



EUPULSE

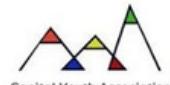
EUROPEAN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY FOR THE DEMOCRATIZATION
OF YOUNG VOTERS IN THE EU

ACTIVITY REPORT **2024**

PROJECT NUMBER: 101132175

ACTIVITY: "TRANSNATIONAL YOUTH OPEN DEBATE "EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ELECTIONS 'LESSONS POWERED BY ACTIVE YOUTH CITIZENS'"

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK



Co-funded by
the European Union

BASIC INFO & AGENDA

VENUE – Mellemfolkelige Samvirke; Freedom & Solidarity Rooms
Fælledvej 12, Indgang C, 2200 Copenhagen

Time Slot	Session: May 28th, 2024, Welcome & Introduction to the Workshop Venue: FREEDOM ROOM, Mellemfolkelige Samvirke Building
09:30 – 10.00	Arrival Coffee & Socialising
10:00 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome & Icebreaker Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the Workshop: Themes, Goals, and the Toolbox
10:30 – 12.00	<p>Guest Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing EP and EU Processes, and the upcoming election
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch Break
12.45 – 15.00	<p>Mock Debate on Core Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory Voting Lowering Voting Age Should elections be on the same day everywhere? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee Break 13:30 - 13:45
15:00 - 16:00	<p>Revisiting the Toolbox:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing a loose framework to think Revisit our icebreaker expectations exercise: How do youth want to apply their expectations to the toolbox?

Date and Time: May 27 - May 30, 2024

Location: Mellemfolkelige Samvirke, Fælledvej 12, Opgang C Copenhagen, Denmark

Organizers: Civil Connections Community Foundation

Time Slot	Session: May 29th, 2024, Going Deeper! Venue: SOLIDARITY ROOM, Mellemfolkelige Samvirke Building
09:30 – 10.00	Arrival Coffee & Socialising
10:00 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction for the Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions & Reflections about yesterday
10:30 – 12.00	<p>Voting Toolbox Workshop & Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking what we have learned yesterday and using it to creating our voting toolbox for youth
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch Break
12.45 – 15.00	<p>Dialogue & Interaction Session with EP Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakout groups to research individual parties

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants pose their questions to EP candidates Should elections be on the same day everywhere? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee Break 13:30 - 13:45
15:00 - 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions & Reflections Extra Time for Toolbox Production
16:00 - Onwards	Social Dinner (TBC): Proposed Time 18:00

Time Slot	Session: May 30th, 2024, Wrap-up & Field Trip Venue: Mellemfolkelig Samvirke Courtyard
09:30 – 10.00	Arrival Coffee & Socialising at MS Courtyard
10:00 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction for the Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflections on the Workshop Evaluations Diplomas
10:30 - 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europa Experience CPH
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch Break
12.45 – 15.00	Good-bye & Return Home

OBJECTIVES



This event for the EUPulse project incorporated the intent and **ERASMUS+** objectives of pan-European cooperation by inviting youth from across the EU to Copenhagen. Together, they shared diverse perspectives and opinions from the side of young and first-time voters.

Through a three-day workshop filled with capacity building and knowledge sharing they **a)** gained knowledge of EU elections and processes from the projects previous activities, youth will be ready to create thoughtful reflections and analysis in this activity, which they will use to prepare questions from EP candidates from each country; **b)** engaged in dynamic team-building activities, such as the mock debate, to encourage critical thinking, research skills, and the ability to consider positions they might not otherwise have done; **c)** Creation of a voting toolbox for youth, with the goal of youth-to-youth dialogue as a form of participation and involvement in EU policy modeling; **d)** Provide opportunities for evaluation and feedback on the workshop itself, allowing participants to share their thoughts and suggestions for improvement in the project implementation process.

This is also designed to develop a spirit of friendly debate in an effort to combat examples of toxic discourse across the political spectrum in media, and encourage collaboration and communication throughout the project duration. The **Transnational Open Youth Debate** embodies several of the Erasmus+ KA2 objectives by **empowering youth, strengthening cooperation across member states, and fostering innovative practices for democratic engagement.** By combining education, collaboration, and actionable outcomes like the voting toolbox, the event models the spirit of KA2 by creating sustainable, impactful learning experiences that resonate beyond the duration of the project.



PARTICIPANTS

Total number of participants: 12 (two per participant country)

Sending Organisations:

Civil Connections Community Foundation

Fifty-Fifty (INSTITOYTO KOINONIKIS KAINOTOMIAS KAI SYNOXIS)

e-Juniors

FAJUB (FEDERACAO DAS ASSOCIACOES JUVENIS DO DISTRITO DE BRAGA)

EUROPEJSKA FUNDACJA NA RZECZ WSPIERANIA ROZWOJU INNOWACYJNEGO (EFID),

• • • CAPITAL YOUTH ASSOCIATION (CYA) EV (CYA),

• • • Participants were selected by each organisation based on a targeted call towards youth interested in expanding their knowledge of EU processes with other EU

• • • youth.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

The Transnational Open Youth Debate welcomed 12 youth from 6 different EU organisations. Each morning, the workshop started with some coffee, a moment of socializing, and reflections from the day before.

DAY ONE

Workshop opened with an introduction and an icebreaker exercise of their expectations and a fun fact about themselves. This session introduced the objectives of the workshop and output that participants created together, namely the voting toolbox. A youth guest speaker representing one of the MEP candidates from the Danish party Moderaterne opened the first day with a session on how the European Parliament functions, how the elections function (in general), and touch on some of the themes of the mock debate which took place that afternoon.

In the afternoon, youth were split up into teams to debate the following topics:

- Mandatory voting - Do we offer young people ways of participating that appeal to them?
- Lowering the voting age - What is the future of the EU if young people do not vote?
- Simplification of electoral life: organizing all elections on the same day (national, local and European): Do we use the right method to communicate to young people? When we talk to young people, do we talk to the right ones? How do we listen to the EU's young people? How do we answer complaints and demands?

Following the mock debate, a loose framework for the toolbox was introduced to get participants thinking about what could be involved in such a product. A loose framework was provided by Civil Connections to stimulate brainstorming between participants.



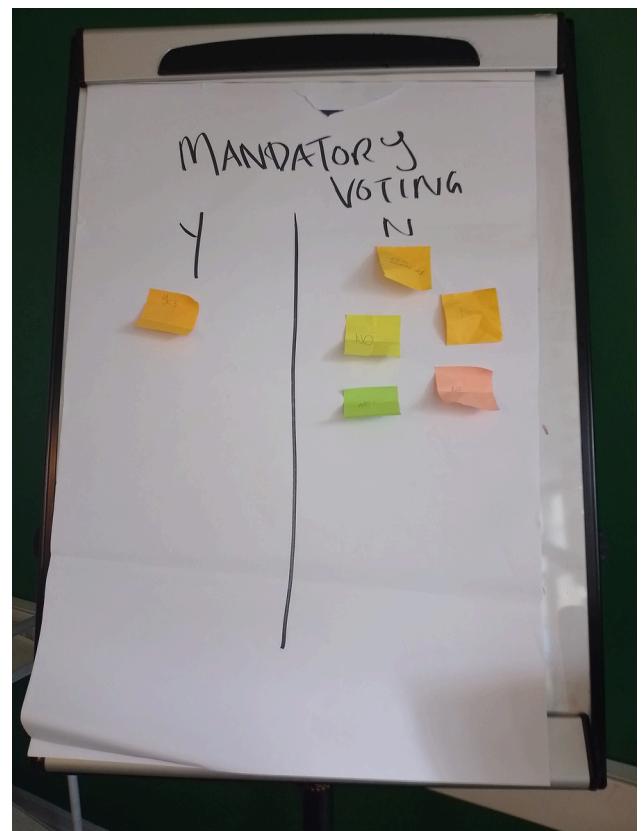
ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES CONT.

DAY TWO

After a morning of catchup and reflections of the first day, the second day of the workshop kicked off with a dedicated session that focused on the creation of the voting toolbox, based on the reflections of the first day.

The second half of the day took a focus on youth interaction with EP candidates. The youth were split into groups with the aim of working collaboratively, with each group researching 1 EP politician from each participant's country. Based on their short research session, they wrote questions and recorded a short video to send to each EP politician, with their thoughts, questions and concerns about the future of the EU and their role in voting.

The rest of the evening was dedicated to having time to continue production of the toolbox as well as a reflection period, followed by a social dinner at the People's House Absalon. In this, day two emphasized youth-led learning, intercultural exchange and building connections through fun and group oriented activities.





ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES CONT.

Civil Connections



DAY THREE

Day three encompassed an evaluation of the workshop. Participants will gave their feedback through an open dialogue session on the workshop, what worked and what could be improved, and what they think has left an impact on them in terms of what they have learned and their activities in the future of the EU. On the whole, participants were satisfied and were engaged through multimedia activities as well as the mock debate.

Rounding off the event, participants were accompanied on an EU-related field trip to the Europa Experience House in Copenhagen, as a final interactive and engaging activity before participants return home.

The **methodology** of this international workshop focussed on fostering engagement, collaboration, and active participation through its structured activities such as the mock debate and MEP video outreach. It took a blended theoretical, practical and reflective approach, with social events such as the social dinner and field trip designed to ensure the workshop was at its heart based on knowledge sharing, experiential learning and intercultural exchange. In this, the workshop was wholly aligned with key Erasmus+ principles of youth empowerment, collaborative learning, and innovation in civic engagement.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Results and Impact

This workshop was a profound success, with engaged participants resulting in a lively mock debate on the stated topics, as well as each taking the time to dedicate themselves to the tangible output of this workshop - the voting toolbox. In 24-pages, participant contributed their own piece to create a complete voting toolbox spanning:

- Knowing the European Parliament: What is the role of the European Parliament in the EU?
 - Main bodies of the European Parliament
 - Who represents the European Parliament
 - What are goals of the European Parliament
- Understanding European Parliament Elections: How do the European Parliament Elections work?
 - When do the Elections happen?
 - How do I vote?
 - What are the challenges of getting youth interested in the vote?
- Additional Resources for Youth

Another impact was the positive cross-European socialization that took place between youth participants from all 6 representing organisations. During the open feedback session, all participants stated that they felt more knowledgeable and more engaged with EU parliamentary processes, and more prepared to partake in the European Parliament Elections due to take place in June. The focus on constructive dialogue (i.e the mock debate), they noted, gave them a sense of involvement and lasting inspiration when it comes to taking initiative on learning about their MEP candidates, and how the formation of policy at the EU level impacts their daily lives.

DISSEMINATION

The results of this activity were highlighted on social media accounts of relevant partners, as well as shared by participants and other stakeholders.



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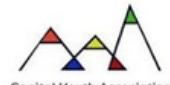
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D6.1 YOUTH VOTING TOOLBOX

MAY 29, 2024

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A manual for youth, by youth!

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This toolbox has been created by the participants of the EU-funded project EUPULSE in Copenhagen, Denmark. The EU-Pulse project aims to inspire young voters to get interested, engaged, and participating in the 2024 EP elections by taking part in capacity-building workshops oriented around debate and dialogue. By bringing youth into EP processes and into workshops oriented around collaboration, EUPulse aims to uplift the concerns of youth, and activate them in democracy in the EU.



Knowing the European Parliament

What is the role of the European Parliament in the EU?

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The European Parliament (EP) is one of the three law-making institutions in the EU, along with the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. The three main roles of the EP are :

Debating legislation

- Most laws must be voted by the European Parliament but also the Council of the EU. The EP does the first reading of the law, that comes from the European Commission, and gives it to relevant EP committees to examine it. It can amend the law too. The EP can approve the proposal, approve the proposal with amendments or reject the proposal. This is the Parliament's first reading position. The Council has to approve the law too. If the two institutions are not agreeing on the law they can send it back to each other with amendments for second readings and more if needed.

Supervising other institutions in the EU and budgets

- The EU Commission's president must be approved by the Parliament and the EP needs to make sure that the voted budget is properly used by the other institutions.

Establishing a budget for the EU with the Council of the EU

- The EP needs to approve the budget, along with the Council, that has been established by the Commission.



What the EP can't do ?

- Unlike national parliaments, the EP cannot initiate legislation which means that MEPs cannot propose new law but must vote for or against the European Commission's law propositions.
- During special legislative procedures however, the EP and the Council are not allowed to make amendments on the law. This special procedure applies in some specific cases like when the EU needs the approval of the EP but is not proposing any law, it is the case when the EU wants to sanction a member state for exemple.



Main bodies of the European Parliament:

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It schedules Parliament's timetable, sets plenary session agendas, and assigns seating in the Chamber. The Conference is composed of the President of the European Parliament and the leaders of the political groups. Additionally, a representative of the non-attached Members attends but does not have voting rights. Decisions are made by consensus or weighted vote according to the size of each political group.

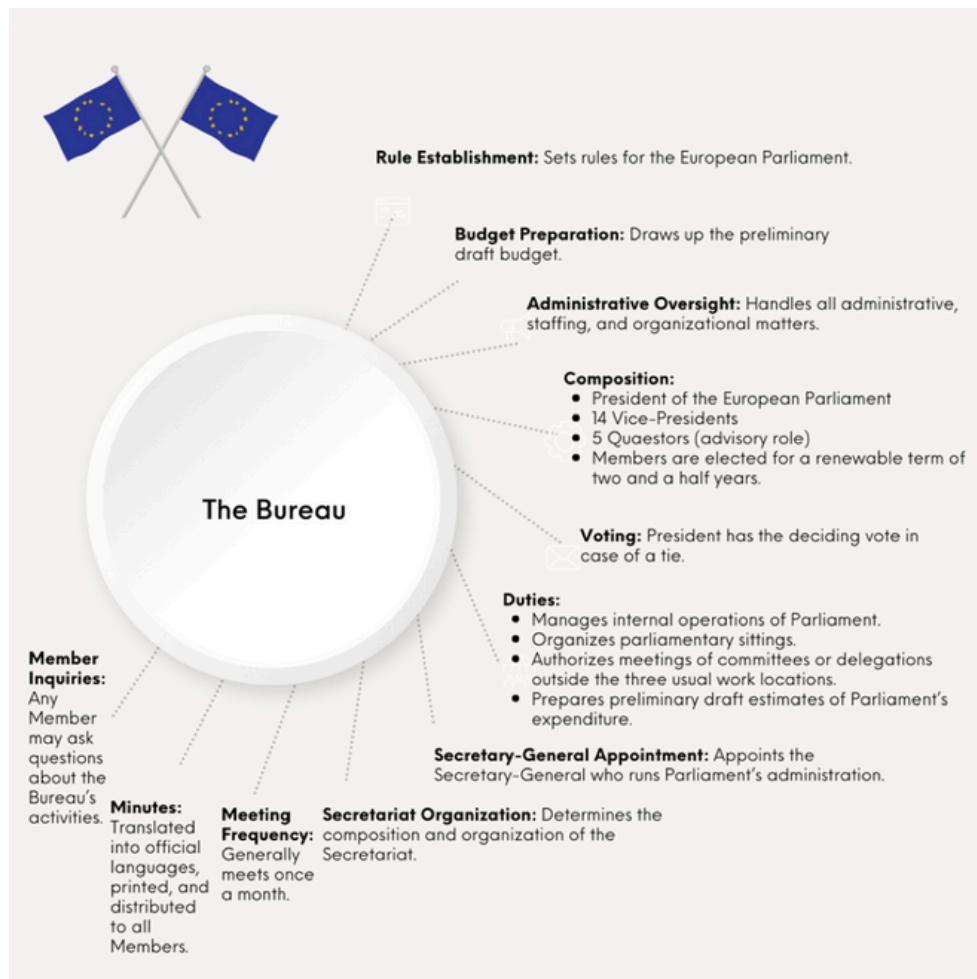
Outlined in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure, the Conference oversees the organization of parliamentary work and consultations on legislative planning and inter-institutional relations. Meetings typically occur twice a month and are not public. Minutes are translated into all official languages, printed, and distributed to Members. Any Member can inquire about the Conference's activities, allowing for exchanges of views with invited guests or obtaining preliminary information about Commission proposals outside of plenary sessions.



The Bureau

The Bureau is responsible for establishing rules within the European Parliament. It prepares the preliminary draft budget and oversees all administrative, staffing, and organizational issues.

Comprising the President of the European Parliament, 14 Vice-Presidents, and five Quaestors (who have an advisory role), the Bureau members are elected by Parliament for a renewable term of two and a half years. In case of a tie vote, the President casts the deciding vote.



The Bureau handles numerous administrative and financial responsibilities related to the internal functioning of Parliament. It makes decisions on the organization of sessions, can authorize committee or delegation meetings outside the usual work locations, and drafts preliminary budget estimates. It appoints the Secretary-General, who manages Parliament's administration, and determines the structure and organization of the Secretariat. The Bureau generally meets once a month. Minutes from Bureau meetings are translated into all official languages, printed, and distributed to all Members. Any Member can inquire about the Bureau's activities.



Additionally, the Bureau allocates funding for the political parties represented in the European Parliament.

The College of Quaestors

The College of Quaestors is a body within the European Parliament tasked with handling administrative and financial matters that directly impact Members and their working conditions.

- Composition:
 - Consists of five Quaestors.
 - Quaestors are also part of the Bureau.
- Election:
 - Quaestors are elected by the European Parliament following the election of the President and the 14 Vice-Presidents.
 - Elections are conducted by majority secret ballot across three rounds:
 - An absolute majority is required in the first two rounds.
 - A relative majority suffices in the third round.
- Term:
 - Quaestors serve a renewable term of two and a half years.
- Role in the Bureau:
 - Serve in an advisory capacity within the Bureau.
- Responsibilities:
 - Manage administrative and financial issues affecting Members, such as providing general services and equipment.
 - Can propose changes or revisions to rules established by the Bureau.
- Meetings:
 - Generally convene once a month.
- Member Interactions:
 - Any Member may inquire about the activities of the Quaestors.

Conference of Committee Chairs

- Purpose: Enhances cooperation between committees within the European Parliament.
- Composition:
 - Includes the chairs of all standing and temporary committees.
 - Elects its own chair.
- Meetings: Generally held once a month in Strasbourg during plenary sessions.
- Functions:
 - Makes recommendations to the Conference of Presidents on committee work and plenary session agendas.
 - Advises the Conference of Presidents in case of disagreements over committee responsibilities.
- Delegated Tasks: The Bureau and Conference of Presidents may delegate certain tasks to this body.

Conference of Delegation Chairs

- Responsibilities:
 - Coordinates the work of the Parliament's 45 standing delegations.
- Functions:
 - Ensures efficient and coordinated delegation work.
 - Provides a forum for discussing common issues and challenges.
- Composition:
 - Includes the chairs of 45 standing delegations and three committees (Foreign Affairs, Development, International Trade).
- Chair Election:
 - One delegation chair is elected to lead the Conference for a term of two and a half years.

Who represents the European Parliament:

The European Parliament is represented by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Key points about their role and representation:

1. Directly Elected Representatives:

MEPs are directly elected by citizens of the European Union (E.U) member states every five years.

2. Number of MEPs:

The number of MEPs allocated to each member state is roughly proportional to its population, but smaller states have slightly more MEPs per capita to ensure fair representation.

As of 2024 – 705 members.

For 2024-2029 term: 720 members. The Council's proposal was based on a report from the Parliament recommending an additional 11 seats.

For more info about seat distribution by country:

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3. Political Groups

MEPs do not sit by nationality, but by political groups. There are currently 7 political groups in the European Parliament.



Deep Dive into Political Groups:

The Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups – they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation.

7 political groups in the European Parliament today:

- EPP – Group of European People's Party
- SS&D – Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- Renew – Renew Europe Group
- ID – Identity and Democracy Group
- G/EFA – Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists
- GUE/NGL – The Left in the European Parliament
- Non-attached members

23 Members are needed to form a political group, and at least one-quarter of the Member States must be represented within the group. Members may not belong to more than one political group.

Some Members do not belong to any political group and are known as non-attached Members.

Each political group care of its own internal organisation by appointing a chair (or two cochairs in the case of some groups), a bureau and a secretariat.



What are goals of the European Parliament:

Democracy and human rights

The European Parliament has earned a reputation as a dedicated champion of people's basic rights and of democracy. Within the EU's only directly-elected institution, MEPs fight against new and old attacks on essential liberties.



Ø Protecting fundamental rights in the EU

Fundamental rights apply to all people in the EU, no matter their status or origin.

Ø Defending human rights beyond the EU

The European Parliament does not believe that people's basic rights end at the EU's borders.

Ø Supporting democracy around the globe

Sustaining democracy is a key element of this effort, spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government."

Organisation and rules

The European Parliament is a large political arena and a multi-faceted institution, involving many people and with elaborate rules of procedure.

Ø Organisation

MEPs may take on different roles and join various formal or informal groupings in Parliament (The president, Members, Political groups, Committees, Delegations and Political Bodies).

Ø How Plenary works

Plenary sessions are the culmination of Parliament's political activities, where MEPs adopt legislation and hold debates.

Ø Parliament's budget

The procedure for drawing up Parliament's budget normally starts in February. The Secretary-General comes up with a proposal, defining the priorities and resources for the following year.

Ø Multilingualism

Parliament uses all the EU's 24 official languages in its everyday activities.

Ø Secretariat

The work of MEPs is supported by an administration that provides technical and expert assistance.

Ø Ecological footprint

Parliament is committed to continuously improving its own carbon footprint and managing its resources sustainably.



In the past

The European Parliament has evolved significantly over the years, steadily accruing additional responsibilities and gaining in importance. While its predecessor the Assembly was merely there to supervise, the Parliament today is the only directly-elected EU institution, charged with representing people's interests. In addition to shaping and deciding on new legislation, it is also responsible for scrutinizing the EU institutions and promoting human rights in and outside Europe. In this section you will find out more about how the Parliament has developed over time.

Ø The Parliament and the treaties

Changes to the European treaties have led to the gradual increase of Parliament's powers

Ø The Archives of the European Parliament

Browse through historical sources, articles and studies and discover Parliament's contribution to European integration.



Understanding European Parliament Elections

How do the European Parliament Elections work?

Frequency and Timing:

- European Parliament elections are held every five years.
- They typically occur over a span of four days, from Thursday to Sunday, depending on national preferences.

Member States:

- All 27 European Union member states participate in the elections.
- Each member state holds its own election according to national laws and electoral systems.

Allocation of Seats:

- The total number of seats in the European Parliament is 705, due to rise to 720 after the June 2024 European elections.
- Seats are allocated to member states roughly in proportion to their population, but smaller states are slightly over-represented to ensure fair representation.

Voting Systems:

- Different member states use different electoral systems, but all must be based on proportional representation.
- Common methods include party-list proportional representation, single transferable vote, and mixed-member proportional representation.

Eligibility:

- All EU citizens aged 18 and over are eligible to vote, regardless of their country of residence within the EU.
- EU citizens can choose to vote either in their home country or in their country of residence if they live in another member state.

Candidates and Parties:

- Political parties and independent candidates can stand for election.
- Many national parties are part of broader European political groups (e.g., the European People's Party, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats).

Voting and Results:

- Voting procedures vary by country, including in-person voting, postal voting, and, in some cases, electronic voting.
- Results are usually announced on the Sunday of the election period, after all member states have finished voting.
- The election results will be reported live on election results website: <https://results.elections.europa.eu/>

Post-Election:

- Newly elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) form political groups based on shared ideologies.
- The Parliament then elects its President and other key positions, and it plays a crucial role in shaping EU legislation and policies.

When do the Elections happen?



European Parliament elections are a very important and crucial event in the democratic process of the European Union, occurring every five years.

1. Regular Election Cycle

- Frequency: European Parliament elections are held every five years, providing a regular opportunity for EU citizens to elect their representatives.
- Historical Context: The first direct elections to the European Parliament were held in 1979, and they have been held every five years since then.

2. Election Period

- Standard Timing: The elections are conducted over a four-day period, from Thursday to Sunday. This allows for flexibility to accommodate the different national voting traditions across the EU's 27 member states.
- Uniformity and Diversity: While the election period is standardized, individual countries have the freedom to choose the specific day within this period that aligns with their customs and logistical preferences.

3. Specific Voting Days

- Thursday: Some countries, such as the Netherlands, traditionally hold their elections on a Thursday.
- Friday: Ireland typically votes on a Friday.
- Saturday: Countries like Latvia and Malta may opt to vote on a Saturday.
- Sunday: The majority of EU countries, including Germany, France, and Italy, prefer to hold their elections on Sunday.

4. Harmonization and Flexibility

- Election Law Harmonization: While the elections are harmonized in terms of their frequency and overall period, each member state retains the flexibility to conduct the elections in a manner that best suits their national context. This includes variations in electoral systems and voting methods.

5. Announcement and Results

- Simultaneous Announcement: Although voting occurs over several days, the results are not announced until after the last polling station in the EU has closed. This ensures that all member states' results are released simultaneously, maintaining fairness and transparency.
- Provisional Results: Initial results and projections are usually made available shortly after polls close, but final official results may take a bit longer to be confirmed, depending on the efficiency of the vote counting process in each country.

6. Why This Timing Matters

- Consistency: Holding the elections every five years on a regular cycle helps maintain consistency and predictability, allowing citizens to engage regularly in the democratic process.
- Coordination Across the EU: The synchronized election period ensures that all member states participate together, reinforcing the unity and collective decision-making process of the EU.

How do I vote?



Voting in the European Parliament elections is a straightforward process, but there are some key steps and requirements you need to be aware of. Here's a simple guide to help you understand how to cast your vote.

1. Eligibility to Vote

To vote in the European Parliament elections, you generally need to:

- Be a citizen of an EU member state.
- Meet the minimum age requirement, which is usually 18 (though it can be 16 or 17 in some countries e.g. Malta: The voting age is 16. Greece: The voting age is 17. Austria: The voting age is 16.).

2. Registering to Vote

Before you can vote, you often need to register. The registration process can vary depending on your country:

- Automatic Registration: In some countries, you are automatically registered when you turn the voting age.
- Manual Registration: In others, you need to fill out a registration form, either online or at a local government office, by a certain deadline before the elections.

3. Voting Methods

Different countries offer various ways to vote. Here are the main methods:

In-Person Voting:

- On election day, go to your designated polling station. This is usually a local school, community center, or similar public building.
- Bring valid identification (such as a passport or national ID card).
- At the polling station, you'll receive a ballot paper.
- In the privacy of the voting booth, mark your choice on the ballot. This might be a specific candidate or a party list, depending on the electoral system in your country.
- Fold your ballot and place it in the ballot box.

Postal Voting:

- Some countries allow you to vote by mail if you apply for a postal ballot before the election.
- You'll receive the ballot papers and instructions by post.
- Complete the ballot as instructed, and return it by mail before the deadline.

Proxy Voting:

- If you can't vote in person, you might be able to appoint someone else (a proxy) to vote on your behalf.
- You'll need to apply for a proxy vote and provide the necessary details of your proxy.
- The proxy then votes at your designated polling station.

Electronic Voting:

- A few countries provide electronic voting systems, either at polling stations or online.

Voting in an embassy/consulate :

- In most countries in the EU, voting from overseas is permitted at an embassy or consulate. To be able to cast a ballot from overseas via mail or in person at an embassy or consulate, certain Member States demand that voters register in advance with their home electoral authorities. Check your country's voting laws if you are casting a ballot from overseas.



4. Casting Your Vote

Here's a step-by-step overview of the in-person voting process:

- Arrive at Your Polling Station: Locate your designated polling station, which should be listed on your voter registration card or in an official notice.
- Check-In: Present your ID to the election officials. They will check your name against the voter list.
- Receive Your Ballot: The election officials will give you a ballot paper.
- Mark Your Ballot: Go to a private voting booth and mark your ballot. You might be asked to put an X next to your chosen candidate or party.
- Submit Your Ballot: Fold your ballot paper and place it in the ballot box.
- Confirm: You might receive a confirmation slip or a stamp indicating that you have voted.

5. Accessibility and Assistance

If you have any special needs:

- Polling stations are generally equipped to accommodate people with disabilities.
- You can ask for assistance from the election officials if needed.

Voting in the European Parliament elections is your chance to have a say in the decisions that affect Europe. By following these steps, you can ensure your voice is heard.

Why is voting so important for young people?

- Long-term Impact: Decisions made by the European Parliament affect future generations. By voting, young people can influence policies that will shape their future
 - Voting can help elect representatives who prioritize sustainable practices, leading to a healthier planet for future generations
- Representation of Interests: Young people have unique perspectives and needs, including education, employment, climate change, and digital rights. Voting ensures their interests are represented in policymaking
 - The European Youth Forum advocates for youth issues within the EU, influencing policies that address the specific needs of young people
- Strengthening Democracy: Voting is a fundamental democratic right. When young people vote, they contribute to a vibrant, representative democracy
 - For example, the European Youth Event (EYE) organized by the European Parliament encourages young people to engage in democratic processes, ensuring their voices contribute to shaping EU policies
- Influencing Change: Young voters can drive political agendas and encourage politicians to address issues important to them
 - The European Youth Dialogue allows young people to directly influence EU youth policies, demonstrating how their participation can lead to tangible changes in areas like education, employment, and climate action
- Empowerment: Participating in elections empowers young people to feel more connected to their communities and more responsible for the future
 - For example, initiatives like the European Solidarity Corps allow young people to engage in community projects across Europe, fostering a sense of active citizenship and empowerment by directly contributing to societal improvements
 - Voting is particularly important for young people in countries such as Greece, Slovakia, or Portugal due to several factors



- High Youth Unemployment: Greece has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Europe. As of early 2024, it is around 30%
- Economic Challenges: The Greek economy has faced significant challenges over the past decade. Young people, in particular, have been affected by these economic difficulties
- Political Disengagement: There is a noticeable trend of political disengagement among youth and voter turnout is usually lower among youth. In the 2019 national elections, voter turnout among young people in Greece aged 18-24 was significantly lower than the national average. That is the case for all elections in Denmark as well.

What are the challenges of getting youth interested in the vote?

- Political Disillusionment: Some young voters might feel disillusioned with politics, believing that their vote won't make a difference
- Low youth turnout in the 2014 European elections led to increased efforts by the EU to engage young voters, such as the "This Time I'm Voting" campaign, aimed at demonstrating the impact of each vote in shaping EU policies and decisions
- Lack of Awareness: Many young people may not fully understand how the European Parliament functions or how its decisions impact their lives
- The European Parliament's decision to abolish roaming charges across the EU directly benefits young people who travel or study abroad, highlighting the tangible impacts of its decisions on their daily lives
- Complexity of Issues: The issues and policies debated at the European level can seem complex and distant from everyday concerns
- The EU has launched initiatives like the European Youth Portal, which provides clear and accessible information on EU policies, opportunities, and rights, helping young people understand and engage with European issues
- Lack of Engagement: Political campaigns and parties sometimes fail to effectively engage with young people or address their specific concerns. Especially since politicians are often a different age group than youth, they do not represent the interests of young people. Such political representation cannot fully understand the concerns of youth.
- The European Parliament has supported the development of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which includes specific actions to enhance youth participation in democratic life and ensure that young people's voices are heard and considered in policy-making processes
- Barriers to Access: Practical barriers, such as registration processes, lack of information on how to vote, and living abroad, can discourage participation
- The EU has addressed these issues by launching the "Your Vote Matters" campaign, which provides clear information on voting procedures, deadlines, and how to vote from abroad, making it easier for young people to participate in European elections
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How can young people get involved in voting?

- Use of Social Media: Social media campaigns can reach young people where they are most active, providing information and motivating them to vote
 - As already mentioned, during the 2019 European elections, the European Parliament launched the "This Time I'm Voting" campaign, which used Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to share engaging content and remind young people to vote
- Education and Awareness: Schools, universities, and youth organizations can provide information about the European Parliament and the importance of voting
 - Best practices: Educational institutions can integrate civic education into their curricula. Schools in Germany often include lessons on the European Union and its institutions, helping students understand the significance of their vote
- Peer Influence: Encouraging discussions among peers can help spread awareness and enthusiasm about voting
 - Best practices: In Denmark, the "Democracy Festivals" such as Folkemødet bring together citizens, including many young people, to engage in open discussions and debates with politicians, fostering a culture of political engagement and peer influence that motivates young people to participate in elections.
- Youth Engagement Initiatives: Joining or supporting youth organizations that focus on political engagement can provide a sense of community and shared purpose
 - Best practices: In Finland, the "Nuorten Ääni" (Youth Voice) initiative allows young people to directly participate in municipal decision-making processes, giving them a platform to voice their opinions on local issues and policies, thereby fostering greater political involvement and empowerment
- Simplifying the Process: Providing clear, accessible information on how to register and vote, including deadlines and documentation required, can remove practical barriers
 - Best practices: Estonia has implemented a highly successful e-voting system, allowing citizens to vote online easily and securely, which has significantly increased voter turnout among young people by making the voting process more convenient
- Political Participation Beyond Voting: Encouraging young people to attend town hall meetings, participate in youth councils, or engage in political campaigns can foster a deeper sense of involvement
 - The EU supports the European Youth Parliament (EYP), where young people from across Europe come together to discuss political issues, simulate parliamentary processes, and propose solutions, thereby actively engaging in the political landscape beyond just voting

Additional Resources:

<https://eyp.org/> The European Youth Parliament provides a platform for young people across Europe to engage in political debate, develop solutions to pressing issues, and influence policymakers at the EU level.



<https://folkemoedet.dk/> Folkemødet at Bornholm is an annual democracy festival in Denmark where citizens, including many young people, engage in open discussions and debates with politicians to foster political engagement.

https://youth.europa.eu/home_en The European Youth Portal provides information on opportunities for young people across Europe, including education, volunteering, and employment.

<https://european>youthstrategy.eu/> The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 aims to empower young people and encourage their active participation in society and decision-making processes.

https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity_en The European Solidarity Corps offers young people opportunities to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities and people around Europe.

https://youth.europa.eu/eu-youth-dialogue_en The European Youth Dialogue facilitates discussions between young people and policymakers to ensure youth perspectives are included in EU decision-making.

<https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en> The European Youth Event gathers thousands of young people at the European Parliament to discuss and propose ideas for the future of Europe.

<https://www.youthforum.org/> The European Youth Forum represents the interests of young people across Europe, advocating for their rights and participation in policymaking.

<https://www.lwv.org/blog/why-we-need-young-voters>

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/yt/yt10/youth-as-peacemakers/default>

<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/youth-are-interested-political-action-lack-support-and-opportunities>

https://youth.europa.eu/nnfe/how-can-we-get-young-people-more-voice-democratic-process_en

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/05/20/first-time-eu-voters-in-athens-speak-on-the-issues-that-matter-to-them>

https://www.epc.eu/content/Youth_Compendium_v6.pdf

<https://elections.europa.eu/en/>

Additional Resources:

<https://elections.europa.eu/en/how-elections-work>

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/754634/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)754634_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/754634/EPRS_BRI(2023)754634_EN.pdf) : Youth Participation in European Elections

<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3181> : Youth and Democracy survey for every EU country (15-30 years old) https://youth.europa.eu/get-involved/democratic-participation/eu-elections-different-ways-of-voting-across-europe_en : EU Elections: different ways of voting across Europe.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/754620/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)754620_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/754620/EPRS_ATA(2023)754620_EN.pdf): European elections: National rules

<https://elections.europa.eu/en/>: European elections 6-9 June 2024 -> How to vote Further information about the budget procedure and the involvement of the EP in it :

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/powers-and-procedures/budgetary-powers>
More information about the European Parliament on its website

: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en> Here you can find information about the Main bodies of the European Parliament:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/political-bodies>



EUPULSE

EUROPEAN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGY FOR THE DEMOCRATIZATION
OF YOUNG VOTERS IN THE EU

D6.1 YOUTH VOTING TOOLBOX

PROJECT NUMBER: 101132175



Co-funded by
the European Union



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