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Imprint

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All pictures taken at the peer-learning seminars in Berlin
and Vilnius and the conference "Hear my voice!" in Brussels.

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Foreword

The following set of recommendations was drafted by an editorial group based on the results of the Multilateral Cooperation Project “Participation of young people in the democratic Europe” and the “Reflection Group on Youth Participation” of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. The recommendations comprise the results of an 18 months peer learning process of five countries (Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Poland and The United Kingdom) involving ministries responsible for youth, youth representatives, and other experts. The recommendations are also based on the findings of more than 25 youth researchers and other experts from academic and practitioner background. These recommendations were further discussed and qualified during the “Hear my voice!” European Conference (Brussels, 6-8 October 2014) by 55 experts on youth participation from 15 different countries.

This whole process forms a joint effort to take youth participation out of the corner of a “nice-to-have”. The stakeholders and experts involved believe that there is a gap between the will declared in many recent political documents to strengthen participation, on the one hand, and the putting into practice on the other. We believe that Europe and its member states have a deeper problem than only a financial crisis. Europe has a problem of trust, of sustainable, democratic governance and a problem to offer the young generation at all levels ways to participate and to experience having influence on political decisions which affects them.

With the following recommendations we want to contribute to a reflection and the changing of the mind-set of stakeholders and decision-makers on European, national, regional and local level. We want to raise the motivation of responsible key people working for and with young people in order for them to encourage participation amongst young people, as well as share their experiences and lessons learnt with those responsible for youth policy. As this will help to support a change of approaches in learning (about) democracy and participation. We feel that our initiative comes at an opportune moment. The current Team EU Presidency (Italy, Latvia, and Luxembourg) puts emphasis on the empowerment of young people for political participation and therefore chose this topic as the overall thematic priority of the fourth cycle of structured dialogue with young people. During the EU Youth Conference “Young People’s access to rights”, held in Rome in October 2014, participants asked the European Commission and Member States to provide enhanced citizenship education at all stages of formal education and support non-formal learning providers. Also during the Council of Europe’s World Forum for Democracy, November 2014 in Strasbourg young people all over the world rallied to make their voice heard and demanded new means of direct democratic expression, new forms of democratic participation and new ways of encouraging young citizens to become involved. The first Global Forum on Youth Policies that took place in Azerbaijan in October 2014, over 700 participants from 165 countries emphasized, inter alia, the need for support of youth civic engagement and participation in decision-making and political processes and institutions.

It is not accidental, that experts and young people from various backgrounds call for similar steps of action to be taken. It shows that there is an urgent call for changing the way politics is made, communicated and shared; if we do not want to lose the young generation and their critical ideas, creative input and innovative potential we need to create an enhanced democratic “culture” in all spheres of life. Europe, it is time to amplify the participation of young people!

The editorial group:

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Background

Participation plays a key role in keeping democracy alive. It is considered to be a crucial or even main principle of the democracies of the 21st century. Political actors of European institutions and organisations emphasise in many recent documents the integrative significance of participation fostering active citizenship, especially with regard to the young generation in Europe.

When we talk about Europe today we think of the whole continent from East to West and North to South, including the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and the 28 member states of the European Union. This already reflects a large diversity in terms of policies, cultures, economies and histories. Regarding the state of democracies and the role of civil society, we consider Europe and many countries herein to be in a critical state. In a number of countries, the election results for national parliaments as well as – in the European Union – for the European Parliament revealed an increase in support for nationalist, anti-European and xenophobic parties. In addition, Europe is in a deep crisis, not only economically but also culturally and politically in terms of power relations, conflict solutions, identity, legitimacy and basic trust. There appears to be a general dissatisfaction with what is considered the “European Project” especially among young people – concerning its values as well as with the functioning of democracy.

However, people want to have their say and address their dissatisfaction in various ways, either directly and frankly towards the political decision makers, or in less constructive ways. This context produces a dangerous amalgam that is gaining force in almost every country across Europe. It is therefore time to redefine and to foster the participation of citizens, particularly young people as a core principle and basic value of democratic governance in Europe.

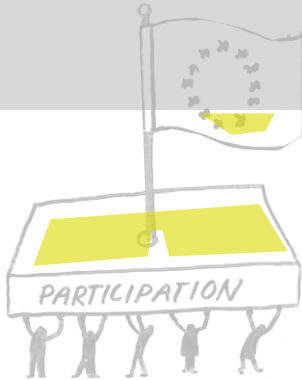
The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a person who fights for children's rights has to be considered a good sign in the right direction: the 17-year-old Malala Yousafzai as the youngest contestant ever. Her courage and civic engagement show that young people can achieve great things regardless of their origin and age. And it makes clear, that participation needs to be linked back to the question of the fundamental democratic rights and education of young people.



1



**Understanding participation
of young people:
participation takes place
in various forms and arenas!**



Participation means having a say on the environment one lives in and shaping it according to our needs and interests. Participation of young people takes place in political and social processes and bodies. It can be of individual or collective nature, it happens online or offline in different settings, as well as in urban or rural life. Young people also engage in their communities, educational environments, the labor market and public space, their daily life, youth care & welfare systems, civil society structures and cultural projects. No matter if this engagement happens in new or traditional forms, young people participate massively in their daily life – but not always in the ways expected by institutional and political actors. Participation of young people has multilateral dimensions, which can be described as ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ participation:

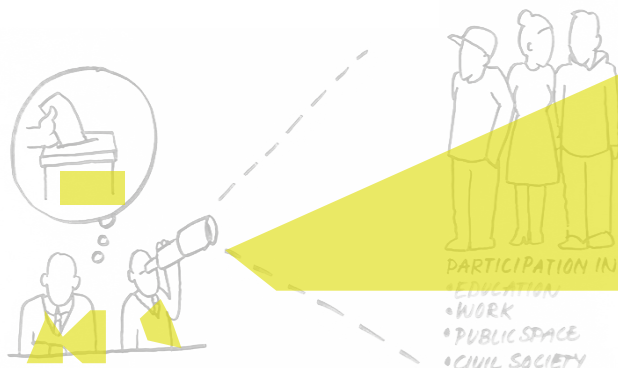
Political dimension

Formal participation in structures of the political system (e.g. membership in a political party, voting in elections, being a candidate in elections or the official representative of young people) and non-formal participation in the political culture of the civil society (e.g. projects, hearings, demonstrations).

Social dimension

Formal participation in social structures of the society (e.g. membership in an NGO), non-formal participation in the social culture of the civil society (e.g. social activities, volunteering).

We need to move towards a wider understanding of and a paradigm shift for ‘public participation’ and what forms of participation young people are using. This should be embedded in a wider discourse on the understanding of a participatory democracy. Participation in all spheres of private and public life means much more than (only) taking part in elections. This should not be underestimated, but one should also look outside of the ballot-box when exploring participation of young people!



What we need to do is:

- Promote a **wider understanding of the notion of participation** as a right and concept of experiencing public and political life in order to influence daily-life issues. This should include the whole scope from local authority laws and mandatory youth representatives (like e.g. in Israel) to activity-based and open formats of citizen movements.
- Include **the ideas and visions of young people** in shaping the understanding of democracy and adjusting structures and practicing democracy to face the challenges of today.
- Link **and balance informal participation** of young people in everyday life and unconventional practice **with formal participation** in institutions.
- Recognise **good examples** of effective participation of young people - whilst peer learning should be ongoing; relevant institutional stakeholders in the field of participation of young people, such as NGO's, the European Youth Forum, National Youth Councils, SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Centre should create or provide databases of good and recent examples and reports and provide them e.g. in the European Knowledge Center for Youth Policy.
- **Share power and leadership with young people** – Programmes like the young mayors network (UK) or public youth budgets like in several countries (Italy, France, Portugal or the UK) should be regarded as a successful way for effective participation. This must go hand in hand with a change of perception towards the model that “young people are the solution – not the problem”.
- **Introduce a youth participation mainstreaming** approach in politic - A **“Youth Check”** should be proposed for all EU-Member States, following the Austrian example of a legal framework for checking the effects on young people of all political opinions. This approach should highlight the impact and consequences that policies/laws have on young people, in particular on targeted youth groups.

Hear my voice!

with Participation powerful



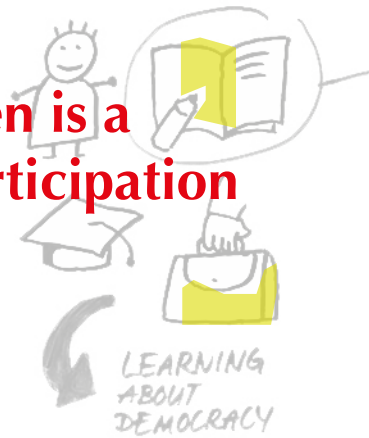
Conference, 6 – 8 October 2014, Brussels



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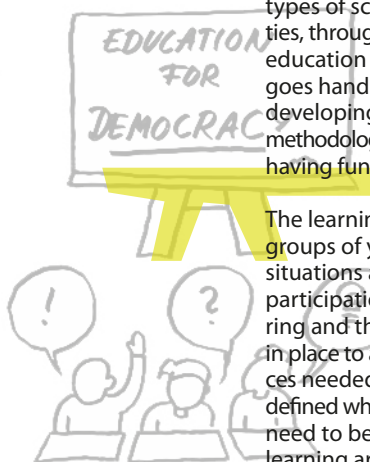


**Learning to be a
democratic citizen is a
key factor for participation**





Learning participation is a life-long issue in various areas of life that keeps democracy alive. Therefore, holistic and inclusive learning concepts including formal, non-formal and informal approaches help fostering participation of young people. Participation can be taught; in all learning settings in various types of schools, through non-formal learning, in universities, through youth work, in communities, as part of vocational education and on training sites. The learning of participation goes hand in hand with making learning more attractive and developing democratic and participatory approaches and methodologies, such as peer learning, learning by doing (practising, having fun, volunteering, having the right to make mistakes).



The learning of participation must be accessible to all groups of young people, particularly those in vulnerable situations and with fewer opportunities. The learning of participation should be accompanied with quality mentoring and there should be supportive structures and mentors in place to assist this learning process. The skills and competences needed for participation and learning outcomes must be defined while ethical and quality standards in learning objectives need to be respected. There are many links to various other learning arenas, which support learning participation such as citizenship education, human rights education, intercultural education and global education. The overlap and the resulting added value should be better used.



In the field of teaching democratic values

In the field of life-long democracy learning

In the field of non-formal learning activities

In the field of formal education: winning formal education as a new partner

In the field of youth work: strengthening youth structures as a strong pillar of civil society

In the community: supporting a participation-friendly environment



In the field of teaching democratic values

The local community is the place where all citizens, regardless of cultural, religious or socio-economic background, sexual orientation and physical abilities, live together in the same neighborhood. In a broader perspective, education on democracy and participation supports community cohesion and integration.

What we need to do is:

- Make educational settings a place where young people learn and can experience democracy;
- Raise awareness that participation is a right for everyone to have a say and to be heard, including the right to be organised;
- Develop respect, tolerance and pluralism in order to foster living together in diversity;
- Gain and maintain motivation for active and democratic citizenship.

In the field of life-long democracy learning

Active citizens need to be able to raise questions, develop standpoints and negotiate them with others. Therefore, young people need to know how politics at different levels are organised and how democratic decision-making processes operate.

What we need to do is:

- Learn to participate in decision-making from an early age, in kindergarten, school, training, or work;
- Offer opportunities for young people to take part in public debates and citizens' dialogues;
- Encourage and empower young people within training and workshop settings to take part in political activities;
- Learn about politics in an interactive and multi-perspective way and by "personalizing politics" and explaining what politics has to do with the individual everyday life.

2



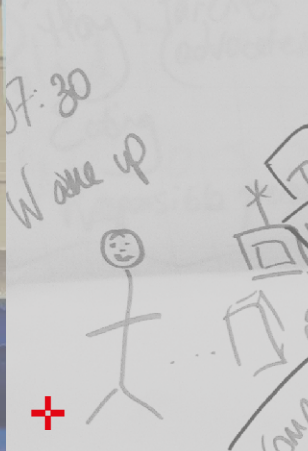
In the field of non-formal learning activities

Learning democracy and participation can be strengthened significantly by non-formal learning projects and youth work activities, since their methodology and approaches such as project orientation provide a good and supporting framework.

What we need to do is:

- Encourage providers of non-formal learning, including NGO's, to meet high standards and to take sustainable action while applying participatory structures and methodologies;
- Provide citizenship education with a stronger political focus. This means to support young people in exercising a critical social and political analysis, when identifying their own political position – without any indoctrination;
- Develop an ethical consensus and set of quality standards in each country. The introduction of or agreement on ethical and quality standards should be accompanied by a process to agree on guidelines with the providers of civic education, train-the-trainer courses etc.;
- Put civic education and NGO's in the position to outreach their non-formal learning activities to excluded target groups. There also needs to be a change of funding rules or provision of special resources for this kind of work;
- Equip educators (both in formal and non-formal settings) with the capacities to develop and implement educational processes that encourage the learner's ability to develop motivation and competences for political and social participation.





In the field of formal education: winning formal education as a new partner

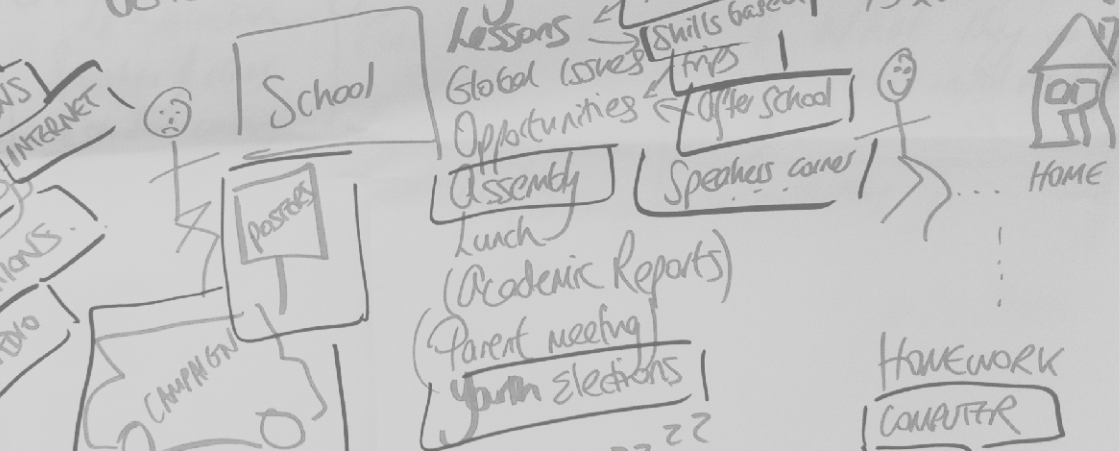
Formal education and vocational education and training (VET) are a constant factor in the socialisation process of young people. Therefore, schools and VET sites could and should play a greater role in promoting participation.

What we need to do is:

- Develop a holistic 'Education for Democracy' strategy by focusing on the identity of young people and their responsibility to engage in democracy;
- Link youth work to curricular activities at schools and VET sites;
- Focus on supporting a participatory mind-set and educational approaches in schools to strengthen students' abilities to discuss topics, to question standpoints and to find their own solutions and to solve problems;
- Support schools to become partners in supporting young people to learn participation and democratic values;
- Link and cooperate between formal and non-formal education and increasing the connection between schools and the local community, especially for lessons and activities in social science, ethics, environmental studies etc.
- Select a team of teachers and students to serve as coordinators of cooperation within the local and regional community (e.g. to coordinate excursions to see how parliaments function, how courts work);
- Accompany pupils and students in their learning through their participation in school structures (e.g. school councils).

In the field of youth work: strengthening youth structures as a strong pillar of civil society

We need to support youth NGO's and youth initiatives as well as public services which offer support to young people such as youth clubs, youth information and counselling services, centres for non-formal citizenship education etc. Young people should be encouraged, invited and attracted to participate in these structures. Debates and



dialogue with young people have to be organised and a critical reflection of values related to participation, policy and democracy offered, supporting relevant communication, consultation and co-decision structures. Tools and information channels have to be developed and made available.



What we need to do is:

- Provide sustainable support of youth structures, which foster and qualify participation, deliver knowledge and offer training in order to foster short-term or longer-term participation;
- Provide particularly genuine, institutional and long-term support for the work of youth NGO's at all levels;
- Find innovative ways to liaise between youth political parties and political life in general, for example by organizing events and debates with young politicians within both formal and non-formal structures;
- Raise awareness of the added value of youth sustainable structures.

In the community: supporting a participation-friendly environment

To achieve sustainability, individual action and measures need to be taken for the promotion of participation of young people, which are appreciative and encouraging, thus forming a tailwind from society, politics and administration.

What we need to do is:

- Make participation a high profile phenomenon and not a generous "nice-to-do-thing";
- Emphasise the benefits of the participation of young people to all stakeholders in the field of youth policy, such as innovation, integration and quality improvement of political decision-making, prevention of brain drain – especially in the municipal sector;
- Establish obligatory dialogue formats such as intergenerational dialogue;
- Encourage decision-makers and administrations to use attractive methodologies to enable participation (e.g. World Café and other methods);
- Use accessible and clear language and forms of communication that young people understand.

3



**It takes a whole society
to rear a democrat!**



Participation is a key to good governance in the 21st Century to foster the fundamentals of democracy in a contemporary way. It is not the young people who have to change and “deliver” to become good democrats. A lot of young people dislike politics not because they do not know what politics is or because they are not interested in politics, but because they disagree with the language, the style and the way politics is taught and done. Learning and experiencing democracy cannot be reached only by top-down measures. It needs generally more participatory settings and ‘cultures’ as well as more actors in the society, particularly decision-makers who are open to democratic principles.



What we need to do is:

- Establish **transparency and accountability**: decision-makers should outline clear conditions and procedures for participation processes so that everyone understands. Public administration and NGO's should communicate clearly when it is possible or not possible for young people to get involved in participation processes. Decision-makers should communicate the findings and conclusions that result from participation of young people.
- Promote **Youth policy 360°**: To achieve consistency and establish ‘**youth mainstreaming**’ there should be an administration unit on youth policy at least at national level, which is appropriate to the population and advocates for the needs of young people. Youth policy demands cross-sector and inter-ministerial cooperation and structures, which must be strengthened to foster participation of young people at all political levels. With regard to the huge differences between nations a specific focus on the diverse contexts and models of mainstreaming is necessary. This should enable public administration to adjust the decision-making process to joint procedures (co-management as in the CoE) in all environments related to youth, and at all levels of governance.
- **Aim at sustaining the participation of young people**: each public administration or responsible unit at any level should identify responsible experts in youth affairs to whom responsibility for the political steering and commitment for youth participation could be delegated; where existing this needs capacity building and structures put in place in order to strengthen coordinating roles.
- **Find pathways for all young people to participate**: consider innovative, inclusive and targeted strategies to reach out to vulnerable and excluded groups of young people, e.g. through information and non-formal learning and youth work activities; empowerment should be one of the main principles.
- **Train young people to interact with institutions and train professionals working with young people**: to interact with young people, the training should be implemented in the formal and non-formal educational system. Evidence and- participatory-based approaches should be used while creating targeted training programmes; relevant documents and symbols should be adjusted to youth friendly language. Apart from training and information sharing, political socialisation is needed through real life experiences (practicing democracy), and not only simulation.

4



There are many good examples and approaches - make use of them!





Peer learning is an acknowledged element of the EU youth strategy framework. This also means the reinforcement of exchanges of practices. Therefore, peer learning on participation of young people should be fostered at all levels – local, regional, national, and European level. These processes are running easier when a network or framework such as twinning cities or other already existing connections is already in place. By such mutual learning tailored tools and services and their different functions and needs should be explored. It would be fruitful to identify where young people already engage and share lessons learnt. The recognition of the added value of non-formal learning by society and by formal educational institutions, in particular, is important to enrich participation approaches in the formal educational sector.

Policy makers should create an atmosphere and sufficient resources to encourage the establishment of mentoring systems at all levels. NGO's could function as providers of such mentoring programmes. In addition, training and debates with politicians are required to establish such mentoring schemes and to make them efficient (e.g. offered by SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres). To enhance the 'participatory climate' European stakeholders should jointly run a social campaign or create an annual Europe-wide day where young people can shadow decision makers to get insight into how democratic processes function and how deliberation works in practice. During a "European Youth Take Over Day" (inspired by the UK) national and local activities could be combined (such as e.g. already existing Children or Youth Parliaments in Slovenia, Poland or Germany).

Often, offline participation approaches make use of online tools or platforms in order to exchange information quickly among the participants or to work on common documents. In addition, offline and online participation offers are mostly interlinked, since young people use mainly new media for communication and information. But one should keep in mind, that not every young person has access to the Internet.

What we need to do is:

- Document good practices in relevant databases, on the EU level such as the EU Youth Portal, SALTO-YOUTH Good Practice Database, European Knowledge Center on Youth;
- Feature good tools provided by different NGO's or inspirational speeches from 'youth ambassadors' on an Good participation Practice App;



- Encourage the interconnections between formal and non-formal settings for the promotion of participation of young people, while non-formal education should keep its unique principles and values alive;
- Showcase good practices during relevant (European) events;
- Disseminate examples of good practice on encouraging the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or from socially disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Use mentoring systems and other supportive approaches to engage young people in democracy;
- Promote non-formal learning and participation of young people by concerted public actions on European and national level like the week of non-formal education (Romania) or the "Take Over Day" (UK);
- Ensure inclusive access to information about participation opportunities through various channels combining old and new media;
- To support critical usage of media - the standard of media training in school, and out-of-school education should be enhanced by combining online tools with offline participation formats.



5



**A few things yet to know
- we need a better
knowledge of the
participation of young people**



Policy-making and youth work have both taken a big step forward towards knowledge and evidence-based strategies in the last decades. A better understanding of the participation of young people and providing knowledge on their social and political involvement is an asset that helps shaping better policies and practice. In this regard there is a need to further support and to conduct research on the participation of young people and fill knowledge gaps, to better understand the concept and forms of participation and to improve knowledge on learning approaches and their impact/effect on learners.



In general terms, knowledge on the participation of young people, particularly research findings need to be provided and disseminated in an understandable manner, to policy-makers and to young people themselves. Resources to support research initiatives should come from European institutions and national ministries, since universities and research centers have insufficient budgets for this kind of activities. Implementation and results should be reported in national and European youth reports.

What we need to do is:



- Promote in-depth qualitative research on political participation of young people to foster a better understanding of “out of the box” forms of political participation (such as e.g. MYPLACE, RAY study on effects of participation within the Erasmus+ programme);
- Extend the definition of participation (e.g. include sub-culture elements, self-expression, unstructured ways of participation);
- Analyse participation both in the public space and in daily life interaction (such as e.g. the Enquête Commission of the Bavarian State Parliament “Being Young in Bavaria” or the advisory board of the “National report of children and youth care” in Germany);
- Examine the interconnections between existing learning participation concepts such as European Citizenship Education, Human Rights Education, Education for democracy and tolerance, Intercultural Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship, Global Education in order to shape and strengthen youth participation;
- Understand how new or alternative forms of civic engagement (internet-based and internet enhanced activism, e-participation, social movements, spontaneous forms of participation of young people) are interrelated and what skills are needed in the constantly changing environment;
- Research synergies between formal, non-formal and informal learning environments for the promotion of participation;
- Research how social-economic conditions and unemployment affect youth participation;
- Study forms of anti-democratic participation such as in the right-wing and nationalistic movement and the reasons for their increasing attractiveness;
- Examine the reasons for ‘non-participation’ and motives why young people do not participate (by choice or because of exclusion) in order to propose measures for overcoming obstacles of engagement.

What is a Youth Take Over Day?



An example taken from the UK: The National Take Over Day, launched in 2007, is supported by the Children's Commissioner for England to promote and encourage youth involvement and participation. Every 'Take Over Day', businesses and organisations from across the country, ranging from Local Authorities, schools and police departments to radio stations and super markets; coordinate a wide range of activities to enable children and young people to work alongside adults, try out different jobs, take on challenges, and be involved in decision making.

*"The day gives children and young people the chance to work with adults for the day and be involved in decision-making. Children benefit from the opportunity to experience the world of work and make their voices heard, while adults and organisations gain a fresh perspective on what they do. We hope this will help break down barriers between generations and encourage children's active involvement in their communities."*¹

From its composition, the Take Over Day is a flexible event with various levels to which young people can be involved:

- Job shadowing: Young people follow someone in their post for the day, seeing what their job involves.
- Work experience: Young people are given tasks to complete which are part of the work of the organisation, ideally doing work towards a current project.
- Sharing a challenge: The organisation shares a challenge it's facing, and asks the young people to come up with a solution.²

In 2014, the National Take Over Day takes place on 21 November in various places in England. Organisations and Local Authorities which take part in the Take Over Day can show their participation by using posters "We have been taken over" and benefit from info packs available for them, for schools and for young people.

Of course, the scheme of a Take Over Day can be criticized on various levels:

- if taken as a sole measure to increase participation of young people it would lack real possibilities to influence political decisions sustainably
- it could be perceived as a top-down measure as the decision makers "allow" young people to have an insight in their positions and tasks; the bottom-up quality of receiving young people's feedback during this day on how they perceived shadowing a decision maker plays a decisive role in this context
- it might be even perceived to perpetuate the project-based, one-off approaches which do not contribute to a systematic increase of participation of young people; here it is vital that the introduction of the Take Over Day is accompanied by training and educational possibilities to learn how decision making functions, to experience deliberation processes, and to embed the experience of shadowing a decision maker in a longer term participation learning experience

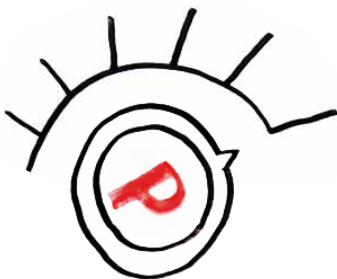
Once more, there is no "one-size-fits-all": the Take Over Day can be a strong signal to open up political structures to young people – it does not replace giving real decision power, budgetary competence etc. to them. Embedded in a holistic concept of opening up "adult" structures and offering systemic participation possibilities with learning opportunities on various levels, the European Youth Take Over Day can be a solid sign of decision makers and stakeholders that they are willing to shape the future together with young people.

¹ http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover_day

² from the Take Over Day Application Pack of London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham



Open up for more participation of young people!
What about a “European Youth Take Over Day”?
Young people would shadow decision makers and have
a lively insight in politics, open the parliaments,
have a young mayor co-manage with an adult mayor,
or a youth group take over the board of an NGO...
For just one day per year.
Everywhere in Europe.
To start with.





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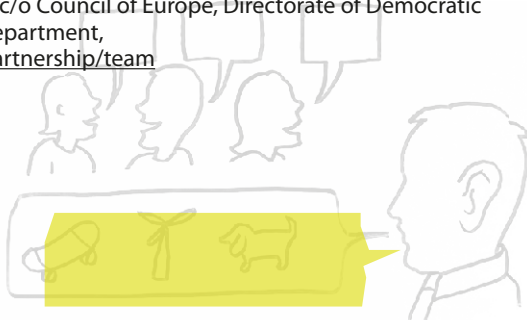
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The Multilateral Co-operation Project “Participation of young people in the democratic Europe” in a nutshell

2011 has seen young people in some European states going out to the streets, occupying central public spaces like their peers in Tunisia and Egypt, protesting and calling for changes in the political and economic reality. Does Europe face a new quality of delegitimization of its political and democratic fundamentals? How can on the other hand those social groups which face disintegration and social decline (among them especially young people with fewer opportunities) have better possibilities to be part of the democratic society? What are tailored and innovative approaches, what are new forms and spaces for youth participation? The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth invited delegates from four partner countries to discuss together in the frame of a multilateral co-operation project to develop adequate answers to the new challenges a democratic Europe faces today.

The Israeli Ministry of Education, the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Polish Ministry of National Education and the British Youth Council (representing the United Kingdom's "Youth Voice" partnership with the Cabinet Office) took part in this continuous peer-learning process. National approaches and practical experience were exchanged in order to find ways in increasing the participation of specific target groups and exchanging on new forms, places and approaches of youth participation. This peer-learning took place in three seminars (in Berlin, Jerusalem and Vilnius) and resulted in recommendations joined with the findings of the “Reflection Group on Youth Participation”. The aim was that the results of this process (including the conference “Hear my voice!” in Brussels in October 2014) shall be delivered back into European and national processes, so that practice, policy making and science may benefit as much as possible from it.

The overall peer-learning was financed and initiated by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany (BMFSFJ) and co-financed by the Training and Cooperation Activities within the EU Programme Erasmus+ YOUTH IN ACTION.

The positions in this brochure do not necessarily reflect the position neither of the BMFSFJ nor of the European Commission.



Federal Ministry for
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The Reflection Group on Youth Participation by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership

The EU-CoE youth partnership has reinforced its focus in 2014 on youth participation, a key topic for youth policy, based on the work from both partner institutions, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and actors in youth work practice and research.

Youth participation, a field of action of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018), figured in recent years among the priorities for cooperation between the European Commission and the Member States: In 2011 and 2012, the Council adopted Resolutions on this topic, which i.a. called for using new tools and methods to enter in dialogue with young people and to reach out to more and different groups of young people. In 2013, the European Commission presented a study on the situation and trends in youth participation among different groups of young people, exploring the merits of various aspects of participation¹.

In the Council of Europe youth participation has been a central issue since more than 40 years. It finds a formal dimension in the principle of co-management with decision-making shared equally between government officials and representatives of youth organisations. Thus participation is at the same time a goal, a principle and a practice in the work and philosophy of the organisation. The Declaration "The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020"² regards 'young people's active participation in democratic processes and structures and equal opportunities for the participation of all young people in all aspects of their everyday lives' a key priority.

The aim of the EU-CoE youth partnership was to summarise and to deepen the reflections on this topic. Facts and figures were gathered and three analytical papers produced, on "Why Participation?", "What is Participation?" and "How is Participation learned?". These draft papers were discussed in a reflection group meeting with experts from policy, practice and research in July 2014. The proceedings and findings are available on the EU-CoE youth partnership website, inviting policy makers, practitioners and researchers to continue promoting participation of young people in all spheres of their lives. Forces were joined with the Multilateral Co-operation Project "Participation of young people in the democratic Europe" and based on the finding from both activities, joint recommendations were elaborated³.

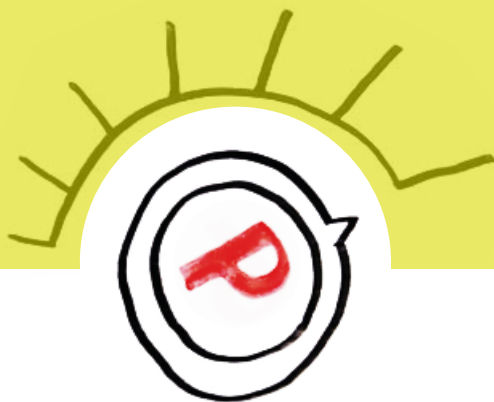
¹ conducted by London School of Economics

² adopted by the 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, Ukraine 2008

³ These recommendations do not necessarily reflect the position neither of the Council of Europe nor of the European Commission.

Watch & share the movie "Hear my voice! Amplify participation of young people in Europe!" on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUHpGEEHSM&feature=youtu.be>



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