

Please, detail the methods you have used and activities you have organised (conference, debate, face-to-face meeting etc...) to collect feedback and input from the decision-makers and from other actors (young people, experts...):

EFIL launched a consultation via our newsletter, with a qualitative and quantitative element. Firstly we asked for a ranking of how much they agreed with the recommendation. Secondly, we asked for elaboration and comments on the content, relevance, and potential effectiveness. The survey and the recommendations were also discussed during our recent training on advocacy ("Exchange Voices") among our Pool of Representatives and Advocacy liaisons.

EFIL supported the organising of the Structured Dialogue roundtable and attended with two delegates to discuss the recommendations and the role of INGYOs.

Preparation with your minister for the High Level Policy Debate:

Please, explain how you have ensured that your National Minister was well informed and briefed about the outcomes of the EUYC, in view of the High Level Policy Debate

N/A

Creating a Culture of Participation At School

Feedback/input collected

1)

Member States should introduce and support a framework in educational institutions, such as students councils or other student initiatives that enable and ensure the engagement of students to take part in the decision-making of the school system. Other forms of civic engagements such as volunteering should also be recognised by the educational institutions in order to stimulate a culture of participation.

95% of those asked completely or slightly agreed with this recommendation, citing that volunteerism is the key, and an important part of non formal education and informal learning which is relevant for any kind of future profession, political participation and youth inclusion. It was suggested to not only have volunteerism recognised by the institutions, but also encourage it. If such civic engagements are encouraged and recognised in educational institutions it can stimulate a culture of participation.

The relevance of the recommendation was also noted that students who are active in student parliaments and councils at an early age often remain active citizens in their later professional life and are eager to participate in policy making process. If there was formal support, the number of active students/active citizens, would rise.

Concrete example of how this could be implemented if by liaising school student councils with the local authorities, and running a bridging project where the elected students get to make decisions within the youth and education sector of the local government.

In order for the recommendation to be effective, it could include the need for supporting schools in this effort.

2)

Member States should further develop or include civic education in the curricula at all levels of formal education, bringing a local, national and European perspective. Formal education providers must include non-formal learning methodologies to encourage critical thinking and enable young people from all backgrounds to develop attitudes and values to participate actively in the society. CULT Committee is invited to advance the civic education discussion in the European Parliament.

100% of those asked, completely or slightly agreed with this recommendation, and encouraged cooperation with NGOs in order to facilitate the use of non-formal learning methodologies. Civic education together with the intercultural dialogue awareness should be included in the curricula at all levels of formal education, as this is a way to reach young people who are not normally interested in these topics. Non-formal education contributes to personal development and by including the non-formal learning methodologies in formal education we enrich the learners with a different perspectives on topics and create motivation. There should also be support for

students' engagement and their initiatives. This point was echoed during the Structured Dialogue Roundtable by delegates from the Commission.

Involving young people in political decision-making

Feedback/input collected

1)

In order to further involve young people in democratic life, Member States and local authorities are invited to implement pilot programmes starting at local level, where voting age is lowered to 16, accompanied by the adequate preparation, including quality civic education.

42% of those asked agreed with this recommendation, whereas 23% either completely or slightly disagreed. The feedback was that it should not be a universal policy for all European countries to lower the voting age for the reason that there is a risk that a voting decision at 16 will only mimic that of the parents' vote, and that young people have not been adequately prepared for at this age. However, the idea of a pilot programme to test this was welcome, but with the provision that it does not only happen in capital cities, and that the programmes should be supported by quality civic education, in order for young people to become aware of democratic life at local level. The civic and political education in schools will also have more relevance, if voting age is lowered. Moreover, intercultural and global education experiences, and support for student initiatives are important make available for young people at secondary school level, so they are prepared for taking their stand on bigger political questions.

2)

By implementing transparent, sustainable and collaborative structures and providing financial support, authorities on the local, regional and national levels should ensure full participation of youth NGOs in decision making processes of the policies that affect young people

In order to democratise and engage the entire civil society, it is necessary to include the youth NGOs into the process, as it is not a real democratic process if those whom you are affecting are not part of the process. Young people constitute majority of the population in many countries and they constitute a majority of the entire world population. NGOs should be invited and let become equal partners of decision makers in every structure. However, it is important to expect quality work from NGOs and financial support should not be unconditional.

Moreover, we need to engage schools with more help from EU institutions and create a link between the European, national and the local level by liaising with organisations that are active on all those levels.

Enhancing policy makers' engagement and commitment with young people

Feedback/input collected

1)

European Commission and Member States should put in place a framework to engage policy makers, providing them with all the necessary tools to involve young people and youth organizations in developing, implementing and evaluating the policies that affect them through shared decision-making

Consider reviewing the phrasing of the recommendation, as it is difficult to read and understand.

The feedback showed split opinions over this recommendation: Firstly, there was a concern that it is not stated clearly enough what is the extent of the involvement of young people and organizations in policy making process, therefore the recommendation gives space for misinterpretation. Secondly, what would this mean for the potential decisions made concerning youth: would young people no longer be able to challenge the decisions taken if they were consulted? However, there is agreement that it's important to involve young people, as it would make them feel more included and heard, and could provide positive outcomes.

2)

Policy makers on all levels, should continuously perform an open political culture of communication using multiple youth targeted methods in order to increase transparency and accountability of the policymaking process

Widespread agreement with this recommendation and feedback tells us that young people would be motivated to gain an interest in politics, if there was a transparent and accountable communication system in place, holding policy makers accountable and clearly responsible to their decisions which affect young people. Moreover, there should be space for two-way channels of participation.

Strengthening the role of youth work for political empowerment of all young people

Feedback/input collected

1)

The crucial role of youth work for fostering a political participation which is based on the values of diversity, human rights, democracy and on critical thinking, should be strengthened and socially and politically recognized by the European Commission and Member States. Therefore, youth work should be provided with the necessary resources, support structures and formal recognition

To reach a greater political participation of youth, youth NGOs should be provided with the necessary resources, support structures and formal recognition for conducting youth work activities.

2)

EU institutions and Member States are encouraged to put up cross-sectoral initiatives and long-term partnerships at all levels with youth workers and non-governmental organizations, with the aim of transferring knowledge and developing political participation competencies of all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

Sharing the knowledge with all of the interconnected stakeholders is the basic principle of transparency. The principle is often idealistic, but a cross-sectoral initiative and perhaps a institutional framework can help solve this problem. And while the idea of long-term partnerships is positive, it should aim to include quality non-governmental organisations, in order to have the most impact and reach those with fewer opportunities. This measure should also be accompanied with additional resources and monitoring tools.

Developing youth friendly tools for political participation

Feedback/input collected

1)

To ensure access of young people to information and opportunities to experience online tools for political participation, Member States should ensure that trainings on the existence of such tools are provided for teachers and other professionals working with young people.

Consider reviewing the phrasing of the recommendation.

It was expressed that dealing with generation focused media is a good solution, but that there is a danger. In fact, using online tools as the only means of reaching young people could be seen as a successful inclusive policy for political participation - but not all young people have the same access to new media and opportunities therefore there should be alternatives. It is very important to include the training element for the teachers and other professionals working with young people, as they are meant to trigger their interest in politics.

2)

Private and public organisations should involve young people in the development, implementation and monitoring of online tools for youth political participation., To ensure recognition of young people's participation and sustain their involvement in political processes, online tools should be complemented by offline methods and have a follow-up phase in which decision-makers reflect on how young people's contributions were taken into account

47% completely agreed with this recommendation, the rest citing that it is more important to have (online) tools for youth political participation in the first place, and having them developed/implemented/monitored by young people could be the next step. Another concern raised was the feasibility of follow-up and how it is measured, and even scepticism towards the idea of including private organisations in this.

Developing local and direct democracy

Feedback/input collected

1)

Member States and youth organisations should acknowledge and make better use of alternative forms of young people's political engagement (e.g. arts, sports) aiming to enrich the debate and decision-making processes.

Alternative forms of engagement is very valuable and create the best way to reach young people. In addition to enriching the debate, it should also focus on fostering active citizenship and intercultural learning.

2)

Member States, local or regional authorities should encourage the establishment and the strengthening of local and regional youth councils or other equivalent youth platforms that should be open, inclusive and sustainable in order to enable young people from all backgrounds to participate and be involved in decision-making processes in accordance with the Revised European Charter on the Participation of young people in local and regional life (Congress of Local & Regional Authorities, Council of Europe).

It is important to emphasise the inclusive element within this strategy, and the fact that the process should be guided and supported. This process should also be decentralised, so young people can have more direct access and support for their political participation.

Increasing synergies and cooperation between different actors

Feedback/input collected

1)

In order to involve young people in political processes and to enable easy and sustainable collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, the EU institutions and Member States should develop or improve coordinated cross-sectoral communication at all levels.

There was general agreement with this recommendation, as communication supported by the EU institutions can only bring more power to the young people when trying to act in national levels. It was emphasised that things need to be debated with young people seeing them as equals.

2)

We call on the European Commission to set the ground for a progressive implementation of a youth impact assessment of all EU policies. This should involve all relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of policies affecting young people's lives, thus increasing the attractiveness of political participation for young people

If this is implemented in a serious way, it could potentially have a great effectiveness. If the Commission takes an important step into better communicating, young people will have more positive incentives to participate at the decision making.

However it was noted that an impact assessment done by youth might not necessarily increase participation for young people.