

# Final Declaration of the EU Youth Dialogue - Youth Participation in Germany and Denmark

Berlin, November 2025

## Introduction

On 7 November 2025, over 100 youth representatives from Denmark and Germany met in Berlin to participate in the one-day European Union (EU) Youth Dialogue on “Youth Participation in Germany and Denmark”. They represented a variety of youth organisations, youth movements and interested young individuals in Denmark and Germany. The conference was initiated and hosted by the Danish Embassy in Germany in close cooperation with the German Federal Youth Council and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

A key element of the EU Youth Dialogue were eight thematic workshops dealing with youth participation in **Political Parties, European Policymaking, Reaching Underrepresented Youth, Youth & Democratic Resilience, Intergenerational Dialogue, Youth & Social Cohesion in Times of Crisis, Social Media as Political Sphere, and Mental Health**. Young people are particularly aware of developments in these areas; as experts on the realities of their own lives, they can provide important impulses for shaping the European policymaking.

In the workshops, the participants contributed actively, discussed the policy fields and possibilities for more youth participation and they jointly developed outcomes for this final declaration.

As a cross-cutting demand, the participants recall that all processes to strengthen democracy and to build a sustainable Europe must actively include the participation of young people and their representative bodies.

## FINAL DECLARATION

### Conclusions

#### Conclusions from the workshop on *Youth Engagement in Political Parties*

- Young people are not the next generation of leaders; they are the current generation of citizens.
- To legally embed long-term youth needs, the EU should mandate the establishment of National Youth Advisory Committees (NYACs) with a legally anchored mandate to review and draft binding opinions on all legislation affecting young people before such proposals are brought to a vote.

#### Conclusions from the workshop on *Reaching Underrepresented Youth*

- We understand underrepresented youth as people with less money, women, BiPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color), people with language barriers, immigrants, the queer community, people from rural areas, people with disabilities and people with disadvantaged family backgrounds.
- One of the major issues is ensuring accessibility regarding time, knowledge, mobility and financial status. To address this, we propose a legally mandated Erasmus+ outreach campaign targeting younger audiences, for example secondary schools, to provide clear, practical and easily accessible information.

#### Conclusions from the workshop on *Youth & European Policymaking*

- EU consultation processes work relatively well, but meaningful youth participation in decision-making remains limited. Binding structures to ensure young people's voices are considered are still lacking. Therefore, a mandatory feedback mechanism from the EU Council, the EU Parliament, and the EU Commission on the outcomes of EU participation tools must be established.
- The EU must ensure its communication and participation opportunities are accessible and understandable to all young people. Information on how the EU affects everyday life and existing possibilities for participation from EU programs to political decision-making processes must be inclusive, low-threshold, and shared through channels young people use. Only in this way can EU policy truly reach young people, strengthen their engagement, and enable meaningful participation.

## FINAL DECLARATION

### Conclusions from the workshop on *Youth & Democratic Resilience*

- Youth organizations are a vital part of democratic resilience by creating strong and democratically organized communities. Therefore, we demand stable core funding which is independent of political changes and does not have unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Factual debates are crucial to foster trust in democracy. We demand the implementation of mandatory live fact-checking in state-funded media, e.g. political talk shows.

### Conclusions from the workshop on *Intergenerational Dialogue*

- Education is essential at every stage of life. To prepare young people for an ever-accelerating future, education systems must continuously adapt to changing needs. The foremost goal of all education for all generations must be to foster critical thinking as the core of lifelong learning.
- Intergenerational fairness should not be a tug of war, where everyone fights for their own interest. Instead, all parts of society should engage in intergenerational solidarity. To ensure all voices are heard, we recommend the legally binding participation of all age groups in EU decision making through quotas, hearings, or impact assessments.
- We recommend that the EU Commission and Member States fundamentally rethink how to inform citizens, especially young people, about existing (youth) programs, ensuring their participation in developing and promoting them. Communication from the EU Commission should be broad, engaging, and youth centered.

### Conclusions from the workshop on *Youth & Social Cohesion in Times of Crisis*

- To foster youth solidarity in the EU, civil society organizations need better access to funding and information to reach, inform, and bring people together in digital and non-digital spaces across societal divides, e.g. through EU Day and partnerships with EU content creators.

### Conclusions from the workshop on *Social Media as Political Sphere*

- A law should regulate both, content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms, ensuring that AI content is clearly labeled and to reduce the effects of “echo-chambers”.
- Verified fact-checked content should be given a badge to indicate its verified (similar to “blue checkmarks” already in use).

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### Conclusions from the workshop on *Mental Health*

- The EU should treat mental health as an impactful issue by funding low-threshold services integrated into the daily environments children and young adults, e.g., in schools.
- The EU should create a hybrid safe space or network for young people to connect, meet and get information on events and activities.

## FINAL DECLARATION

### Remarks on Meaningful Youth Participation

Participation in the democratic life of any community involves more than just voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Recognising the importance of voting and elections, young people are motivated and interested in political issues within our societies; however, they find that traditional forms of participation are not fulfilling their promises.

Discrimination of all kinds, along with a general othering and patronising of youth, keeps adding barriers to youth engagement with democratic processes and institutions, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and disenfranchisement.

Thus, meaningful participation means, that young people are always enabled to have a direct influence on everyday life and politics, that formats and framework conditions are appropriate and the commitment of young people and their positions are taken seriously and serve as a basis for what is to come.

This event in the framework of the EU Youth Dialogue demonstrates that young people need the EU, but the EU also needs young generations.

### Final remarks

The EU Youth Dialogue makes a decisive contribution to the communication between youth and EU institutions. Further strengthening this instrument is a central component to the involvement of young people and in advancing their interests.

The Final Declaration has been developed by the participants solely and does not represent the opinion of the Danish Embassy in Germany, the German Federal Youth Council and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

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