

youth parliament



Call for action
If we were you...



Young people are under-represented in policy processes, while being disproportionately affected by many social problems such as ongoing climate change, the lack of access to quality education and healthcare, or being stuck with education systems which do not match the needs of today's world.

The European Parliament takes the voices of young people seriously and values their input as engaged citizens. It therefore launched the biggest pan-European platform for debate and exchange between young people and European leaders. In June 2018, the European Youth Event brought together more than 8 500 young Europeans in the European Parliament in Strasbourg to debate their perspectives on the future of Europe. 100 of the proposed ideas were collected in the official EYE report which was handed over to the MEPs. Since October, hearings between idea givers and MEPs from the relevant committees have taken place in the EP to further discuss some of the strongest ideas.

Against the background of ongoing citizens' consultations, Parliament also launched an online and local consultation during one month with 800 young people who would later take part in the Youth Parliament. The youth aged 16-30 were asked to vote online for the ten ideas they considered most important from the EYE report and worked at a local level on solutions to the issues affecting young Europeans. These ideas were developed in depth on 19 November when they gathered in the plenary chamber of the European Parliament in Brussels.

We acknowledge that the European Parliament is providing spaces for young people to discuss the issues they want to see addressed at a European level. But we are far from being agenda setters. Now, we are calling on EU leaders in the Member States and European Institutions to act!

The following three ideas are the issues that received the most votes in the Youth Parliament.

If we were you...

we would push
for a plastic free
environment and
combat climate
change

The EU Directive on single-use plastics is a start; let's do more:

- ▶ **Let's fund research into solutions;** research plastic free approaches, recycling technology, green energy, biofuels and sustainability. This research could be funded by introducing fines on environmental offenders.
- ▶ **Let's introduce product labelling standards** to allow consumers an easy understanding of the environmental impact of their choices as well as their carbon footprint.
- ▶ **Let's develop comprehensive education** starting with the youngest on the environmental impact of the decisions we make on local, national and international level.
- ▶ **Let's provide incentives for green businesses** through grants and enforce punitive action against harmful practices through fines. This would ensure that it is both economical and ethical to be green.

We need to change our approaches, or the impact will be irreversible. We care about our planet and our future and want the EU to lead by example toward a plastic-free world.

If we were you...

we would make
quality healthcare
and education
accessible to
everyone

Access to high quality healthcare and education is a right of all children. The EU needs to play an active role, not only in ensuring that basic standards are respected in all Member States, but also in reducing inequalities among different social groups and countries by introducing a mandatory minimum of GDP expenditure in these areas.

- ▶ **Let's introduce an EU wide set of regulations into baseline standards** of hospital operations and care provision, access to local GPs and primary care, quality training and education, fair pay, and quality working conditions for medical professionals.
- ▶ **Let's make education compulsory for the first ten grades** all over the European Union. Truancy will be fined.
- ▶ **Let's address insufficient access to both education and healthcare for migrant and minority groups** and explore solutions at EU level. Someone's background, citizenship or residence should play no role in their access to these essential services around the EU.
- ▶ **Let's ensure free transportation for all children both to attend school and to access healthcare.** This could be funded with additional taxes on products harmful to health such as cigarettes.

Dialogue between civil society organisations and policy makers at all levels can help us understand what is happening in the communities across Europe and respond. The EU has an obligation to safeguard access to quality education and training both formal and non-formal; these services need to cater for individual abilities, backgrounds and needs, and break down cultural and financial barriers.

If we were you...

we would provide
young people with
the life skills to
thrive in society

The world has moved on. Rote learning and traditional educational approaches don't provide young people with the skills they need for everyday life.

- ▶ **Let's help young people to develop the abilities that prepare them for adulthood**, by introducing life skills subjects in education systems across the EU. We should do this according to a "learning by doing" approach.
- ▶ **Let's build competences in practical areas**, from home and economical skills, to developing critical thinking, debate and negotiation skills as well as problem solving and decision-making abilities. Differentiate this offer based on the educational grades, respectful of the various age requirements and priorities: home and money management skills for the youngest pupils, civic education for secondary school students and soft skills throughout the entire school path.
- ▶ **Let's set up a life skills framework that can adapt to the different school systems** while homogenising educational standards around the EU.

The EU should bind Member States to mainstream these skills into current educational curricula as well as recognise the potential of youth organisations and non formal education to help young people develop as individuals, professionals and citizens.



Call for action

Young people have the greatest stake in the future and must continue to be engaged in opportunities to help shape it.

For young people climate change is a matter of generational injustice, while access to quality healthcare and reformed education are human rights which must be realised.

Progress will be made by partnership: for this the Member States and European Institutions must fill their crucial roles. We cannot wait any longer. We need to continue building solutions and creating a more equitable society, from grassroots cultural movements to a European policy reform.

This is a call from young people for a perspective change of the Member States and European Institutions to take responsibility for our environment, our health and our education.

But there was more...

The Youth Parliament's ideas for a better Europe

The following ideas may have received fewer votes in the Youth Parliament's closing session - and it was a very tight race - but they still matter. After all, these were the ideas that young people selected as their priorities from the 100 ideas in the official EYE report. We are proud to present seven more ideas that were discussed and developed at the Youth Parliament with the aim of presenting them to the political leaders of the Member States and European Institutions.

With these additional proposals, EU leaders and institutions are now faced with an opportunity to embrace these priorities and concerns as their own.

Let's empower young people to play an active role in shaping Europe!

If we were you... we would make more use of modern technology for culture and heritage

The use of new technologies can be a fruitful strategy to increase young people's interest in all cultural happenings around the EU.

- ▶ Let's update the technological systems in museums and make them more interactive and entertaining. This includes introducing museums experiences that involve other senses besides sight and the involvement of artists, psychologists, educators and bloggers.
- ▶ Let's establish a minimum requirement of technological standards for cities in their bid for the title of "European Capital of Culture".

This would also serve the purpose of uniting the European Union in spirit, which is much needed in times of Brexit and nationalist trends.

If we were you... we would establish an annual Q&A with EU leaders

The EU should establish better communications channels with young people on political matters. We would promote better knowledge of the EU among youth and increase their participation in the political process.

- ▶ Let's establish a digital channel or platform allowing young people to connect and share ideas with EU politicians. The livestreams and chats on social media would maximize the impact.
- ▶ Let's also bring this to the local level with dialogues in schools, where invited MEPs and other political leaders would participate in talks and debates. Young people could choose the topics that they want to discuss during these meetings.
- ▶ Let's promote general knowledge of the EU by getting influencers and VIPs involved.

The implementation and moderation of these activities could be managed by youth organisations and NGOs.

If we were you... we would use social media to promote the European elections

The Internet and social media in particular should be used as a means to address young people's lack of interest in the EU and their abstention from the elections.

- ▶ Let's show young people why they should vote! Working more closely with partner organisations to create engaging content and organic share, such as #thistimeimvoting, could make a difference.
- ▶ Let's make voting cool and digital: influencers and celebrities could offer a neutral message through an interactive use of social media to educate young people about voting by explaining what, when, where, how, and why, what's at stake.

Connecting and interacting with young people on the channels they use the most is likely to be the best way to inform and engage them.

If we were you...
we would provide free anti-virus software to everyone
and improve digital literacy

The time has come to make online protection a human right.

- ▶ Let's make anti-viral software accessible to all by making it more affordable. While the European Institutions cannot develop public software themselves, they should improve access to free solutions that are already available on the market by updating the legal definition of what basic internet security means and by imposing minimum operational standard security levels in all hardware and software on sale in Europe.
- ▶ Let's introduce education at school from an early age on how to be tech-literate and offer free digital literacy workshops in the communities across generations to strengthen individual, regional, national and European online defence.

The basic level of security starts with the user, which is why we acutely need computer literacy skills. People need to be safe on the Internet, just like in everyday life.

If we were you...
we would develop smart cities and make public transport more accessible

By now, 70% of the European citizens live in big cities: this implicates increasing levels of pollution and inequalities.

- ▶ Let's establish a regulatory framework featuring green standards to be adopted in all urban areas around Europe, specifically aimed at reducing emissions and discouraging the use of cars.
- ▶ Let's make public transport more affordable to everyone and free for more people with small budgets.
- ▶ Let's increase investment in research on more environment-friendly public transport solutions, as well as in technologies that can help in modernising public transport systems and interconnectedness.

We share this responsibility, from governments to city councils to individual citizens. Everyone can do something to make a difference.

If we were you... we would provide better civic education and enable more young people to stand in elections

Trust and participation in EU politics need to be built among young people.

- ▶ Let's introduce EU-wide political education in schools on how democracy works and about the different political models. The school schedule should devote at least 1 hour per week to this in every classroom.
- ▶ Let's teach young people from an early age how to vote nationally and at the European elections and about the benefits that a system with different political parties offers.
- ▶ Let's make young voters aware of their duties and rights. Education is a precondition for future young candidates and they should always be encouraged to get active, even besides simply elections, and become activists in their communities.

This can be done with the help of role models like young politicians who have already stood in elections. They should share their experiences and inspire others to be involved.

If we were you... we would make rural areas more attractive for young people

Life does not just happen in the city! We want to ensure that rural areas are also a source of economic and financial growth. To do this, we need to begin by making them appealing to youngsters and promote generational turnover.

- ▶ Let's invest in infrastructure in rural areas, improve the connections between the city and the countryside and build vibrant educational institutions, making less urbanised regions a place where people want to both work and live.
- ▶ Let's financially incentivise youth companies based in rural areas, creating stable jobs and a healthy environment for sustainable business.
- ▶ Let's improve the digital infrastructure in these regions and ensure that everyone, no matter where they live, has access to high-speed internet.

This way we would address young people's struggle of rising costs of living in the cities, as well as the problem of aging population and unequal generational representation in the rural areas.



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