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THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S YOUTH OFFER

Seeing the European Parliament in Strasbourg during the latest edition of the EYE (European Youth Event) filled with thousands of young people eager to learn, speak up, and make European democracy more participatory and representative, gives meaning to what we do every day. But what exactly is our mission, and how do we ensure that young people feel they are also part of the European project?

The European Parliament engages with young people, educators and youth organisations through a wide range of educational programmes and opportunities. To make sure they are more than mere passive actors, we create real opportunities of exchange with decision makers in interactive formats that stimulate debate and active participation. We want to create a long-term relationship with them and build a community of active European citizens ready to support European democracy by getting involved and ultimately voting in the European elections. Yet can relationships of trust be built in a day or two? Good things take their time and every little action counts. With this in mind, we put in place a comprehensive set of initiatives, from events and awards to educational programmes. We aim to reach young people with all levels of knowledge and background, including those who are less certain about what Europe does for each of us. Regardless of the steps we take, we always have three goals in mind:

- **Provide information:** not everyone knows how the European Parliament works, nor are they familiar with its priorities and activities. Ensuring that young people, educators and also civil society organisations working with youth understand what the European Parliament is, what it stands for, what it does and what it offers, is essential. Sometimes we meet young participants expressing their interest in getting involved in youth activities but not knowing where to look for or simply how to start. As plain as it may seem, that's the first step.

- **Allow young people to be active:** we want to encourage them to take part in events and to attend networking activities. But to achieve this, we must remember that not everybody has the same opportunities, and we have to make them available to everyone. Inclusivity is always at the core of what we do. We regularly launch calls and grants to support young citizens with fewer resources or advantages. This also ensures we are as accessible as possible for all and provide genuine diversity, in terms of gender, geography, socioeconomic status, ability, etc.
- **Offer real opportunities to be involved:** to learn, take action, express ideas, facilitate dialogue amongst youth but also with the European Parliament. Conversation is a two-way street! That's why we encourage youth associations to collaborate with us in designing our events and activities programme, which results in an offering better suited to young people's interests and real-life needs.

Political participation

One of the biggest myths is that young people are apathetic and uninterested in political participation. The results of the [EP 2024 youth survey](#) conducted by the European Parliament with approximately 26,000 young people aged 16 to 30 from the 27 Member States tell a different story.

Data shows that voting in local, national or European elections is the most common form of political and civic participation among young people in the EU, with 39% doing so. Creating and signing petitions is the second-most popular form of participation for 26% of the respondents. To add to that, about one in five reported having done volunteering for a charity or campaign organisation (20%), posting opinions online or on social media about political or social issues (19%) or boycotting or buying certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons (19%).

This shows that there is a willingness to participate, but times have changed, and politics must adapt. When we ask young Europeans what holds them back from getting more involved in politics, we find some barriers.

About 30% of respondents who have never contacted a politician explained that doing so would not have an impact for them, while 23% felt that decision-makers do not listen to people like them. A lack of interest in the political process is true for 18% of respondents, while 12% shared that they simply do not understand what is going on enough to get involved. For some, the language used in political discourse is also too complex to understand.

If we take the concrete example of the past European elections in June 2024, we see that among the reasons for not having voted, there is again the feeling of lacking information to make a decision (16%), followed by not finding any relatable candidate or political party that represented their views (15%) and a general distrust or dissatisfaction with politicians and politics (15%).

How to encourage young people to take part

The survey also shows that 37% believe that increased opportunities for young people in their country to study, volunteer, work and travel abroad are a benefit of being a member of the EU. What does Parliament offer to all those seeking opportunities, and to all those who are still unaware of what is available?

Let's take a look at some examples of opportunities for youth participation provided by the European Parliament:

- **EYE (European Youth Event)**

If you are looking for an inspiring event where you can meet thousands of young people from across the European Union and beyond, right at the heart of European democracy, the EYE is for you. Organised every two years in Strasbourg, it provides a unique opportunity for 16- to 30-year-olds to inspire and get inspired, to debate directly with Members of the European Parliament and other European decision-makers, and to exchange views with experts, activists, journalists and content creators.

The sixth edition took place in June 2025 and welcomed 9000 young people from 133 different nationalities. More than 450 programme-related activities took place inside the European Parliament premises and outside at the EYE Village, which was coordinated by the European Youth Forum and which was an outdoor space for workshops, debates, stands, creativity and activism. Among these activities, 163 activities were selected through an open call and were organised by youth groups, youth and civil society organisations, and young participants at the event. The variety of debates, performances, workshops, stands and exclusive sessions with Members of Parliament have proved to be a successful tool to bring Europe closer to young people.

After the EYE, and to ensure young people's views are reflected in EU policymaking, we are working on the possibility of introducing young people's perspectives, needs and rights in parliamentary committees, to invite a number of young people attend parliamentary committee meetings and provide input on legislative files.

This new concept is being implemented in other institutions and would help ensure youth voices are effectively integrated into Parliament's work.

- **The European Charlemagne Youth Prize (ECYP)**

The European Parliament, in cooperation with the Foundation for the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen, awards the European Charlemagne Youth Prize (ECYP) every year to youth-led projects that foster democracy, promote active citizenship and bring communities together. With this prize, we celebrate the powerful work that young people aged 16–30 do every day to shape a shared European identity and make a lasting impact on Europe's future.

In order to participate in the European Charlemagne Youth Prize, you will need to:

- Have a European project with which you wish to apply;
- Be between 16 and 30 years old;
- Be a resident of one of the EU Member States – you can submit a project either as an individual applicant or on behalf of an organisation or a group of young people.

All submitted projects will be first evaluated by a national jury in your Member State, which will select a single national winner. From these 27 national winners, the three top European laureates will be selected by the European Jury and awarded up to €7500 in prize money for their projects.

If you have a project or know someone who has one, why don't you apply to the next edition of the ECYP? Applications are open for approximately one month at the beginning of each year (from January 7 to February 2 for 2026). Do not hesitate, no matter how big or small your project is. Trust your work and especially the impact it has on others. If you need inspiration on previous winners, you can discover them on the [European Charlemagne Youth Prize website](#).

- **Euroscola**

The [Euroscola](#) programme offers young Europeans the chance to experience the role of a Member of the European Parliament for a day in the heart of the European democracy. This initiative brings students from the age of 14 years old from all 27 EU Member States, applicant countries and former Member States to Strasbourg to debate, take sides, negotiate, amend, vote and finally adopt resolutions on real European issues. The students, always accompanied by a teacher or an educator, get the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the workings of the European institutions, to discuss democracy, fundamental rights, European values and to express their personal opinions on the decisions taken at the European Union level.

Imagine participants gathering in the Parliament's Hemicycle in Strasbourg to experience firsthand what is the role of a Member and how EU politics work and you will have the perfect picture of what an Euroscola session looks like.

- **European Parliament Ambassador School Programme (EPAS)**

The European Parliament Ambassador School Programme (EPAS) aims to increase the awareness of students from 14 years and above about European parliamentary democracy, the role of the European Parliament and European values, directly from their classroom.

Teachers and students are appointed as Senior and Junior Ambassadors by the schools selected to take part in the programme. Teachers and educators take care of organising lessons on European parliamentary democracy by using European Parliament interactive educational materials that include general information and facts about the EU, training on democratic skills and participation, class role-play games and quizzes. Teachers and students can put in place activities such as the creation of an EU Info Point, (or stand of information about European opportunities), the organisation of Europe Day events or the creation of social media content. They liaise with Members of the European Parliament, other Ambassadors and partners, and engage with their communities.

When the school year finishes, the activities carried out by schools are evaluated and if everything is successfully completed, the school is certified as an Ambassador School. Teachers and students may also be given the possibility to participate in Euroscola sessions in Strasbourg or other events organised by the European Parliament in the Member States and Brussels or Strasbourg.

It starts with you(th)

It's often said that young people are the future, but they are also the present. And youth engagement starts with every little step, from learning about the role of the European Parliament, to signing an online petition, to casting your vote on the next elections. Are you ready to give it a try?

All the European Parliament's youth programmes listed in this article and much more are available in 24 languages on the Youth Hub, a portal where you can find information about events, materials, and prizes. You can also follow the Parliament's social media youth channels to follow our work.

Educational materials

In many of our events and meetings with teachers and educators, we have understood that schools, high schools and also universities need to have informative, comprehensive and easily accessible materials on European issues. For this reason, the European Parliament is updating its educational resources for teachers and educators to teach about the European affairs in an attractive way. They will soon be available on the Youth Hub as a toolkit with different elements that can be selected and customised based on the specific needs of the educators and learners. You should stay tuned for the launch; we will share more information soon to make sure this reaches every corner.

We invite you to have a look at our offer, to reach us at youth@europarl.europa.eu and stay in touch with us!