



European
Commission



IT'S ABOUT THE
**FUTURE
OF EUROPE**
Let's talk

TOMORROW IS HERE

A report on
YOUNG CITIZENS' DIALOGUE
LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF
EUROPE TOGETHER!

Sibiu, Romania - 8 May 2019

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JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER,
President of the European Commission

'We have to focus on climate change. As a Commission we did it. But we have to improve our efforts. Climate change is the major problem of the future. Europe has to be the place where climate change is tackled in the best way possible.'



KLAUS IOHANNIS, President of Romania

'We have to link the educational system to the labour market. We have to take care of the young generation. The young generation is the future of a society.'



MARIANNE THYSSEN,
Commissioner for Employment,
Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

'To prosper in the digital revolution what we need most of all are skills, skills, skills. Some jobs will disappear. But many new jobs will appear. And most of all, jobs will change. That's why we all need to keep learning, our entire working lives.'



TIBOR NAVRACSICS,
Commissioner for Education, Culture,
Youth and Sport

'Europe must be democratic, youth-oriented and stable, because otherwise there will be no European Union in the future. And that's why when we work on problems and try to address all the challenges facing young people, we break issues down to everyday life.'

Editors' note

What if young people are not just about carpe diem? Do they actually have enough options to seize the day, and what is it that they want to seize? How much do they care about the future, and do they realise that **'Tomorrow is here'**? In the following pages I invite you to open your mind and heart to what young people have to say, what is it that they wish to seize and what their vision is of the EU's future.

Young participants in Sibiu have proved how much they care about local, regional, national and EU affairs. They have asked for fairness, inclusion, equality and an updated educational system. They have offered their judgement, clever ideas and strategic solutions. The reporters have listened, taken pictures, interviewed young people and monitored social media. There have been many other interesting ideas, quotes and tweets, but not all of them could make it into this report. Instead, we kept it short and focused on the main ideas that young people wanted to put forward at the event. The selection was made by the reporters according to their journalistic assessment.

The authors of this report would like to express their gratitude to both the organising team as a whole and the team at AoHATHina, a social cooperative creating a 'learning laboratory' for emerging and mature leaders, who made this work possible. Thank you for helping us gather the written and visual material and for helping us see and listen to what young people had to express. The spectacular amount of material that we have collectively managed to capture in a single day enabled us to write a report that is truly rich in variety and content.

Our thanks to the young people who shared with us their stories and their individual yet common wishes and desires. Your participation and devotion have been authentic, motivating and eye-opening.

Many thanks to everyone who helped in the making of this report. We appreciate the input from everyone, including the volunteers who were always present and in a good mood. Kind thanks go to Mie Olsen and the official photographers of the event for the pictures.

We want to thank the European Union, and the European Commission specifically, for financing and organising the meeting, and the town of Sibiu for hosting the event.

Last but not the least, we would like to thank the European Youth Press for connecting young people from various countries to work on projects and act on their potential, voice their thoughts and develop their skills.

It has been a great pleasure to participate in one of the citizens' dialogues, to be the eyes and ears and ultimately to be the written voice of more than 300 young people who flew from all across Europe to share their hopes for our future.

Young people have indeed proved that they have the will, energy and hope.

Enjoy your read.

Julie Mahlerová (Czechia), Editor-in-Chief

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Introduction

The young citizens' dialogue on the topic 'Let's shape the future of Europe together!' took place on 8 May 2019 in Sibiu, Romania. The event brought together more than 300 young people from all across Europe and EU politicians to discuss five areas of common ground. After long hours of travel, the eager participants took seats in the spacious theatre and listened to the welcome speeches. Then they went to the workshops they picked and gathered back together again afterwards to present their ideas, confront the politicians and enjoy a lively dialogue.

The workshops dealt with five topics.

- A. Democracy and me: engaging in European democratic life.
- B. Society and me: how do I want to get involved and build communities?
- C. Fairness in the EU: illusion, reality or unfinished business?
- D. Digital Europe and me: will our lives and jobs change for the better?
- E. Fighting climate change: what difference can Europe and its young people make?



Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania (third from left), Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission (third from right), Astrid Fodor, Mayor of Sibiu (second from right), and Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner (right), with the young participants behind.

During the day participants went to two workshops, in which they experienced an interactive, professionally moderated session to brainstorm and address the topics. Participants took part in discussions, offered their experience and personal views and respectfully exchanged them with others. As a result of each session, they presented surprisingly worked-through ideas. This report presents five ideas from each topic. Some of them come from individuals, some of them are collaborative. They were either voted on by the participants as being the most necessary or selected by the reporters as being the most viable or ambitious. The ideas arising from the workshops at the young citizens' dialogue were presented by nominated idea givers and discussed with Commissioner Navracsics following the morning session and with Commissioner Thyssen following the afternoon session.

The walls of the Ion Besoiu Cultural Centre in Sibiu, where the event took place, were covered with the finalists' photos from the #MySocialEurope and European Solidarity Corps photo competitions. The competitions focused on the author's ability to visualise a personal story within the five topics of the events. The award ceremonies for both took place during the day, with the Commissioners presenting prizes to the winners. The winning photos and interviews with the photographers can be found in the annex to this report.

The date of the event was not coincidental, as on 9 May in Sibiu there was a summit of the EU Heads of State or Government at which the leaders focused on strategic plans for the EU in the coming years. More than ever it is essential to recognise that young people are very much present and want to be heard. They care about the present as well as the future. Events such as the young citizens' dialogue prove that young people are here to use the means and seize the opportunity to be active members of their communities and participate in the decision-making process. At the end of the day, the participants had further discussed their questions and concerns about today's future and tomorrow's now with Romanian President Klaus Iohannis and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

The concept of a young citizens' dialogue needs to be taken out of the context of a one-time event. Young people should be included further in politics and participate more in civic life. Strong connections and a strong feeling of European identity, belonging and citizenship need to be developed across generations. The common aim is to create a competent and united society that shares a common vision and aims for successful collaboration across borders and age groups.

During the welcome talk, Commissioners Marianne Thyssen (Employment, Social Affairs, Skills, and Labour Mobility) and Tibor Navracscsics (Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) offered young Europeans a wide perspective on the current state of the EU. Commissioner Thyssen said that it is important to 'turn challenges into opportunities', referring to issues such as migration, social protection and the availability of jobs. She said: 'We can't predict the future, but together we can shape it.' She also added that it is important to make a difference on a European level, saying: 'If we want a Europe that protects, we also need to protect Europe.' Commissioner Thyssen referred to flexibility as an opportunity for many, but also a source of worry for others. She highlighted the importance of being able, as EU citizens, to move from one Member State to another without undergoing passport or baggage controls. Commissioner Navracscsics referred to education as a key instrument for European integration. He welcomed young Europeans in Sibiu by pointing out their essential role when it comes to new jobs and the creation of a more prosperous environment. 'The EU is a youth-oriented project,' Commissioner Navracscsics claimed, adding that the aim for his mandate was to reach at least 1 million young people. 'What makes us European is the European culture, so we have to keep, rediscover and maintain our identity,' he said, pointing out the need to build a community on a European level. 'European integration must be a community of communities,' he added. Commissioner Navracscsics also said that he has planned to double the Erasmus budget so that by 2021 there will be twice as many opportunities for young Europeans.



Rapporteur Julius Lajtha (right) presents the results of workshop A 'Democracy and me' to Tibor Navracscsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

A. Democracy and me:

engaging in the European democratic life

It may be easy to feel or be born European, but is it equally easy to feel that one's voice has the power to make it through the bureaucracy in Brussels? Today, it is crucial to engage the under 30-year-olds and to give them the option to be heard. In the end, the decisions of the EU affect the everyday lives and present future of young people. So why not let them affect the EU?

In 2014, less than one third of young voters made it to the polling stations in the 28 Member States of the EU. That is somewhat contradictory because the young age group is also where one finds most EU enthusiasts. A 2018 Parlemeter survey shows that more than two thirds of young people between 18 and 24 support EU membership, and in general they place trust in the EU institutions. Many identify with their fellow young Europeans beyond the borders of Member States and care for European democracy.

'I want to represent the voices that I am hearing in my country from my friends and family'

Marek Zarański, participant, Poland

Young people emphasise the need to give their peers with fewer opportunities a chance to participate in European programmes such as Erasmus or the European Solidarity Corps. Another way is to let them speak directly to policymakers. And a third is to raise awareness of what the EU does for them.

New media channels hold the potential for connecting with young EU citizens. They nonetheless pose challenges as well. How does one recognise that something is reliable and truthful? How does one judge the credibility of media and news channels? These questions were asked by young people, and they need answers and actions to follow.



➔ In the workshop 'Democracy and me', participants gathered in groups to discuss how to improve European democracy.

Idea 1

Revised European citizens' initiatives

A. Democracy and me



JULIUS LAJTHA, AUSTRIA, 19 

Young people must be given new opportunities to interact with politics so that they do not live with the decisions made by older generations. It is necessary to revise the criteria and lower the age for the submission of European citizens' initiatives (ECIs). In many countries you can get a driving licence or drink alcohol at the age of 16, but you cannot vote, run for elections or submit petitions. At the moment the ECI can only be submitted from 18 onwards. Apart from the age, the Commission should revise the threshold of 1 million signatures to be collected from seven different Member States for submitting the ECI. The revision of the criteria would make civic participation in politics easier for people.

HASHTAG

#EUVoicesareheard

Idea 2

A fake-news agency with national offices

A. Democracy and me

A stronger fake-news agency with the power to sanction through national offices in each Member State is needed in the EU. A complete body should monitor the European news landscape. A body that in the mildest cases provides readers with guidelines such as digital certificates or ticked fact-checking boxes, and in the worst cases issues fines. The agency could help young European readers to navigate through journalistic content and avoid speculation about media ownership. This is imperative at a time when media-literacy education is nowhere near sufficient, and when fake news that often plays on strong sentiments spreads rapidly on social media. When reading an article, an algorithm with a pop-up window should suggest another article with a different perspective on the same story, or even an article from another country. In that way, young readers can become better informed about current events.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



TWEET FROM A PARTICIPANT:

Romain Laugier/@_third_Opinion 'Very proud of our group's discussion on 'Me and Democracy'. I invite EU officials to read youth voices. Please #HearEUs.' @Charles2M @sixtinebouygues #EUDialogues #FutureofEurope #JourneeDelEurope #EUDialogues #FuturdelEurope #RoadtoSibiu @UEFrance



'THE DEMONS FROM THE PAST ARE FACING US AGAIN'

MAREK ZARAŃSKI, POLAND, 21

Is fake news a problem in your home country?

Marek: 'The media in my country only one side of the story, which is almost borderline propaganda. We, in Poland, had communism for a very long time. Young people are afraid that we are taking a step back. It feels like we are going back to communist times, which was one of the darkest times in the history of my country. Our parents and grandparents tell us similar actions were taken by the government in the past. That does not match the supposedly democratic system we live in.'



'I AM A TEACHER. THE FUTURE I CREATE FOR MY STUDENTS MEANS A LOT TO ME'

JULIE KJÆR MIKKELSEN, DENMARK, 24

How is the issue of fake news a problem in your home country?

Julie: 'I think everyone is affected by fake news. However, in Denmark, I trust the newspapers. We have been taught critical thinking for several years now. I grew up with it, had it as a subject in 7th-8th grade.'

HASHTAG

#independentmedia


Idea 3

A platform for public input

A. Democracy and me

An online platform that informs EU citizens about public debates could help European politics become more *quid pro quo* and spark new EU civic participatory systems. Public debates should always be organised in each of the Member States in collaboration between public institutions, civil society and trustworthy media outlets. An EU media outlet would gather and distribute the conclusions from each debate during the process involved in new legislation. Civilians could be selected upon application to represent EU citizens and interests on a larger scale. Applicants qualified to talk about a topic would be allowed to enter the Parliament or speak to the committees. Citizens would thus be included through being able to express what they think of an initiative before it is blueprinted.



 *Young participants discuss how to increase political participation among young Europeans.*

‘Little changes made by each of us can have a great effect on society as a whole.’

Overheard in the Democracy workshop.

Idea 4

Exclusive EU broadcasting channels

A. Democracy and me



The European Parliament and the Commission could broadcast a 10-minute-long daily update on European affairs through media such as television, Facebook Live, Instagram and others. The European Youth Media channel would provide the latest EU news from the youth perspective on a daily basis. The content of the media outlet would be produced by young people across the EU, who would be matched, supervised and mentored by professional journalists and media-makers. The news would be shared through all channels with translation into all official EU languages. The broadcasting would work as a form of infotainment and would, in a digestible way, capture negotiations, debates and wishes that go before any political decision in Brussels.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE

JUAN RAYON GONZALEZ, SPAIN, 24 

'DEMOCRACY SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED'

Why are you participating in the young citizens' dialogue?

Juan: 'Europe has achieved so many things for us. It has made us better people and better citizens. People who understand that beyond the small differences, the things we have in common matter the most. And I am here to fight for that. I would do anything for it.'

What is driving you?

Juan: 'Democracy is composed of many elements. Voting is just one of them. We need more public debates, and more people engaged in discussions. People know that having a strong opinion and position is vital, yet being able to compromise and look for the common ground is the basis of democracy. In Spain, my amazing country, we are losing that. I want to change it.'

HASHTAG

#youngmedia

Idea 5

Young lobbyists

A. Democracy and me

Young people should be able to lobby through interconnected local-, regional-, national- and European-interest organisations. The European Parliament and the European Commission offices can start expanding the network of youth organisations in which volunteers work to promote their interests in society. This shows young civilians that they can have a political impact at the European level. If young people get the support to get together, it will make it easier to articulate an opinion and make it heard by European representatives. Young people need to be shown that you do not have to support one political party to be active in European politics. As long as there is an issue worth lobbying for, young people need to be able to access the means and channels to do so.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



JUAN, SAME, GABRIEL, MAREK, DANA, MARIS, IOANA, ANDRA AND PAWEL.



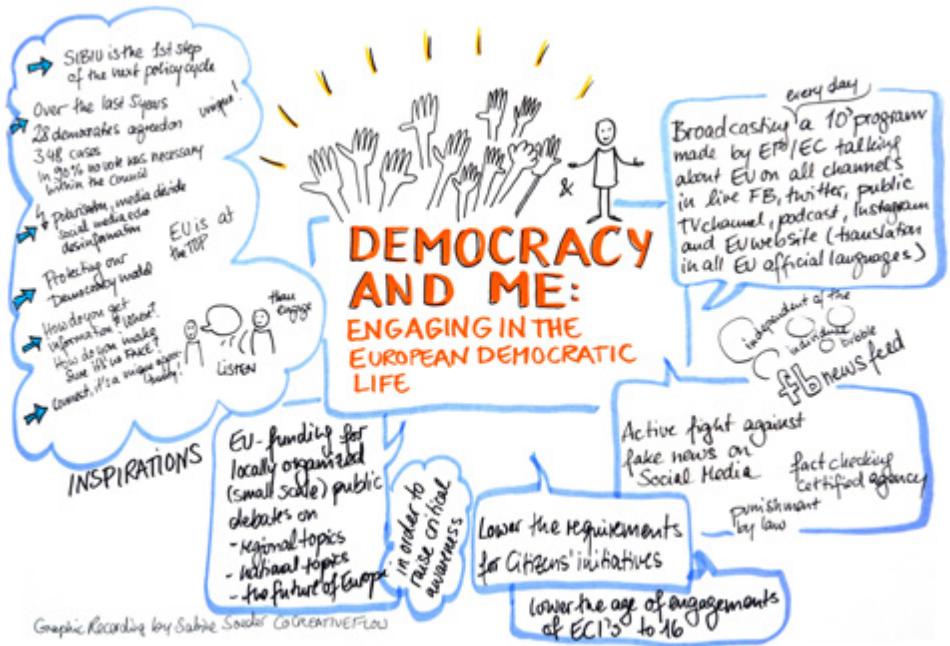
Rapporteur Julius Lajtha presents the ideas with the most votes from the workshop 'Democracy and me' to Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility.

'I honestly believe in the European project. I think the underlying idea is the most beautiful thing that we have in the world'

Juan Rayon Gonzalez, participant, Spain

HASHTAG

#youngimpact



Graphic Recording by Sabine Soeder COCREATIVEFLOW

B. Society and me: how do I want to get involved and build communities?

Many of the participants were born in a country that was already a part of the European Union. The EU is their identity, and young people feel strongly about actively participating in European society. Nevertheless, young people need to be able to understand the full meaning of what it means to be a citizen of the EU. Only once young people gain full comprehension, often facilitated by an educational institution, can they decide about personal involvement in societal matters.

The young people in Sibiu have recognised and identified several participatory options that have the potential to address common societal challenges. They have called for urgent improvements in educational systems across Europe. Civic classes do not seem to provide sufficient information to help facilitate an understanding of what it means to be a part of European society. In some countries, students are not even allowed to talk about politics at school. It is important that students learn about EU common values and beliefs in order to strengthen civic participation.

‘Young people have optimistic minds; we need to listen to them and not disappoint their hope’

Stefana Maria Greavu, participant, Romania

Do programmes initiated by the EU deliver on their potential? Do people really benefit from what the EU has to offer? Young people are missing a sense of EU community and are seeking a feeling of belonging. Sometimes they are not informed well enough. Sometimes they come from less advantaged regions. These factors need to be addressed so that through encouragement and connectedness young people feel empowered to shape the EU together.

Idea 1 Co-management

B. Society and me



The institutionalised concept of co-management would ensure that young people have equal rights and are included in decision-making. Young people need to be there during the drafting, implementing, evaluating, redrafting and reimplementing of policies at EU level. Young people are sometimes consulted at the beginning of the process, but then we are not there anymore. The systematic and binding inclusion of young people is lacking. Co-management increases the willingness and the participation of young people in democratic processes. If we want to achieve a successful scenario of EU co-management, young people need to take part in the decision-making processes and not just listened to.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



MARIUS SCHLAGETER, GERMANY, 27

HASHTAG

#comanagement

Idea 2

Political education

B. Society and me

Young people call themselves a generation of 'belongers'. They belong to Europe and Europe belongs to them. But they need a better understanding of what the concept actually means. They proposed a united system of political education across Europe. In this way, understanding is nourished, along with a structured and informed dialogue across borders and generations. To achieve a sense of active belonging and understanding, political education should be put in place and available to children from a very young age.

HASHTAG

#learnpolitics

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



' WE WANT TO FEEL LIKE WE MATTER'

STEFANA MARIA GREAVU, ROMANIA, 18

You are not allowed to talk about politics at school?

Stefana: 'Yes, that is, unfortunately, true. In my eyes, this is not acceptable at the EU level. We have civic education in the 7th grade when we are too young to understand the separation of powers, but after that, we don't talk about politics anymore. **The educational system is inefficient, insufficient and failing us.** If we bring up the subject of politics, we are told to be silent and not to bring it up again. We have to talk to our parents or search on the internet if we want to know something about politics. Romanians are misinformed and

uninformed and so we don't feel the need to vote, because we don't know why to vote or who to vote for. This is a disadvantage of our country as well as the European Union.'

Who should initiate the change?

Stefana: 'I think it needs to come from the officials, and the European Union has big enough power to do so in Romania. It is not that we are not aware that we have the right to vote, but we don't know how to use it. Young people should feel involved not only in voting, but we also need to be involved in general. We want to feel like we matter and that we have power, we have a say and we have a role in the future. Often we are told that we are too young to understand, but there are a lot of us who have a lot to say.'

HASHTAG

#wematter

Idea 3

Real-life dialogues with politicians

B. Society and me

Member States should be encouraged to facilitate frequent options for young people to interact and have discussions with the European politicians. This way the subject of politics becomes more familiar and closer to young people and is likely going to increase engagement. These options need to be cheaper and easier and facilitated on a local basis. In Germany there already is a federal institution that provides political and civic education. For young people to participate in the EU matters it is key to know the roles of the institutions, and direct human interaction is a great option.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



Idea 4

Volunteering recognition

B. Society and me



Youthpass is used to certify the competences of volunteers supported by Erasmus +. The EU has no competence to oblige organisations to issue any kind of certificate outside EU-funded programmes. However, the Youthpass is not well enough recognised in companies across Europe, and it is insufficient for young people to recognise volunteering only on Erasmus+ projects. Most volunteering is done outside those projects, and there is a need for further binding forms of proof and certificates. It is rarely recognised as work experience, even though people get exactly the same skills, and this needs to change. Furthermore, volunteering has the potential to affect civic participation. Local non-governmental organisations should be invited to schools to talk about volunteering and to explain what they are doing and what it means in terms of EU opportunities.

MATTHÄUS FANDREJEWSKI, POLAND, 26 

HASHTAG

#euvolunteering

Idea 5

EU civic education agency

B. Society and me



An EU-level agency should be put in place that would be specifically responsible for fostering a higher level of civic competence. Not enough resources are being allocated to civic education at the moment. In some systems it is an optional rather than a compulsory class. **It is clear that there is a willingness from the institutions to listen and from young people to be heard.** Having a dialogue is vital, but there needs to be a constructive take away, and an EU civic education agency could be in charge of that.

**DÉNES ANDRÁS NAGY,
HUNGARY, 24**

IDEA

CHOSEN BY VOTE



HASHTAG

#EUciviceducation



Graphic Recording by Sabine Soeder CoCreativeFlows.com

C. Fairness in the EU: illusion, reality or unfinished business?

'Do you want to be happy in life? Do you wish you would live until at least 80? Do you hope that, once you get to a certain age, you will get a retirement income that you can live with? How many of you think that a woman who gives birth should be entitled to maternity leave? Do you wish to have support if you are in a situation of unemployment? Do you think that discrimination based on age, sex or sexual orientation should be banned?'

These are some of the questions asked at the beginning of this workshop. Fairness influences all aspects of our lives, from jobs and equal opportunities to social rights and migration. The way citizens perceive inequality differs from person to person, depending on aspects such as education, cultural background and living conditions. The common factors of citizens' well-being and their chances to succeed in life, however, should be vital when assessing fairness.

According to a 2019 report³ on income inequality and poverty by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there is a widespread and growing concern over the wealth disparities in Europe. The topics young Europeans consider to be the ones that need our immediate attention are unemployment, equal pay, unbalanced opportunities for women and men, and migration.

The youth unemployment rate in the European Union was an average of 19.05 % from 2000 to 2019, according to statistics published by Trading Economics⁴. Many young Europeans who met in Sibiu think more protection is needed not only for full-time but also for self-employed workers.

Another key argument shared with the young audience is solidarity for refugees who escape from wars and life-threatening poverty. Human rights have become a relevant topic, especially after the 2015 mass migration when many almost a million non-EU citizens entered Europe. During the closing remarks of the young citizens' dialogue in Romania, Jean-Claude Juncker pointed out that these people want to enter Europe not because of their own pleasure or for tourism, but because their own lives are at risk.

HASHTAG
#euandme

³ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Income inequality and poverty', 2019
<https://www.oecd.org/social/inequality-and-poverty.htm>

⁴ Trading Economics, 'European Union youth unemployment rate', 2019
<https://tradingeconomics.com/european-union/youth-unemployment-rate>

Idea 1

Equal pay

C. Fairness in the EU

For young people it is absolutely essential to have equal pay for workers who do the same job, avoiding different salaries based on gender, origin or disability. In order to guarantee fairness in pay, it is also important to pledge a fair amount of taxes, which should be adapted depending on every worker's salary across the EU. In order to guarantee minimal social standards, a minimum level of equal pay should be guaranteed for the same job in every state, financed by a common EU tax.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



KRISTIN, LUCA, DOROTA, ESTER, MARONIA, ALVARO



Participants discuss topics such as how to build models of civic participation and include youngsters in political decision-making at the EU level.

'My mum works in automotive and she does the same work as a male but gets 25 % less money. I've seen my mother at work and she works like a maniac, but she gets 300 or 400 euros less than her male co-worker. This is just not right in Europe'

Dimitrios Athanasiou, participant, Greece

HASHTAG

#SocialRights

Idea 2

Solidarity for refugees

C. Fairness in the EU

Welcoming refugees also means guaranteeing their protection. It is necessary to give more power to the headquarters of the European Asylum Support Office. This agency aims to encourage the EU Member States to work together for asylum seekers, enhance the implementation of the Common European Asylum System and help those countries that are under pressure. Education programmes, including language and cultural classes for refugees, should be implemented as the effects would be beneficial for each EU Member State in the long run. Thanks to the coordinated and compassionate integration of non-EU citizens, the labour market could grow and become stronger.

CAMILLA, NADINE, PAUL, BARTOSZ, FRANZISKA, MICHAEL, PAUL, SVEN, MAX

TWEET BY A REPORTER:

'@JunckerEU: I will always fight for the people needing open doors. And there are many.
#EUdialogues #FutureOfEurope'

(@ChiaraFiorillo1, 2011Italy)



HASHTAG

#eurefugees

Idea 3

Unemployment scheme

C. Fairness in the EU

Creating an unemployment scheme at European level would give more people the possibility to advance in their career. Establishing social protection through legislation opens up further possibilities for young people to be considered suitable candidates when applying for a job. The protection does not only apply to full-time workers but is also relevant to self-employed people and those engaged in mini-jobs or shorter contracts. It would be advisable for Member States to modify the types of contracts available, limiting temporary ones, in order to give more opportunities to workers and limit the precariousness status of some jobs.

IDEA

CHOSEN BY VOTE



ISABEL, MATTHAÜS, LARS, GABRIELA, MARITJ, WEYDEMANN, FANDREYELGHI



'WE ARE INSECURE ABOUT OUR FUTURE'

ISABEL OTERO BARDERAS, STUDENT (EUROPEAN STUDIES), SPAIN, 24 🇪🇸

Do you think fairness influences your country?

Isabel: 'The topic of poverty and precarious jobs is really relevant in my country. We are insecure about our future because we often hear about the rise in unemployment rates. We are suffering a trend of workers who are not able to pay for rent, food or other basic things. We hear about the creation of new jobs and the collaborative economy. On the other hand, we also observe traditional jobs disappearing or getting abandoned by the new legislation. We need a clear

picture of this development and how we can protect workers, self-employers and people working for an enterprise or a company. At the moment, this is causing insecurity all over the EU and needs to be tackled, especially in Spain.'

How do you see fairness affecting your daily life?

Isabel: 'I know people who are working as self-employed and they are unsure whether they are going to be able to cover their expenses. Sometimes it's not only about how much money you earn. Some people don't even know if their contracts are going to be renewed until the day they are due to expire.'

HASHTAG

#eunemployed

Idea 4

Education against discrimination

C. Fairness in the EU

The topic of discrimination against people of a different gender, background, age, religion or sexual orientation is one that is of the utmost importance to many young Europeans. Starting education from an early school age means young children become aware of the differences that exist. The key is to help them see differences as an opportunity to enrich their own life rather than a threat. Including volunteering in the school curriculum would be a way to encourage people to understand from a young age that every citizen has the same rights and options. Another way to prevent discrimination at work would be to apply for a job without having to specify what your gender is. These initiatives would guarantee that all citizens get the same possibilities without being discriminated against for who they are or where they come from.

IDEA

CHOSEN BY VOTE



'I EXPERIENCE RACISM'

DIMITRIOS ATHANASIOU, STUDENT, YOUNG EUROPEAN FEDERALIST, GREECE, 24 🇬🇷

How does the topic of fairness affect your daily life?

Dimitrios: 'As a Greek person living in Germany, fairness in the European Union is very essential for me. I see the advantages of being European, to be able to work there. However, I also see the downsides, such as racism and sexism. I experience racism. When people see my name, they automatically start speaking to me in English. With all the problems Europe faces, such as unemployment, migration and climate change, racism shouldn't be one of them.'

When do you experience being treated in a different way?

Dimitrios: 'Often when I am on the bus on my way to university and a person looks at me, checks my documents, speaks to me in an unfriendly way. They always speak in English and, even if I answer in German, they keep talking to me in English. Sometimes when I am outside a club or I am driving with friends, the police stop me and ask for my ID. I think that it is due to my hair colour, as you can see, as I have dark hair and I have a beard, which is a typical thing for Arab people or north African people. It's a pity because I can show them my European citizenship, but others don't have this privilege.'

Idea 5

Opportunities for women

C. Fairness in the EU

Changing the narrative of male and female jobs can help the push for fairness and equality at the EU level. By guaranteeing equality, young people would become more flexible and be allowed to put stereotypes aside. Women should be encouraged to pursue careers that usually belong to men and vice versa. It would be useful to promote caring facilities for both men and women, such as telework, which would ensure more options and flexibility in the workplace. Reconsidering and revisiting stereotypes also means making sure that both mother and father are entitled to parental leave. Men should be supported should the family decide it is not the woman who is staying at home once their baby is born. Parents should also have a chance for more kindergarten and out-of-school care.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE

MATILDE, PILAR, ELENA, STEFANIE, ALEXANDRA, THEODORA, IOUUT-REMUS



'WE NEED TO FOCUS ON INCLUSION'

NADINE SCHÜBERL, STUDENT, AUSTRIA, 22 

How do you see the topic of fairness influencing Austria?

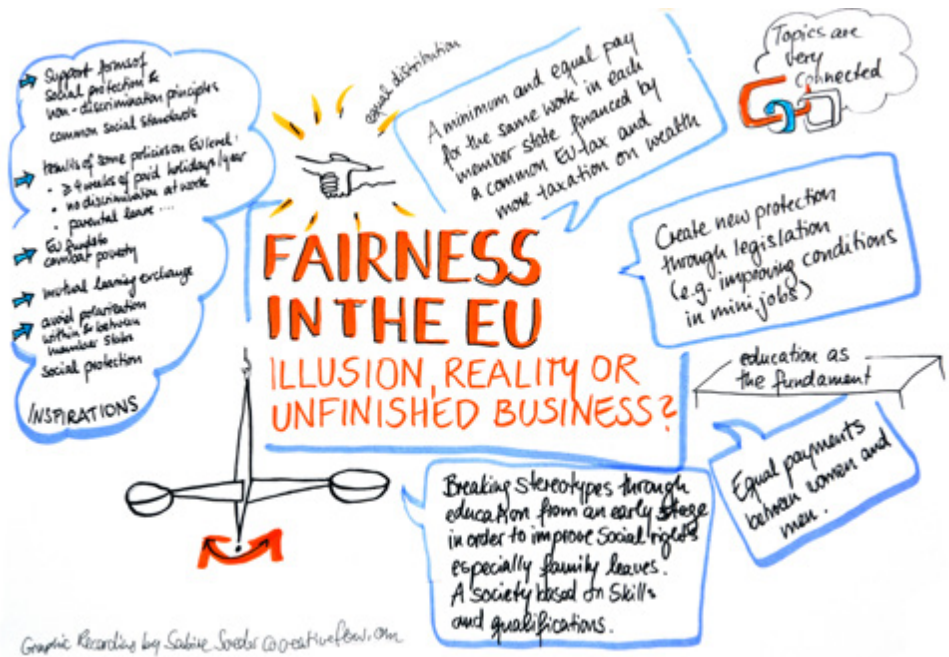
Nadine: 'In terms of solidarity, migration and the refugee crisis we are not handling this problem well. Even though we have a good social security system, there is poverty. There is still a huge gap in pay between men and women. There is discrimination against other genders, ages and religions as well.'

Have you ever experienced any discrimination in your country?

Nadine: 'I need to get additional support money from the state to study because my parents don't earn enough. It's a very complicated bureaucratic system and it takes a long time to get this money. I am lucky because I am a native speaker but I know that a lot of people who don't understand this system because of a language barrier, so they have problems with getting the funds. I think that a universal basic income would be a good solution that would ensure fairness for people in Austria and also in the EU.'

How can we go forward?

Nadine: 'We also need to focus on the inclusion of disabled people and old people, people who identify as a binary gender, people coming from other religious backgrounds and speaking different languages. We don't value all these cultures as equal. A lot still has to be done to allow diversity in the EU and to ensure that some cultures aren't valued more than others.'



D. Digital Europe and me: will our lives and jobs change for the better? —

The internet of things. E-health. AI. Blockchain. Not many years ago these words would have caused a look of curious wonder in the eyes of most EU citizens. Today they appear frequently in research, public debates and work spaces. Digitisation is already revolutionising the economy and the job industry, while machines are programmed to perform human tasks such as medical care, procedures and the operation of vehicles. Yet this transformation remains intangible. What exactly does it and will it mean for society? How can Europe make sure that the digitisation of the labour market does not leave anyone behind? Actions and discussions are vital in order to avoid being collectively lost in the digital transition.

A 2019 Statista projection claims that the number of smart devices such as security systems, health-monitoring systems and even toothbrushes that connect to smartphones will increase to 75 billion worldwide by 2025⁵. The public sectors, economic systems and private spheres of the European Union will increasingly be shaped by the use of connected devices and artificial intelligence. The overall technological transition has the potential to foster social innovation and bring innovative solutions

If digitisation can improve everything ranging from green transport to food security, are there reasons not to go ahead fully? In the EU there are still significant income differences related to region, age and educational background. An outphasing of physical work can increase income inequality by leaving low-skilled and less-trained employees quickly out of job.

New ways of working are available, for example the number of independent platform workers is on the rise, but they remain stuck in a regulatory greyzone when it comes to working conditions, tax payments and working privileges. Young people believe that in this digital age we need nothing less than a new way of conceptualising our society. It takes not only digital literacy but also social literacy to make sure that all citizens prosper equally from the technical innovations reforming our job markets.

‘I think it is important to leave no one behind’

Leila Benabdallah, participant, France

⁵ Statista, 'Internet of things (IoT) connected devices installed base worldwide from 2015 to 2025 (in billions)', 2019
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/471264/iot-number-of-connected-devices-worldwide>

Idea 1

National agencies to provide digital skills

D. Digital Europe and me



As the job market is constantly evolving it is vital to equip young people with digital skills to keep up. Vulnerable societal groups, such as those living in smaller villages, those in long-term unemployment and those who in their everyday life struggle with access to the internet and digital sphere, need special attention. A national agency should take digital responsibility, and send IT experts to teach digital skills to children starting from the age of 12. This education must be represented at all societal levels ranging from educational institutions through companies to job centres. Experts could help citizens by showing how the digital world works and getting people more rewarding jobs. A national digital agency could especially help young jobseekers achieve professional success and integrate better into society.

SABINA GREBLIUNAITE, LITHUANIA, 27 

HASHTAG

#digitalskills4life

TWEET FROM A POLITICIAN:


Marianne Thyssen @mariannethyssen 'To prosper in the digital revolution we need skills most of all. We need to keep learning our entire working lives. To be critical. To be creative. To learn technology. #EUdialogues #FutureofEurope'

Idea 2

Clear rules for platform work

D. Digital Europe and me



 In the workshop 'Digital Europe and me', participants and motivational speakers debated the consequences of the rapid digitisation of our societies.

The number of platform workers is believed to be growing significantly as more people sell their products and skills online. The EU needs to reflect on this by clarifying the rules for platform workers. Firstly, the EU needs to agree on basic rights and work conditions, such as minimum pay, insurance and working hours. Secondly, it should be clear and concise which tax rules digital workers must comply with, especially those with remote and transnational employment. Finally, all platform workers must have the right to collectively organise and negotiate with platform providers. Every platform operating on EU servers should follow these rules in order to secure working standards for digital nomads.

HASHTAG

#futureofwork

Idea 3

Charter on fundamental digital rights

D. Digital Europe and me



➔ In the workshop 'Digital Europe and me', the young participants discussed topics such as digital skills, inclusion and rights, among others.

The European Convention of Human Rights was drafted a long time ago in a completely different reality. For young people, digital life and virtual space is such an integral part of living that it could be useful for the European Commission to set global standards by drafting a new charter on digital fundamental rights. While the general data protection regulation protects our digital rights in a legal way, it remains a very technical text. The charter on digital fundamental rights would be more political and more focused on values such as the right to privacy, freedom of expression and, not least, inclusion.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE



Idea 4

Virtual exchanges online

D. Digital Europe and me



A platform for virtual exchanges would reach people from different backgrounds and be moderated by facilitators. A similar platform already exists in the French–German Youth Office, allowing schools to connect online. Why not expand and improve that concept and have international meetings? The platform could be used as a preparation tool for physical meetings and follow-ups. It would offer a pathway to other youth organisations. In the regional hubs, people would coordinate different sections and remain close to the people to give them information. An online platform of this kind, with an integrated database and regional hubs, could show citizens the value of cross-country cooperation and exemplify what the EU does for them every day.

LEILA BENABDALLAH, FRANCE, 25 

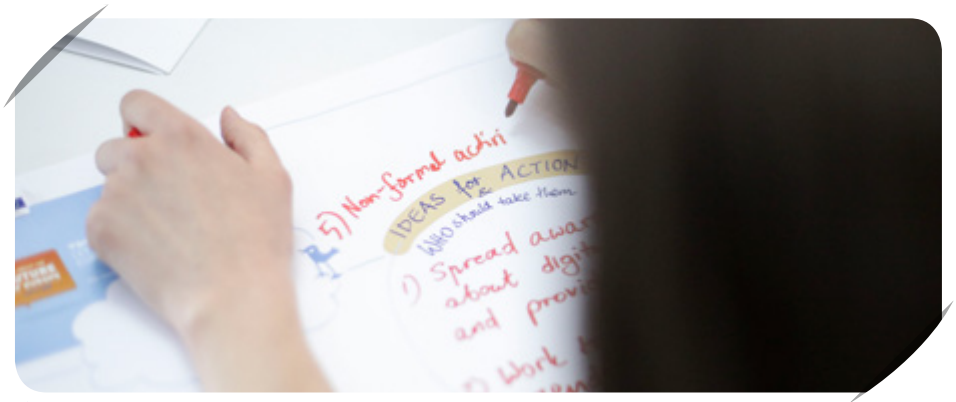
Idea 5


Workplace health

D. Digital Europe and me

There should be a mandatory innovative change to set standards in the workspace to care for the physical and mental health of workers in the ever-growing number of desk jobs. Offices should be designed in a healthy way and always have a leisure area where worn-out workers can go to relax.

Non-formal activities such as chats, energisers, walks or even little workshops during the day can improve work performance. There should be a definition of minimum ergonomic standards such as position, equipment and comfort in order to meet the needs of individual workers.



 A participant writes down an idea selected by the group.

'REAL LIFE AND VIRTUAL LIFE IS COMPLEMENTARY'

LEILA BENABDALLAH, FRANCE, 25

Why are you participating in the young citizens' dialogue?

Leila: 'We can vote, but we also need to co-create together. If we just stay silent, and afterwards complain that things are not like we want them to be, it will not fit our needs. So we need to meet people from other countries, to share with them and to learn in order to develop things together. And I think for us now it is imperative to be involved, to be part of the processes and not rely on others to do the job.'

How is the topic of digitalisation relevant in your home country?

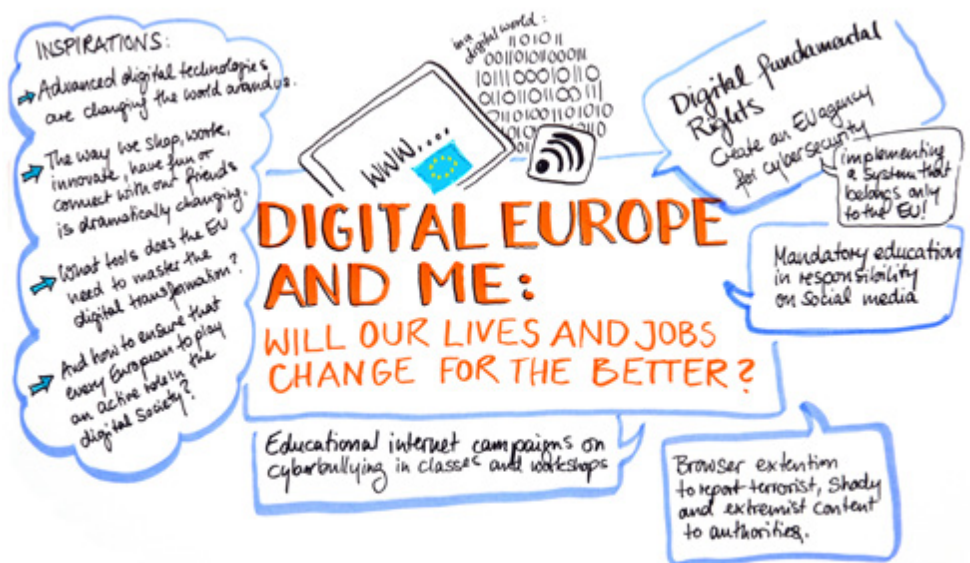
Leila: 'In France, but also in other countries, digitalisation is our real life. Some people think that because it is virtual, it is not real life. Digitalisation can, of course, serve as a tool, but it also has risks.'

'Many people do not have decent work. I think it is essential to give them digital skills so they can get more opportunities'

Sabina Grebliunaite, participant, Lithuania

HASHTAG

#healthyworkspaces



Graphic Resonance by Sabine Soeder, Co-creative-flora.com

E. Fighting climate change: what difference can Europe and its young people make? —

With more activist movements arising, and campaigners who feel strongly about the issue speaking up, climate change is at the forefront of most EU Member States' policies. Yet stronger measures still need to be implemented to address this phenomenon, which is believed to be leading to the sixth mass extinction in history. Caused mainly by human activities, ranging from pollution to overpopulation, the term 'global warming' refers to a rise in the Earth's temperature.

Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish student, began protesting and calling for immediate action about climate change last year. She has since become an outspoken climate activist and has encouraged other young EU citizens to do something for the environment. For almost 1 year there have been weekly strikes all over Europe, during which school children protest and ask their governments to face the issue as soon as possible.

Last year the European Parliament voted to ban single-use plastic cutlery, cotton buds, straws and stirrers by 2021 in an effort to avoid the production of waste that ends up in our oceans, killing wildlife and polluting the environment. The European Commission has set ambitious goals⁶ for the future that young people want to be a part of, such as net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, encouraging alternative means of transport such as cycling and supporting more sustainable ways of agriculture.

⁶ European Commission, Going climate-neutral by 2050, 2019
https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/long_term_strategy_brochure_en.pdf

Idea 1

Eco traffic-light system

E. Fighting climate change

A traffic-light system should be created for all products to signify their impact on the environment. Red would indicate that certain actions or products can be very harmful and create irreversible damage. Yellow would show the risk of medium damage to the environment. Green would refer to the safest system, which is not damaging the environment and which represents what every country should be aiming for. This would help the general understanding and the impact of everyday actions. People would shift their consumption patterns and be encouraged to use more eco-friendly products. Thanks to this colourful system, citizens would be more encouraged to take appropriate steps in their daily lives to avoid causing more harm to the environment.

IDEA
CHOSEN BY VOTE

IOANA, CHRISTIAN, INES, ATHANASIOS



'LESS PLASTIC, MORE ECO PRODUCTS'

LAURA SOPHIE GAISSMAIER, GERMANY, 21 

Why did you join this event?

Laura: 'Europe is shaped by people, including young people, and this is a good opportunity because everything will be taken to the Commission and to the ones who decide about policies.'

Is climate change affecting your country?

Laura: 'I live in Erfurt in eastern Germany and it was unusually dry last summer. I was never really affected by climate change, but last summer I did notice that it is also directly affecting Germany itself.'

What steps do you take in your daily life?

Laura: 'I try to avoid plastic and like to buy ecological food. In most cases, however, the food is wrapped in plastic, which is contradictory. I don't know why they do that; it makes no sense. This is why usually I try to buy food at farmers' markets, but I don't always have time to go there. Big companies and enterprises should be held responsible for what they do to the environment, and that is why I really favour a carbon or a general energy tax that would help reduce their energy use.'

HASHTAG
#ecoeu

Idea 2

'Alternative' transport

E. Fighting climate change

Alternative ways of living, such as biking to work instead of driving, should not just be considered as an alternative, but rather should become the norm. Some countries, such as the Netherlands, strongly support the use of public transport or bikes, but others still rely heavily on cars. It is thus necessary to encourage other means of transport. The creation of more bike lanes would be just one way. In some bigger cities, cyclists do not have a reserved lane, which is dangerous and discourages this eco-friendly means of transport. Governments should encourage the use of bikes (or any other eco-friendly means of transport) by subsidizing them and making them an affordable solution for every citizen.

IDEA

CHOSEN BY VOTE



LINDA, ROBERT, SILVESTER, STAMATIS, KRISTIN, HELENE, KLARA, JULIA, ANABELLA.



In the workshop 'Fighting climate change' participants discussed the daily impacts of climate change and possibilities for changing our patterns of consumption.



'THE EU SHOULD BE A LEADER AND A GUIDE'

FRANCESCO PIETRO SANTORO,
ITALY/PORTUGAL, 20

Has climate change affected your countries much?

Francesco: 'I come from two countries, Portugal and Italy. In the last few years, climate change has affected both of them quite significantly. In Portugal, we have experienced severe natural disasters. During the summer we had long droughts and, because of that, we had fires all over the fields, which caused many deaths as well. In Italy, climate change affected the country in many different ways, such as landslides and floods.'

What can the European Union do to address it?

Francesco: 'I think the EU should lead by example, act as a guide and as the leader, transforming the energy sources into renewable ones, then reducing the waste that we produce. Last but not least, maybe it is time to rethink capitalism as it seems like a driving force of the worsened climate situation.'

HASHTAG

#alternativetransport

Idea 3

Modern climate change classes

E. Fighting climate change



At the young citizens' dialogue in Sibiu, the young participants were eager to take the floor and put their ideas forward to the politicians.

Raising awareness about climate change from a young age is key in leading to effective measures being implemented. Mandatory classes for children explaining the scale of the phenomenon would teach them responsibility and help them realise the collective impact of their individual actions. The classes would include improved education about recycling to encourage more people to separate the waste they produce in order to avoid more harm being done to the environment. An alternative solution would be a climate change app, on which users can find useful information about what is currently happening in the world, but also tips and suggestions on the steps to take and how to go forward.

LEA, KIM, ARMELA, IONELA, CARLO, PUCK, LETITIA, HANNA.



'OUR VOICES CAN MAKE A CHANGE'

ELEONORA KERSTENS, NETHERLANDS, 24 

'The EU could implement some principle headlines, for example organising sustainability or classes about climate change so that people actually get informed about it'

Eleonora Kerstens

Why are you here?

Eleonora: 'I think it is an honour that we live in a democratic society such as Europe and that the EU enables us to actually use our voices to make a change.'

Have you seen any effects of climate change in your country?

Eleonora: 'In my country, I think people are becoming more conscious. My grandmother has told me that there used to be snow at this time of the year (May), while now the sun is shining, we can walk around in skirts and with bare legs. There is a crazy difference. I don't notice it myself yet, but I know it's there.'

HASHTAG


#climateducation

Idea 4

Emergency environmental policy framework

E. Fighting climate change



 *In the workshop 'Fighting climate change' the groups sketched their ideas as part of the process.*

Creating a common emergency environmental policy framework would guarantee that all EU Member States are on the same page about climate change. This would allow a more sustainable way of agriculture that does not damage the environment and increases the consumption of healthier organic products. Having a common framework would be beneficial to the EU economy, because it would create a more profitable solution and help everyone, from small-scale farmers to bigger companies. The framework would also implement a zero-waste policy. New trade deals could be created, keeping in mind the impact daily actions can have on the environment. Creating an emergency environmental policy framework would be a solution relating to the implementation of practical initiatives to protect the Earth.

SANE, RAPHAEL, MICHALINA, ROMAIN, SAMANTA, PAWEL, MARIS

IDEA

CHOSEN BY VOTE



HASHTAG

#eepf

Idea 5

Transparency of common goals

E. Fighting climate change

The European Union should set transparent common goals and initiatives to achieve major protection for the environment. The EU is widespread and varied, and all the Member States have different priorities as well as different struggles. More common policies should be adopted, such as preventing private-sector firms from exporting the waste they produce. More funding is needed for participatory science projects at the European level to find more solutions to face the causes as well as the results of climate change. One specific suggestion is to create a common EU carbon tax, as well as taxation on fuel for airplanes and subsidies for public transport. Agricultural policies could be redesigned through, for example, redistributing funding to small-scale farms and prioritising organic and high-quality food.

KAROLINA, FROLYO, LAURA, EMMA, SEBASTIAN, COLLEEN, MAX, GRAIMA, ILARIA, ALEX, NORBERT.

'Make renewable energy great again! #noplan(et)B'

Overheard in the audience



'WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF OUR HOME, EUROPE'

LETISIA CIOARIC, ROMANIA, 22 

Have you seen any effects on your daily life due to climate change?

Letisia: 'I was born in a little village in Romania, where we encourage the use of eco food, pure water and what really feels like proper clean air. When I moved to a bigger city because of my studies, I was shocked as people there are very consumerist, they use our resources very irrationally. It is urgent that we change these practices, starting by changing our way of thinking.'

What do you think the European Union can do?

Letisia: 'I think the European Union is a number-one leader across the world regarding the issue of climate change, and I think the other regions should follow its example. National governments should renew their agendas and be more receptive to the advice that the European Parliament and Commission give them. **We need to create a common path to solve this issue.'**



CLOSING




 *President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker (left) and President of Romania Klaus Iohannis (right) during the final discussions of the day.*

Klaus Iohannis, the Romanian President, and Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission, had a lively debate with young people during the closing session. President Iohannis started and addressed the audience by highlighting the significance of trust among citizens and EU institutions. He said: 'I am sure that today's debate will have an optimistic note on our common future inside the European Union.'

President Juncker greeted participants and soon started answering the public's questions. The issues raised by young people ranged from the regulation of migration to voting age, from the protection of young voters to climate change. Both presidents took turns to address the topics put forward, creating a two-way conversation between them and young citizens. In light of the summit that followed in Sibiu the next day, where national leaders discussed the pressing issues that really matter for people, the two presidents promised to be the voices of young people.



The gathering of young people in Sibiu on 8 May 2019 from all across Europe proves that they want to be heard, seen and listened to. Through the young citizens' dialogue with two presidents and two commissioners, it became clear that young people very much want to be involved. Young people are striving to be present in the common and united future of the EU at all points in the decision-making processes.

 *During the final round of questions for Jean-Claude Juncker and Klaus Iohannis, many participants eagerly raised their hands to voice their opinion.*

The young participants say that they realise that Tomorrow is here. They know that what was once a future promise or a distant threat is already happening. The effective dialogue interaction and exchange of ideas and opinions between the young people and politicians needs to be elaborated on and taken out of the 'event' context. The young citizens' dialogue should deliver on the promise of its name on a daily basis. As a Romanian participant, Stefana Maria Greavu, adds: 'Young people should feel involved not only in voting; we need to be involved in general. We want to feel like we matter and that we have power, we have a say and we have a role in the future'. Young people are ready to invest themselves with all their enthusiasm, believing in democracy, fairness and equality. Their thoughts and ideas were responded to by two presidents — Jean Claude Juncker and Klaus Iohannis — and two commissioners — Marianne Thyssen and Tibor Navracsics. 'We better take care of the young generation and do whatever is necessary to integrate them. It is absolutely vital for the EU society,' added Iohannis, the President of Romania. Young people that participated in Sibiu have the vision that tomorrow the generations should inherit a future-proof world with strong democratic values, an authentic feeling of belonging in the EU society, equal opportunities, a digital world they are able to navigate through and a climate that is resilient to change.

Annex 1:

1 day, 50 ideas

Not all ideas have made it to the report. The following ideas were also heard during the day and are listed here to show that young people have much more to say than this report could capture.

A. DEMOCRACY AND ME: ENGAGING IN EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

- Idea 1** - Revised European citizens' initiatives
 - Idea 2** - A fake-news agency with national offices
 - Idea 3** - A platform for public input
 - Idea 4** - Exclusive EU broadcasting channels
 - Idea 5** - Young lobbyists
 - Idea 6** - Active fight against fake news / fact-checking certified agency
 - Idea 7** - Broadcasting every day a 10-minute programme made by the Parliament/Commission talking about the EU live on all channels (Facebook, Twitter, public TV channels, podcasts, Instagram and EU websites (translation into all EU official languages))
 - Idea 8** - EU news agency
 - Idea 9** - Lower the requirements for citizens' initiatives / lower the age of engagement of European citizens' initiatives to 16
 - Idea 10** - Lobby mechanism for young people (local to global)
-

B. SOCIETY AND ME: HOW DO I WANT TO GET INVOLVED AND BUILD COMMUNITIES?

- Idea 1** - Co-management
 - Idea 2** - Political education
 - Idea 3** - Real-life dialogues with politicians
 - Idea 4** - Volunteering recognition
 - Idea 5** - EU civic education agency
 - Idea 6** - Expanding Erasmus+ to promote vocational education and training
 - Idea 7** - EU ambassadors
 - Idea 8** - Engagement of Institutions in the Education of Future Generations
 - Idea 9** - An annual European information week at school
 - Idea 10** - A phone application extending the connections between teachers (or others) for collaboration
-

C. FAIRNESS IN THE EU: ILLUSION, REALITY OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS?

- Idea 1** - Equal pay
- Idea 2** - Solidarity for refugees
- Idea 3** - Unemployment scheme
- Idea 4** - Education against discrimination
- Idea 5** - Opportunities for women
- Idea 6** - Minimum and equal pay for the same work in each Member State, financed by a common EU tax

- Idea 7** - Common EU work law (e.g. a European minimum wage according to the cost of living in the country)
 - Idea 8** - Remove the narrative of men's and women's jobs, using education to promote a person's own interests
 - Idea 9** - More opportunities for women (e.g. lifelong learning seminars, workshops on equality between men and women)
 - Idea 10** - Create new protections through legislation (e.g. improving conditions for mini-jobs, types of contracts, 'Uberised' workers — collaborative economy)
-

D. DIGITAL EUROPE AND ME: WILL OUR LIVES AND JOBS CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?

- Idea 1** - National agencies to provide digital skills
 - Idea 2** - Clear rules for platform work
 - Idea 3** - Charter on fundamental digital rights
 - Idea 4** - Virtual exchanges online
 - Idea 5** - Workplace health
 - Idea 6** - Redesign school curricula to include more practical experiences, boost transversal skills and promote proactive attitudes
 - Idea 7** - A common educational framework to diffuse best practices among EU Member States
 - Idea 8** - An online platform for the exchange of ideas and practices between educational actors
 - Idea 9** - Promotion of regional fact-checkers: extending budgets, developing technologies
 - Idea 10** - Increase of the budget of EU-funded projects (Erasmus+) on digital education and awareness
-

E. FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN EUROPE AND ITS YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE?

- Idea 1** - Eco traffic-light system
- Idea 2** - 'Alternative' transport
- Idea 3** - Modern climate change classes
- Idea 4** - Emergency environmental policy framework
- Idea 5** - Transparency of common goals
- Idea 6** - EU-wide carbon tax with the proceeds invested into renewable energy
- Idea 7** - Free public transport
- Idea 8** - Introducing climate change as an interactive and active/directive school subject
- Idea 9** - Approximating a zero-waste production and consumption structure
- Idea 10** - Additional funding for a shift towards green energy

Annex 2:

Photo competitions – #MySocialEurope

Of the more than 1 000 photos submitted, the participants in Sibiu were able to see the 15 best ones from the #MySocialEurope photo competition. Each of the following winners visualises a topic that was dear to them personally but also tells a story about the situation in their country. The #MySocialEurope photos shed light on a phenomenon that, in the eyes of the photographer, is not being paid enough attention.

HASHTAG

#SocialRights



'LOVE IS PATIENT'

1- BEATRIZ PEREIRA, PORTUGA, 27 🇵🇹

How does your photo speak to us?

Beatriz: 'The photo captures an intimate moment of daughter–father caregiving. My mum gave up her job to look after my grandfather, who is more and more dependant. My project focuses on the recognition of informal care and portraits of people having different diseases.'

Why is this project relevant at the EU level?

Beatriz: 'Because I want to spread equality and decency of healthcare treatment. Informal care is not recognised in many EU countries. The caregivers are often needed 24 hours a day and receive very little if any money. This is the time and place to show the topic. This picture represents the love and care we need to share with those who need it.'

HASHTAG

#inclusion



'JAIME AND CARMEN, SON AND MOTHER'

2- MARIA GINER SOLER, SPAIN, 29 🇪🇸

What is the message of your picture?

Maria: 'My picture captures a family where the child has a rare disease, but since he does not have a proper diagnosis, nobody knows what the disease is. I want to bring EU attention to the fact that in Spain there is no money to invest in medical research into rare diseases. It is a part of my project. I spent 24 hours with the families to see what their daily life is like.'

What makes the photo European?

Maria: 'It represents the value of inclusion of people with disabilities. I think that when we see someone with a disability, we see them as someone different. We tend to feel uncomfortable, look away or pity them. But I would like to change that on an EU level. I feel like it the topic does not have a lot of recognition.'



1- BEATRIZ PEREIRA, PORTUGAL



2- MARIA GINER SOLER, SPAIN

Annex 2:

Photo competitions - #MySocialEurope

HASHTAG

#digitalnatives



‘LEARN. ANYWHERE. ANYTIME’

MÁTÉ LADJÁNSZKI, HUNGARY, 22 

How can people relate to your picture?

Máté: ‘I wanted to make the importance of learning visual. It does not matter that my picture was taken in Budapest. The right to learn is a basic one that should be given to anyone. I am extremely proud that I won. The best thing in a photographer’s life is when you can share the message of your photo, and this seems like the best place.’

What is the state of education in Europe?

Máté: ‘It needs to catch up with the evolution of technologies and digitalisation. There needs to be a comprehensive investment in media literacy education all across the EU and beyond the borders too.’



Annex 2: ---

Photo competitions - European Solidarity Corps

To celebrate the entry into force of the legal basis of the European Solidarity Corps, the Commission launched the European Solidarity Corps photo contest: 'My magic European Solidarity Corps moment'. The first round of the contest was announced at the European Youth Ministerial Meeting in November 2018. The pictures capture a 'magic moment' of the contestants during their European Solidarity Corps activities. A TV screen in Sibiu showed all of the photos, including the photos of the month and about the winners. The pictures capture young people participating in projects to protect the environment, work with the elderly or work with children.

Lucie volunteered in Estonia, where she found new friends from Italy and Bosnia whom she took on a hike into the Estonian forest. They experienced together the special atmosphere of the vastness of Estonian nature and finished with a traditional sauna. The jury decided on this picture for its composition, its loneliness and Lucie finding true friendship through the European Solidarity Corps.



LUCIE BERQUIERE, FRANCE, 25

How does your picture speak to us?

Lucie: 'Above, you see a Bosnian and an Italian discovering the foggy Estonian forest. In my opinion, intercultural learning is the most important value of the European Solidarity Corps. I thought this picture was a good representation of this European melting pot.'

Why is your project important at the EU level?

Lucie: 'My project took place in a circus school where I worked mainly with children. Some of them have the chance to travel with their parents, others do not. I think it's important for everyone to grow up understanding what "a stranger" is. Through these things that may seem trivial, there is an opportunity to understand more about cultural difference, and so to fight racism.'



Annex 2:

Photo competitions – European Solidarity Corps

Hugo volunteered at Tour du Valat in the natural reserve of the Camargue (France) to protect, monitor and research water birds, namely the great flamingo. He also engaged with visitors to sensitise them to the beauty of the place and the preservation of nature and its inhabitants. The jury decided on this picture for the beauty of the composition, the great flamingo colony and Hugo's story. Hugo is also one of the 21 active young people who want to create a European Solidarity Corps network.



It makes you want to go outside and enjoy what this world has to offer, making you lost in its beauty. A truly magical moment.'

Why is your project important at the EU level?

Hugo: 'For me, my project has a big importance for the EU. We should develop more projects like that and I am actively seeking for it. This project allowed me to get important data that will help the protection and understanding of species like these beautiful flamingos and Mediterranean wetlands. It allowed me to inspire students, children and curious people to the cause. Additionally, we currently have young Europeans spending thousands of euros to go for few days to other continents to do something like this. Why are we not supporting these youngsters to do them in Europe? We need them! Nature needs them! They need it and they want to help! We have so much wonderful nature in Europe, why are we not getting the help of youngsters to preserve it?'

HUGO FERREIRA, PORTUGAL

How does your picture speak to us?

Hugo: 'It is a very special photo for me. It speaks to my inner kid. The kid that had a dream of watching all those wonderful animals from Sunday morning shows in real life. It shows the perfect balance between humans and nature; we can learn just by observing. It shows a student learning by doing and getting inspired to do more. It relaxes you and makes you dream.



Meet the authors



Julie MAHLEROVÁ, CZECH REPUBLIC

Julie studied communication and mass media at the University of New York in Prague, and for 4 years has been working as a journalist and media-maker in the EU field, with a specialisation in editing. Besides writing, she loves hiking and her dream is to work for the BBC.

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Chiara is a freelance journalist born in Italy but based in the UK. She studied journalism at City, University of London and currently works for British news organisations. In her free time she loves reading, writing, swimming and travelling.

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Mie is a Danish reporter currently based in Copenhagen. She holds an Erasmus Mundus master's in international journalism and has worked for the press team at the European Parliament Information Office in Denmark. She has extensive knowledge about EU affairs and loves travelling and writing. Mie is a passionate Tintin fan, an explorer and a *bon vivant*.

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The young citizens' dialogue on the topic 'Let's shape the future of Europe together!' took place on 8 May 2019 in Sibiu, Romania. This report delivers a comprehensive insight into a full day of interactive workshops and dialogues with EU politicians. The 300 young European that participated in Sibiu have the vision that tomorrow the generations should inherit a future-proof world with strong democratic values, an authentic feeling of belonging in the EU society, equal opportunities, a digital world they are able to navigate through and a climate that is resilient to change.



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