital youth political participation, it must be noted that existing inequalities can be reproduced in digital spaces. The digital competences of young people, youth workers or policy makers can be limited and harmful behaviour may occur: 60% of young women and 31% of men have experienced bullying, harassment or hate speech online. Young people can also be trapped in echo chambers,<sup>1</sup> which can be created in online environments more easily than in real life, and this can increase polarisation of society in certain matters and have further implications if disinformation or misinformation is involved.

Digital youth political participation therefore needs to be understood by analysing how young people use new technologies in this context. In order to explore this domain, new (digital) research methods

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1. Echo chambers are spaces in which the prevalent opinions of group members are further supported by an influx of like-minded information sources. For more, see Cinelli et al. (2020).

are needed to reach, collect and analyse young people's digital youth participation practices. Further important topics to explore include e-governance (utilisation of online tools in state governance structures), digital human rights (protection of human rights in online environments), the right to disconnect (ensuring a work-life balance, including online tools), the right to be forgotten (the right to remove one's data from online platforms), AI (online tools mimicking human intelligence), surveillance issues (privacy in online spaces), digital divides (between urban and rural areas, for example), the emergence of virtual reality spaces and also the use of hybrid youth participation formats<sup>2</sup> (such as using online spaces to complement in-person events), and many others. It is important to also keep in mind that this is only one of many important research pathways, and that exploring in-person youth political participation is still as important and pressing as ever.

### Reflection and exchange: the future of youth political participation

Participants in the seminar divided into smaller groups and reflected on three key topics related to youth political participation: polarisation and radicalisation; elections; and mainstreaming youth political participation.

#### Polarisation and radicalisation

The political spectrum contains different ideological bubbles, echo chambers or filter bubbles (opinions reinforced by personalised search engines), which sometimes co-exist and sometimes clash with various levels of violence. There is the question of the role of social media platforms in the creation of these bubbles and also in shaping non-constructive dialogue environments that lack space for constructive deliberation. There are also questions of what space or role young people may or should have in the context of polarisation and radicalisation.

#### Elections

There are several key considerations that should be taken into account regarding voting and youth participation in the European elections.

- The question of voting-age restrictions and the potential to lower the voting age to 16.
- The potential to increase the number of youth candidates in various elections, such as the upcoming European Parliament elections in 2024.
- The need to support capacity building of youth organisations in order to support their work with young people in the context of the upcoming elections. Election behaviour is also closely linked to citizenship identity of young people, and therefore voting should not be communicated as a stand-alone issue, but as part of a wider democratic environment and as a powerful way to affect how the EU and other governments work by choosing what parties represent young citizens. Young people should also look for specific youth-related items on the political programmes of political parties and take these into account when deciding who to vote for.

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2. For more, see Di Paola et al. (2023).



## Mainstreaming youth participation

Mainstreaming youth participation has received increased attention from the European institutions, and it has also been supported and advocated by European youth organisations. First, the [EU Youth Test](#) co-created by the European Youth Forum aims to mainstream youth in policy development across all sectors, and it has already been [approved by the European Economic and Social Committee](#). Second, the [EU Citizens' Panels](#) have been implemented to allow EU citizens to deliberate on various topics, with one third of young people aged 16-25 taking part in the panels. It is also worth noting that the EU Citizens' Panels are one of the [results](#) of the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), a large-scale consultation which took place in 2021 and 2022. The participants also discussed how in some cases there might be potential hesitation among policy makers to introduce binding mainstreaming mechanisms into policy.

## Expert panel: reflections on the current context of youth political participation

The following panel of experts shared reflections on various topics concerning contemporary youth political participation:

- Mr Spyros Papadatos, Chair of the [Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe](#)
- Mx. Hanna Kivimäki, Vice President of the [Young European Socialists \(YES\)](#)
- Mr Guillaume Libsig, Deputy Mayor and person responsible for youth policy at the [City of Strasbourg](#).

**Mr Guillaume Libsig**, Deputy Mayor and person responsible for youth policy at the City of Strasbourg, mentioned that one of the challenges to engaging young people at the municipal level is keeping them engaged for a substantial period of time, and eventually finding new active young people to take up the roles of those who are leaving the process, while also safeguarding the continuity of these processes. While the consultations have been the main youth participation tool used by the Strasbourg municipality, priority is now given to introducing co-creation processes. In concrete terms, two members of the municipal youth council became members of a working group preparing a redesign of public spaces in Strasbourg. Young people can work directly with elected officials and come up with concrete measures or results that can be subsequently implemented by the political representatives. Youth engagement needs to be supported also by educating policy makers to allow them to work with young people as equals, actively listening to the voices of youth.

**Mx Hanna Kivimäki**, the Vice President of the Young European Socialists (YES), stressed that innovative youth political participation tools are not necessarily brand new: there can be old tools which are now applied in another context. Young people may often feel that conventional participation methods do not have the desired effects and therefore they come up with innovative ideas, such as occupying public spaces and other types of protests, reusing ideas that were used in the political participation domain in the past. Youth participation can also often be a way to discover a community or safe spaces and for sharing topics. The topics can relate to any public policy domain, because all of them influence young people. When tackling the topics, young people do not necessarily engage for long periods of time: they can be interested in one particular campaign and then keep on searching for something else they find of importance. Young people can also speak for those whose voice has not been heard, to point out oppression and inequalities.

**Mr Spyros Papadatos**, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, pointed out that young people are a heterogeneous group and therefore different types of engagement will attract different sub-groups. It is important to avoid youth participatory mechanisms becoming exclusive activities only designed and frequented by young people from certain backgrounds, and to avoid these mechanisms becoming tokenistic or perceived as tokenistic. It is equally vital to explore how to develop advisory mechanisms into decision-making mechanisms, for example at the Council of Europe or EU levels. Youth participation opportunities need to take into account the changing and challenging realities that young people face. As housing issues or the rising cost of living mean young people struggle to find their way in life, their opportunities to engage in public matters become limited. There are also emerging trends in youth political participation that need to be tackled: the toxic environments of some social networks, safeguarding of online spaces generally, paying attention to the urban-rural divide, AI, virtual reality spaces, online privacy and many other things. It is important to be proactive and engage in research to explore these emerging trends to avoid only reacting to what is already happening.

**Mr Ondřej Bárta**, a freelance youth researcher and consultant and member of the Pool of European Youth Researchers, and **Mrs Clotilde Talleu**, Manager of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, also provided their final reflections on the topic of youth political participation, and these are included in the following chapter.

### Final reflections

The seminar covered some emerging topics within the youth political participation domain. This chapter summarises these topics, elaborates on them and examines some important associated questions.

First, the topic of individualised and lifestyle politics is emerging as an under-researched area that touches upon in-person as well as digital youth political participation opportunities. How much of young people's everyday decisions are based on political messages? To what extent are their everyday lives and decisions led by concerns for public good and democratic developments? How do young people choose to take such action and how do they assess their efficiency in real life and in the digital spaces? How can policy makers learn to listen to and understand such messages? How is individualised and lifestyle politics related to the phenomenon of shrinking civic spaces? Youth research should develop methodologies to capture this part of young people's reality, decode it and support other stakeholders in understanding its content.

Second, the tension between creating support mechanisms and the need to adjust existing structures is increasingly present in youth political participation debates. On one hand, substantial efforts are made to create new, innovative and effective tools for supporting youth political participation, as well as carrying out research into these support tools. These can be digital participation tools, deliberative democracy mechanisms, co-creation and co-design bodies and many other things. On the other hand, it becomes more and more apparent that in some cases the general social structure needs to be changed because no amount, shape or form of support mechanisms are able to compensate for inequalities and obstacles created by the ever-present social fabric. This is especially true in the case of young women's participation and in terms of the participation of people experiencing intersectional disadvantages (cumulative obstacles). Social mechanisms such as socialisation (assigning different genders to different gender roles), cultural frameworks (the expectations put on people of different backgrounds, ages, genders, etc.) or safe spaces are beyond the usual scope of youth political participation debates or research, but they do play an enormous role in creating or removing

numerous youth political participation obstacles. How can youth political participation practice and research take into account various social realities, decode them and suggest solutions that are needed at a wider societal level to enable all young people to engage in public matters?

Third, democracy in-between elections is a long-term topic of importance. While elections take place once every few years, it is important to implement deliberative and participatory democratic practices to ensure high levels of democracy in-between elections. This is needed to tackle the democratic deficit caused by the under-representation of youth in politics: young people are not equally represented in political positions (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2021) and that in turn creates a political environment that is less sensitive to the topics and preferences of young people. The emerging subtopic within this debate is a question of ensuring continuous dialogue between policy makers and young people in an open and respectful way that enables new trends and issues to be identified by young people and policy makers, and solutions to be co-created as soon as possible. This would, to some extent, increase the proactiveness of policy making in the youth domain and cross-sectorally, and prevent new issues becoming problematic, therefore increasing the overall well-being of young people and other citizens. The role of young people as experts in various fields, as well as the question of the means and length of their engagement, resonates within this debate, as does capacity building among policy makers to enable them to work effectively, transparently and accountably with young people.

Fourth, the question of ensuring constructive deliberative spaces exist both online and offline, by exploring the characteristics of current policy and political debates among young people and between young people and other generations, is important. How do we ensure safe spaces exist for both young people and youth organisations in a reality in which civic spaces are shrinking and some organisations feel they are being gagged and no longer feel comfortable communicating openly with their governments? How do we prevent echo chambers from hijacking open debates and preventing genuine deliberations? How do we tackle the long-term issues of disinformation and misinformation damaging the public debate and having a potentially devastating effect on young people who participate in such debates? How do we balance inconvenient debates that are necessary for developing certain topics with the equally necessary safety of spaces and debates? How do we ensure that media stay objective, critical and unbiased, providing factual information to wide audiences and ensuring that democratic deliberations are well founded?

Fifth, the question of future developments in democratic participation remains an underlying point of discussion in many debates on the topic. What is the future of voting rights and voting processes generally (such as the duty to register as a voter or e-voting)? Is Europe moving, slowly but surely, towards a universal vote-at-16 rule? What mechanisms are needed to support a wide and universal transition to vote-at-16 (such as efficient civic education, widespread democratic mechanisms in schools, accessible non-formal learning opportunities focusing on democracy and participation, etc.)? What structural changes can and should happen to the democratic governance systems in terms of accommodating youth participation across the board? Are citizens' panels one of the answers? Are mandatory advisory bodies allowing young people to represent themselves and be represented at the EU, national, regional and other levels, and across policy fields, another possible answer? Are there examples of co-creation platforms in which young people work side by side with politicians and experts to deliver concrete policies? What shape and role will the EU Youth Test take on in terms of youth mainstreaming? Once the EU Youth Test is established, how can it be adapted to other levels of governance? What grass-roots mechanisms will play a role in the future, and is there an opportunity to establish them as official institutionalised tools? For example, vote tripling is originally a grass-roots strategy based on finding three peers who are likely not to vote, trying to get them to vote or even to

talk to some of their peers who are unlikely to vote, and have similar conversations with the same aim: to boost voter turnout. A similar strategy is also used institutionally, with Together for Democracy, for example, creating networks of active citizens reaching out to their peers and local communities in order to increase voter turnout for the European Parliament elections in 2024. How are these tools used by young people?

Sixth, the topic of youth political participation continues to rapidly expand beyond the domain traditionally considered “youth policy”, into areas such as education and youth work. There are, in principle, two categories of such topics: complex and sometimes unexplored or emerging themes (climate change or social inequalities and human rights, for example); and themes that are rather well established but little influenced by the needs of young generations (such as energy, housing or health policies). This, again, leads to the need for more research to cover areas that are not traditionally perceived as youth policy but are currently clearly linked to youth political participation efforts.

Seventh, it is clear there is a strong need for youth participation research to adapt, to create new research methodologies, new theoretical frameworks and new approaches to data interpretation. This is true when exploring forms of youth political and civic participation (such as mechanisms) but also when exploring the content of such activities (such as topics or policy domains) and when considering those that participate and the associated stakeholders (such as young women). It is also necessary to widen the scope of youth political participation research to overlap into domains that traditionally lie outside of the youth field scope and to engage with relevant stakeholders in these fields. There are also areas of interest to young people which do not overlap with (mainstream) politics, such as well-being measurement (like the Gross National Happiness Index) or degrowth philosophies. Youth research should not shy away from such topics as they are of importance to young people. Youth political participation research should also dive into policy mapping and exploration, keeping track of the impacts of various youth political participation opportunities on policies, and hence supporting monitoring and evaluation efforts to increase transparency of participatory processes. Similarly, youth research should explore the perspective of policy makers: how are they prepared to work with young people? What mechanisms are there for policy makers to meaningfully engage with young citizens? What obstacles do politicians face when trying to keep in touch with the realities of young people? It is, nevertheless, equally important to build on sound foundations and to carefully distinguish between youth political participation mechanisms (active, voluntary, citizens’ activities aiming at public or political changes) and supporting mechanisms (such as educational activities, role-playing games, seminars, visits to political headquarters, etc.).

Last, there is a vital need to ensure that any new developments are still democratic developments, following the long history of democracy in Europe and beyond. While it is tempting to lobby for youth voices to be taken into account immediately and without pause, it is necessary to accept that there are democratic processes in place, and that these processes play a crucial role in ensuring that all citizens have their voices heard and their needs taken into account. In the words of Dr Elenkova, democracy is not fast, it is not convenient, but it is safe and transparent. And while democracy is and should be more than a voting right, any new innovative mechanisms and support tools need to also be designed to live up to democratic standards and values and expectations should be managed to be realistic and democratic.

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## Annex 1: Agenda of the seminar

### 10 October 2023

09.00 – Welcome and opening remarks

- Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe
- Vesna Batistic Kos, Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe
- Nicholas Kujala, European Youth Forum
  
- Overview of the findings of the research on youth political participation

Clotilde Talleu, Manager of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership

09.45 – Promoting youth political participation – a first glance at the participants’ practices

10.30 – Break

11.00 – Keynote speech: Contemporary forms of youth political participation

- Tomaž Deželan, PEYR

11.45 – Reflection and exchange: upcoming and emerging topics in youth political participation

12.30 – Lunch break

14.00 – Panel: How are the European institutions promoting youth participation?

- Babis Papaioannou, DG EAC, European Commission
- Liliya Elenkova, CDEJ, Council of Europe
- Julie Verney, European Parliament
- Anca-Ruxandra Pandea “Democracy Here, Democracy Now”, Council of Europe

15.15 – Break

15.45 – [The Virtual Role Play Game](#) – step into the shoes of a Member of the European Parliament (MEP)

16:45 – Plenary: harvesting highlights



17.00 – Close

19.00 – Reception dinner

### **11 October 2023**

09.00 – Opening of day 2

09.15 – Thematic parallel sessions

- Contemporary forms of young women's participation: priorities, challenges and ways forward

Laden Yurttagüler, researcher

- Young people's participation and digitalisation

Demet Luksulu, researcher

10.15 – Plenary – Exchange

10.30 – Break

11.00 – Future of youth political participation – participants' perspectives

11.40 – Closing panel

- Spyros Papadatos, Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe
- Hanna Kivimäki, Young European Socialists (YES)
- Guillaume Libsig, City of Strasbourg

12.15 – Final remarks

Clotilde Talleu, Manager of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership

12.30 – Departure

## Annex 2: List of participants

Name	Organisation
AYHAN Bahattin Muhammet	Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye
BARTA Ondras	Freelance Youth Researcher (PEYR)
BELLONE DE GRECIS Chiara	European Parliament
BENDER Felix	IJAB – International Youth Service of Germany (EKCYP)
BERGHOLTZ Alice	Advisory Council on Youth – Vice-Chair
CARVALHO Ana	Conseil des Jeunes Ville de Créteil
CIOBANU Marilena-Valentina	NYC Romania (CTR)
DEDEYAN Celia	Fédération Léo Lagrange
DEZELAN Tomaz	Lubjana Universitat – Researcher / PEYR
ELENKOVA Liliya	NWG youth work Bulgaria (CDEJ)
GARRIDO Arthur	ANESTAPS (Association Nationale des Etudiants en Science et Technique des Activités Physiques et Sportives)
GOJKOVIC Tamara	European Parliament
GORNY Jeanne	French Ministry of Education and Youth – Directorate of youth, non-formal education and voluntary organisations (EKCYP)
HUSSEIN Sara	Autonomous Province of Bolzano (Division of Italian Culture)
ISERNIA Gilda	School Students Union (OBESSU)

KIVIMAKI Hanna	Young European Socialists (YES)
KOSOWSKA Karolina	Eurodesk Brussels LINK
KUJALA Nicholas	European Youth Forum
LAMBE Adam	NYC Ireland (NYCI)
LIBSIG Guillaume	Ville et Eurométropole de Strasbourg
LODESERTO Anna	Researcher
LUKSULU Demet	Yeditepe University
MALDZISKI Aleksandra	DYPALL – Facilitator
MARIPUU Kadri	SALTO PI
MARTIN (GOMEZ DA COSTA) Miguel	Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth – IPDJ
MERLINO Lucia	ANCILAB
MIKHANASHVILI Nino	Georgian Ministry of Culture, Sport, and Youth – LEPL Youth Agency (EKCYP)
NUNES Rafaela	EYCA Youth Panel
PANDEA Ruxandra	Council of Europe – Education and Training
PAPADATOS Spyros	Advisory Council on Youth – Chair
PAPAIOANNOU Charalampos	European Commission DG EAC – Youth Unit – Policy Officer
REICHLING Audrey	Strasbourg Co-exister
ROTTACH Andreas	Centre for European Youth Policy

VAN BREMEN Mireille	Graphic facilitator
VERNEY Julie	European Parliament – Directorate-General for Communication
YURTTAGULER Laden	Researcher

<b>European Union Delegation to the Council of Europe</b>	
Vesna BATISTIC KOS	Head of Delegation
Franziska SCHEPPACH	Junior Professional in Delegation

<b>Council of Europe Youth Department</b>	
Tobias FLESSENKEMPER	Head of Youth Department
Clementina BARBARO	Head of Youth Policy Division
Melike OLGUN	Trainee – Youth Policy Division

<b>EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership</b>	
Clotilde TALLEU	
Tanya BASARAB	
Marietta BALAZS	
Paola ROSATELLI	

