

Invitation

“Hear my voice!” Making youth participation powerful

European Conference
6–8 October 2014 in Brussels,
Maison Notre Dame du Chant d’Oiseau



Background

In a number of countries, the European Parliament election results revealed an increase in support for nationalist, anti-European and xenophobic parties – some of which now have a presence in the European Parliament. There appears to be a sense of dissatisfaction with what is considered the “European Project” – as well as with the functioning of liberal democracy. This produces a dangerous amalgam that is gaining force in almost every country across Europe. It is therefore time to redefine the participation of young people in a democratic Europe – previously considered a mere nice-to-have option for youth

NGOs and interested youth workers. Learning to participate in practical and effective ways in daily life, and experiencing that one’s opinions and activities can actually shape the political dialogue with those in power, may be a highly effective way to prevent young people from becoming too discouraged and apathetic to make their voices heard in a democratic society. That said, political decision-makers, too, have to learn to open to an early dialogue about political decisions that involves target groups of all ages on all levels. Is that a naïve vision? Or is it the state of the art of good governance?

Objectives

This European conference will discuss the outcomes of two processes: one, the recommendations of the Reflection Group on youth participation organized by the Youth Partnership of the Council of Europe and the European Union and two, the recommendations of the multilateral peer learning project “Participation of young people in the democratic Europe”, a collaborative effort between five partner countries (Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Poland and the United Kingdom) over the past two years.

The conference will compile these outcomes into a set of shared recommendations on youth participation to be handed over to stakeholders such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe, members of the European Parliament, the Council of the Regions and others to give youth participation a major boost for the next few years. The event will therefore assume the character of an intensive discussion and working seminar for international experts for youth participation.

Target group

50 youth policymakers, youth workers, youth leaders, experts in the field of youth participation and civic education are invited to the conference.

Another approx. 60 representatives of European institutions, NGOs, regional representations etc. will be present during the presentation of the recommendations on 7 October.

DAY 1

2:00 pm

Welcome by a representative of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Germany)

Welcome & introduction to the conference by the coordinators of the multilateral cooperation project (MCP) "Participation of young people in the democratic Europe" and the Reflection Group on youth participation

Participants' introductions
Inspirational keynote speech:

Youth Participation for a Democratic Europe.

Speaker: **Manfred Zentner**, Danube University Krems (Austria)

3:30 pm // Coffee break

4:00 pm

Analytical workshops (based on the results of the Reflection Group)

- I. *What do we mean by participation?*
- II. *Why participate?*
- III. *How is participation learned?*

6:30 pm

- _ Dinner
- _ Free time

DAY 2

9:00 am

Expert workshops

- _ Each workshop will discuss the recommendations concerning one key issue identified by the multilateral cooperation project and the Reflection Group
- _ Participants are invited to finalise the policy recommendations prepared in advance by an editorial group
- _ Each workshop has a rapporteur who will collate all results

12:30 pm // Lunch break

2:00 pm

Expert workshops (continued)

Each workshop will discuss how to implement the recommendations in the respective fields, what this requires, and to whom the recommendations are addressed. They will also collect practical examples that have already taken steps in the right direction to implement these recommendations.

Meanwhile: meeting between rapporteurs; editing of a comprehensive version of the recommendations based on the morning's workshop results; preparation of the presentation of these recommendations during the evening session

4:30 pm

Presentation & finalisation of the recommendations by the plenary

5:15 pm

Departure from the venue; transfer to venue of the public presentation in Brussels city centre

6:30 pm

Public presentation: "*Making youth participation powerful*" – Meeting with representatives of the European Parliament, European Commission, Council of Europe, Council of the Regions, European Youth Forum and others to discuss and hand over the recommendations

Buffet & drinks, informal gathering

DAY 3

9:00 am

Feedback on day 2

- _ Next steps & action plan: What can we do to push things further? How can we boost youth participation in the next few years? How can participants cooperate to support youth participation further on the European and international level?
- _ Evaluation

Noon

Official closing of the seminar as the last step in the multilateral cooperation project

12:30 pm

Lunch & departure

Registration and fees

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Please apply online by Monday, 15 September 2014 via
➤ www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/4403/
Accommodation, food and the participation fee for the conference will be covered by JUGEND für Europa.

Participants must cover their own travelling expenses unless their National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth in Action can do so on their behalf. Please contact your National Agency for further information.

The conference will be held in English.

Venue

Maison ND du Chant d'Oiseau, Avenue des Franciscains 3 A,
B-1150 Bruxelles
Directions to the venue:
➤ <http://www.chant-oiseau.be/infos.html> (in French)

Contact

Contact

Please address any questions regarding the conference to:
Jochen Butt-Pośnik
JUGEND für Europa – Service and Transfer Agency EU Youth
Strategy
Phone +49 228 9506 – 303, e-mail: ➤ butt-posnik@jfemail.de

Organizers

JUGEND für Europa, the German National Agency for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme in cooperation with SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Centre and Bureau International Jeunesse (BIJ) in Belgium / French speaking community

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