

**Youth
Goals**

EU YD9

EU YOUTH CONFERENCE
IN VÄXJÖ, SWEDEN

**Final Conference Report:
Recommendations on
Sustainability and Inclusion**

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March 2023, based on conclusions of conference participants and work
of conference harvesters

**Engaging together for
a sustainable and
inclusive Europe**

Implemented under the
Swedish Presidency of the
Council of the EU

Introduction

The EU Youth Conference (EUYC) took place in Växjö, Sweden on 20-22 of March 2023 under The Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU. It was the third conference under the Trio Presidency of France-Czech Republic-Sweden and concluded the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD). The thematic framework of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD9) was Youth Goal #10 Sustainable Green Europe and Youth Goal #3 Inclusive Societies under the title “Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe”.

By combining Youth Goals #3 Inclusive Societies and #10 Sustainable Green Europe, the objective of the EUYC in Sweden was to involve young people in discussions and deliberations with policy makers and political decision makers on the social dimension of a sustainable Europe for youth. By emphasising the social dimension of sustainable development, the overall objective of the EUYC in Sweden was to contribute to the aim of giving all young people the opportunity to participate and gain influence in the work for a sustainable future.

Through the conference working group sessions and plenary discussions, the conference participants formulated recommendations for each of the five sub-themes of the EUYD9 Cycle. These recommendations were used to feed into the Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 9th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (“the Council Resolution”).

This report summarises the key discussions and results from the EUYC in Sweden. The full conference programme is in the annex.

Opening speeches

Mr. Jakob Forssmed, The Swedish Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health opened the conference via a video address, stressing combating mental illness and social inclusion as key priority areas, wishing the conference participants fruitful debates, and success drafting recommendations on sustainability and inclusion, the two key topics of the EUYD9.

Ms. Lena Nyberg, Director General of The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF), welcomed the participants, introducing the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society as a knowledge-generating body focusing on youth in a wide variety of areas, but also as a National Agency for Erasmus+, and one of the coordinating bodies of the EUYC in Växjö. Ms. Nyberg also stressed the importance of various projects in the youth field, such as the Europe Goes Local initiative. Ms. Nyberg also stressed the need for young people to have the power to influence conditions they live in, giving examples of local democracy methods that are in operation in Sweden. Ms. Nyberg also underlined the importance of the EUYD for deepening of understanding of the EU processes all around Europe, including awareness of the youth dialogue and the way in which young people can influence policy making.

Ms. Noura Berrouba, President of the National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organisations (LSU) welcomed the participants to Sweden and to the EUYC, and voiced excitement at the upcoming processes. Ms. Berrouba listed a wide variety of areas in which the EU affects everyday lives of young people, stressing the importance of EU policy making for national policy making in Member States. Ms. Berrouba underlined the importance of the recommendations that are to be drafted during the conference for EU policy making, namely in helping young people to make their voices heard. Ms. Berrouba also listed contemporary threats to democracy such as rising populism and authoritarianism in the world, and stressed events such as the EUYC contribute to shaping a world which is democratic and based on human rights. Ms. Berrouba also mentioned interdependence of social inequality and environmental sustainability, as impacts of environmental degradation have immediate social ramifications (e.g., water poverty, displacement, etc.). Ms. Berrouba stressed access to resources as a key condition to be able to thrive, and also to avoid extreme weather events, to establish sustainable rural communities, sustainable urban development, and to promote social equity.

Ms. Miriam Malmquist, Head of Group at the Civil Society and Youth Unit, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Sweden welcomed all participants in Växjö, stressing that needs and priorities of young people should be reflected in policy making. Ms. Malmquist underlined the need of governmental decisions to create positive conditions for civic society to operate, as that is a key domain that benefits all members of society. Youth policy is a cross-sectoral area and it needs to be coordinated, to ensure youth perspective is present in all policies, stressing youth mainstreaming as one of key policy making principles in Sweden. Ms. Malmquist mentioned that the processes leading to the EUYC have been youth-led, and the EUYC outcomes in the form of concrete recommendations will feed into the Council Resolution. Ms. Malmquist also stressed the need to further develop the EUYD processes in the future, with the upcoming DG Meeting to debate some of the EUYC conclusions that deal with improving EUYD processes.

Objectives of the EUYC were presented by **Ms. Emma Wedner**, one of the Swedish youth delegates. Ms. Wedner outlined the two main EUYD9 topics of Youth Goal 3 (Inclusive

Societies) and 10 (Sustainable Green Europe), summarising the EUYD9 processes from the EUYC in France, in the Czech Republic, leading to the EUYC in Sweden. Conference facilitators **Ms. Clara Drammeh** and **Ms. Alice Bergholtz** introduced various conference sessions, as well as how they work and interlink with each other (e.g., working group sessions, open space format, etc.), along with well as roles of harvesters and researchers capturing to conference discussions.

Opening panel discussion

Panel members:

- Ms. Kristýna Jelínková - Czech Council of Children and Youth Council (ČDRM)
- Mr. Sigge Eriksson - Sweden National Youth Council (LSU)
- Ms. Martina Schiattarella - French National Youth Council (CNAJEP)
- Ms. Julija Kordež - Rural Youth Europe

This panel discussed the expectations and advice for both youth and Ministerial delegates from the panel members. Panel members were youth representatives from National Youth Councils of the FR-CZ-SE Trio Presidency countries, and Rural Youth Europe, an International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation (INGYO).

Ms. Kirstýna Jelínková advised youth delegates who were attending for the first time to take a positive approach, and not to be afraid to ask more experienced delegates and facilitators for support. She highlighted the importance of creating a safe space for debates. Considering her expectations Ms. Kristýna Jelínková emphasised that she expected EU Member States to “take the Council resolution as their own.” She noted that young people are asked to compromise their expectations on a regular basis, especially in the area of climate policy. She expected Ministerial Delegates to take account of this, and to work in the spirit of compromise themselves to deliver strong outcomes with regard to sustainability and inclusive society during the conference. Ms. Kirstýna Jelínková further noted that “the work does not end here in Växjö, it only starts here”. She encouraged all delegates to approach politicians and M.E.P.s to further the conference outcomes.

Ms. Martina Schiattarella shared what has been done at the national level in France within the EUYD9 cycle. Here, 1200 young people came together with local decision makers to make recommendations. Ms. Schiattarella was hoping the European Resolution would reflect this. Ms. Schiattarella reminded youth delegates to take account of scientific publications on climate change such as the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. She stated that in France young people say it's important to listen to scientific work on this topic, and also highlighted this as a priority within the previous cycle of EUYD. Ms. Schiattarella gave advice to Ministerial delegates to work together and keep in mind the priorities of the Czech Presidency on intergenerational dialogue. She described one of the aims of the EUYC as enabling people of different ages and perspectives to work together. Ms. Schiattarella's expectations for the conference were concrete proposals and recommendations from the working groups, which were well considered and built on the more broad discussions of previous conferences. She also hoped the EUYD would mobilise more politicians and EU representatives in response to these recommendations.

Ms. Julija Kordež gave advice to youth delegates to be open minded, and to speak from their heart and their experiences. She hoped that the conference would provide an opportunity for people to share and learn from each by exchanging opinions. Everybody has their own knowledge and we are here to collect this and share points. She encouraged Ministerial delegates to talk with young people as much as possible to create intergenerational dialogue. Noting that this space is unique in the EU, Ms. Kordež identified that we need to work hard and fight for the outcomes of the conferences to be implemented. She called on Ministerial delegates to use their roles to advocate for the conference outcomes, and reach out to other decision makers. For her own expectations, Ms. Kordež identified she hoped to grow networks and learn from the work of the other organisation by speaking on the topics of Youth Goals #3 and #10, which are closely linked to the values of Rural Youth Europe.

Mr. Sigge Eriksson reminded youth delegates that the EUYD cycle lasted only one and half years, so time was limited. For this reason it is important that delegates make best use of this time. He stated that conference delegates should reflect on the work of the cycle so far. This reflection process could help evaluate the cycle and also help advance the outcomes. Mr. Eriksson highlighted that “connections, colleagues and co-operation” were the three words that represent the EUYD dialogue to him. The conference would enable participants to meet colleagues and friends and then develop co-operations coming from the dialogue that could extend after the conference. He highlighted that, in times where there is a lot of division, we need these “three C’s”, to take place in contexts like the EUYD in order to help unite us towards common goals. Mr. Eriksson noted the importance of face to face discussion during the conference. Whilst the various reports and resolutions would capture the formal outcomes, a much deeper understanding can come from direct dialogue. This could help identify how meaningful the experience had been for the individuals who took part, and how represented they had felt in the process.

Information and Education working group results

Group deliberation process

Starting with the reflections on the EUYD9 consultation and implementation outcomes, the conference delegates identified remaining gaps in implementation such as: inclusive education, sustainability competencies, transformative potential of education, and interdisciplinary perspectives. The delegates also noted potential strengths, such as links between formal and non-formal education, building youth-friendly and accessible information sources, inspiring various stakeholders, and also increasing accountability of policy makers.

From these initial debates, the delegates deliberated on potential topics of the recommendation, listing empowering young people via schooling, increasing competences of young people via non-formal learning projects, including sustainability topics in lifelong learning activities, and intergenerational inclusion and learning. The working group also debated on topics that were later on discarded and did not influence the working group’s recommendation creation process further, such as inclusion of young people from various backgrounds in the EUYD processes, and delivering clear messages to policy makers.

Subsequently, inclusive lifelong learning encouraging understanding of climate change and its ramifications, as well as utilising intergenerational and interdisciplinary approaches to empower young people by providing them with skills, tools, and information on how to get

involved in sustainable practices, were chosen by the conference delegates as the key topics to focus on further.

During the session with decision-makers, the conference delegates raised questions such as: How do the current education system and youth information services exclude people? For Swedish policy makers, what is user friendly information and how is it published? How can decision-makers contribute to recognising and valuing non-formal education as an equal counterpart to formal education? Decision-makers provided valuable feedback, namely pointing out that different educational levels are governed by different governments (national, local), and that the recommendation should have a clear language.

As a result of the discussion above, the following recommendation and abstract have been prepared by the conference delegates.

Recommendation:

“We request the Member States to ensure equal access to user-friendly information on sustainability and climate change through inclusive and empowering non-formal and formal education fostering intergenerational dialogue and learning.”

Supporting abstract:

“The aim of our resolution is to secure trustworthy and inclusive information on sustainability and climate change. Such user-friendly information accessible to people from different ages/stages of life help us achieve a greener Europe. We need to integrate information on these topics into all types of educational content, both non-formal and formal. It is important to learn together and from each other, taking different perspectives into consideration like various cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, climate justice should be taken into consideration. It is not fair to burden young people with the consequences of the policies that they, themselves, did not make. We must have all generations actively involved in education about climate change and the solutions needed.

Young people need the skills, knowledge and platforms to take meaningful action. It is important to utilise the potential of non-formal education and recognise the practical benefits. We foresee the implementation through an interdisciplinary approach and make use of the potential and knowledge of youth organisations and youth information services already available. It is necessary to provide resources for educators to receive the appropriate training and capacity to perform their role. As this is a living process, it needs to be a continuous process of evaluation, monitoring and improvement.”

Action and Empowerment working group results

Group deliberation process

Starting with the reflections on the EUYD9 consultation and implementation outcomes, the conference delegates identified remaining gaps in implementation. More progress was still needed making effective links between participation mechanisms and policy making, particularly in relation to environmental and sustainability issues. There was still a need to ensure participation led to actions and change by policy makers. Key discussions included the need for mandating youth participation in all policy fields. This meant links to policy fields that are not “conventionally” inclusive of young people (e.g., climate, housing etc.) but are still very much impacting young people. It also meant mandating participation across all EU Member states, as some countries have weaker participation systems. The importance of intergenerational dialogue, as well as intersectional and inclusive approaches was highlighted, to ensure a stronger approach to inclusion within policy making and participation.

From these initial debates, the delegates deliberated on potential topics of the recommendation. They considered ideas relating to diversity and justice for minority groups, and enabling young people with less means and support to feel “permitted” and enabled to take part in participation spaces. This related to ideas of strengthening political education,, and affirmative action and bottom up, youth-led and grassroots approaches to participation. Transparency and active communication of policy making in youth-friendly languages was also considered.

Ultimately, the group moved forward with a focus on how meaningful youth participation could become mandatory and “legally binding” in all fields and levels of policy making. Alongside this they continued to explore how long-term intersectional inclusive and structures for participation could be achieved. Careful consideration was given to the importance of “mandating” of “guaranteeing” such structures and processes; the group was keen to establish a strong and permanent approach to young people's involvement.

During the session with decision-makers, the conference delegates discussed various challenges different countries might face in implementing “mandatory” involvement of young people at “all levels”. The need to consider that some country's systems for youth participation are less fully developed was raised, making it harder for these countries to implement participation on a mandatory footing. Decision makers also raised concerns that current structures were not fully representative of young people and their voices, creating further barriers to policy maker's willingness to engage with them.

Furthering their discussion, the working group recognised that different methods and structures for participation may be needed in different countries in order to take into account national and local realities. The group also opted to emphasise local level structures. This supported their ideas about the need for grass roots, bottom up, approaches to participation, which could be most effective at working inclusively and intersectionality. Focusing at the local level was also felt to have long-term potential for strengthening participation structures across Europe.

Recommendation

“We urge Member States to guarantee independent advisory boards on a local level (e.g., youth councils) consisting of, and selected by, young people with an intersectional emphasis on young people with fewer opportunities, taking a sustainable approach.”

Supporting abstract:

“Time and time again young people are disregarded and excluded in decision making processes that have a grave impact on their future. In order to tackle this issue, we urge the betterment of local bottom-up participation mechanisms through empowering young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

Although these [advisory boards] currently exist in some countries such as Finland, Estonia, and Sweden, we recognise the need for a Europe-wide framework to establish more efficient models for effective co-decision processes between local youth and decision-makers. This approach needs to be taken in a sustainable and intersectional lens, to ensure both the continuity of the processes, and the inclusion of youth from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. Taking an intersectional approach implies that a person might be experiencing several forms of discrimination and marginalisation at the same time.

These boards shall be formed through democratic and youth-led processes in which young people choose their own representatives. The exact process and its logistics can be reflective of the respective local context. The members of the boards will act as the voice of the local youth before, after and during the local policy making processes.

It is crucial that member states prioritise the inclusion and representation of young people in decision-making processes. By implementing independent advisory boards on a local level and empowering young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, we can create a better future for all.”

Governance working group results

Group deliberation process

Starting with the reflections on the EUYD9 consultation and implementation outcomes, the conference delegates identified their remaining concerns considering the progress made so far. This included a lack of focus on young people’s involvement in environmental or climate policy, as distinct from other fields of policy, ensuring institutional representation of young people at all levels, further improving accountability in policy making and inclusive participation in policy making.

From these initial debates, the delegates deliberated on potential topics of the recommendation. These included ideas to encourage and develop formation of National Environmental Youth bodies, accountability measures to guarantee diverse youth representation within decision-making on sustainability, transparency and accountability in policy making, youth participation in local governance structures, and feedback and outreach to young people with fewer opportunities.

Subsequently the group moved forward with a common concern of how to make meaningful youth participation in policy making “the norm” when sustainability policy decisions are taken. This included the role of transparency and accountability during such processes. The relationship between Governance and participation mechanisms was discussed extensively. It was challenging for the group to distinguish between ideas to enhance transparency and accountability in Governance, and ideas to enhance the functioning of youth participatory mechanisms and structures. They ultimately recognised that participatory mechanisms are a method of improving Governance. At the same time, the need to focus on Governance of sustainability issues during the process of constructing the final recommendation was discussed.

During the session with decision-makers, the conference delegates raised issues such as how youth washing can be avoided, how decision-makers define governance, how Governance differentiates from action and participation, how the topic is approached by decision makers, and which methods of participation enable young people to have the greatest impact on policy making. The decision makers advised that it was easier to have impact at local or municipal level, and when ideas and proposals are concrete. Regarding the definition of Governance, decision makers commented that Governance is based on a structure; it is about how young people are integrated in policy making structures, while participation can have a softer nature. They suggested focusing on “official” participation rather than meaningful participation.

Moving forward the group considered how their work might complement the work of the Action and Empowerment working group, and how their recommendation might become more specific. The need to link clearly to Governance, as well as sustainability, was discussed.

As a result of the discussion above, the following recommendation and abstract have been prepared by the conference delegates.

Recommendation:

“[We recommend] develop[ing] legislation ensuring accountability and transparency in environmental and sustainable development policy making processes and supporting participation and evaluation mechanisms which enable this (e.g., youth bodies, youth tests) at local, regional and European level”

Supporting abstract:

“The consultations of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue showed a high level of mistrust among young people towards the effectiveness of policy making mechanisms regarding economical, social and environmental policies. Despite aspirations and efforts to include young people in these policy making processes, young people report that their engagement is unlikely to bring about political change.

The purpose of this recommendation is to make sure that young people are included throughout the policy making process, making their voices heard, while monitoring and providing follow-up and feedback to young people on actions taken by policy-makers following participation activities and publicly reporting on changes achieved or justifying the lack of changes by given deadlines. This will help increase transparency and accountability at all levels of policy-making.

The recommendation contributes to the empowerment of the role of youth bodies, including local, regional, national and European youth councils, the strengthening of the EU Youth Dialogue and introduction of impact assessment tools such as the youth tests. This enables better targeted policies that are impactful, work to reduce inequality gaps and support current and future generations.”

Working group results: Mobility and Solidarity

Group deliberation process

Starting with the reflections on the EUYD9 consultation and implementation outcomes, the conference delegates identified challenges such as: long-term youth mobility, trustworthy information on mobility opportunities, low awareness and absencing information sources, options and encouragement to engage in accessible and sustainable mobilities, and recognition of learning outcome of study stays abroad. The delegates also reflected further on topics such as utilising EUYD consultations to influence policy, outreach communication to young people, local and regional participatory mechanisms for youth, limited mobility opportunities for young people with disabilities, ramifications of youth with mental health issues participating in mobility opportunities, potential to simplify administration and increase mobility funding, and impacts that mobility can have on employability.

From these initial debates, the delegates deliberated on potential topics of the recommendation, particularly obstacles for people with fewer opportunities (lack of outreach to certain groups of young people), recognition of mobility stays abroad, and financial matters related to mobilities (e.g., influence of low funding on quality of on-boarding when participating in a mobility project, necessary support for youth with disabilities, etc.). The working group delegates also agreed which topics to discarded from their recommendation such as mental health aspects during mobility stays (e.g., cultural shock, etc.).

Subsequently, recognition of legitimacy of mobility programmes and volunteering was chosen by the conference delegates as the key topic to focus on further. The conference delegates stressed subtopics such as clarity of information, outreach and communication, young people with fewer opportunities, costs of programs for beneficiaries (e.g., in relation to inflation), or youth-friendly language. During planning of further steps, the conference delegates also outlined some key matters that should be addressed in this particular recommendation, such as educational recognition (i.e., recognition of schooling from abroad), societal recognition (i.e., recognition of social value of mobility and volunteering), impacts of mobility opportunities on young people with fewer opportunities, relation of mobilities to micro-credentials, accessibility and psychological safety during mobility, standardisation and accreditation of mobility opportunities, links between non-formal and formal learning sectors, and finally quality labels.

During the session with decision-makers, the conference delegates raised topics such as recognition of mobility and its benefits (including legal recognition procedures), information, outreach, accessibility of mobility schemes, legitimacy and trustworthiness of mobility schemes, increasing access to mobility opportunities by increasing financial support (e.g., in case of youth from rural areas or with various barriers), recognition guidelines for institutions (e.g., including integration of mobility schemes into study programmes), visibility of mobility opportunities, and many others. Decision-makers provided valuable feedback, namely

pointing out that the recommendation should also include a positive message (e.g., what will supporting mobilities lead to in the future), that intersectionality should also be taken into account (i.e., youth with multiple barriers), that soft skills gained during mobility are often ignored or not recognised, that the Erasmus+ programme is an example of a functional scheme, but that it is important to measure impacts and keep track of mobility statistics generally. The conference delegates noted that awareness of the mobility topic was not high in policy makers who were present at the EUYD, reminding them that the topic might not be universally recognised by policy makers at large. Youth Pass was also debated in relation to recognition, and a link to the European Year of Skills was suggested.

As a result of the discussion above, the following recommendation and abstract have been prepared by the conference delegates.

Recommendation

“We urge the European Commission and Member States to create action plans, aimed at the formal education sector and labour market, in order to ensure formal recognition of experience and key competences acquired through participation in volunteering and learning mobility.”

Supporting abstract:

“As part of the European Year of Skills 2023, an urgent need was emphasised to promote the mindset of reskilling and upskilling the workforce, contributing to sustainable growth and leading to a well-equipped formal education sector and competitive labour market. Therefore, we strongly encourage the participation of European youth in volunteering and learning mobility as an active learning-process for further skill development. In parallel, there’s growing misunderstanding not only from youth, but from policy decision-makers, formal education institutions and the labour market, preventing the recognition of the value that these experiences have or the competencies that European youth can develop from them.

Mobility is not accessible for a majority of young people due to lack of information, language barriers, insufficient financial resources and other personal duties. Hence, there is a necessity of having youth friendly and accessible information, from a trusted source, as well as a general awareness raising campaign, for all young people in Europe to recognise these opportunities, empowering a more inclusive society, according to Youth Goal 3.

The European Commission should initiate a process engaging Member States to have consultations in order to develop national action plans, in a 2-year timeframe, focusing on making volunteering and learning mobilities more accessible for young people, particularly the ones with limited opportunities. Moreover, Member States should create a framework to recognise the competences and skills learned during short- and long-term volunteering and learning mobilities as part of their action plans, acknowledging these experiences as beneficial to their work and curricula.”

Working group results: Access to Infrastructure

Group deliberation process

Starting with the reflections on the EUYD9 consultation and implementation outcomes, the conference delegates deliberated on various topics including: sustainable transport infrastructure (e.g., connecting rural areas and neighbouring larger towns and cities), creation of more versatile spaces (co-working spaces and green open spaces) accessible to young people (including people with disabilities), increasing the youth participation in urban and infrastructure policy-making, or internet connectivity (especially in rural areas). As a result of these deliberations, the conference delegates decided to focus on several subthemes, such as: housing market regulations (i.e., providing viable housing options), providing a healthy and affordable living environment, or benchmarking sustainable ways of living.

From these initial debates, the delegates deliberated on potential topics of the recommendation, listing better accessibility (e.g., via multimodal apps or tickets), and promoting sustainable modes of transportation (e.g., car/bike sharing, trains, and generally free public transportation). The working group also debated on topics that were later on discarded and did not influence the recommendation creation process further, such as creating mechanisms to boost infrastructural investments, adequate, affordable, sustainable, and healthy housing, or influence of infrastructure imbalances on social inequalities. A focus on transport was selected as a priority issue.

Subsequently, “climate youth ticket”, i.e., one ticket for all types of public transportation, including rural and urban areas, was chosen by the conference delegates as the key idea to develop. The conference delegates argued that expanding and developing transport logistics from rural areas towards the bigger cities will help with the housing market, creating a viable option for people to travel from the neighbouring cities. The conference delegates also appreciated the simplicity of such a ticket as one travel card would cover all modes of transportation, while also contributing to increased use of the public transport, hence lessening the environmental impacts of the transportation sector as such. The conference delegates also argued that such a tool would support young people to also live outside of large cities, hence positively influencing population distribution and city traffic.

During the session with decision-makers, the conference delegates raised important topics, such as: different levels of public transport (regional, national, international), whether the travel card should be free or discounted for young people, what modes of public transport to cover by such a mechanism, necessary infrastructure developments if the travel card is to be a successful project, whether a physical travel card is to be issued, or digital or gamified options should be available, reliability of public transport across different regions, unification of the public transportation cards/apps around the whole EU to make the process of purchasing tickets easier and produce less waste, and others.

Decision-makers provided valuable feedback, namely suggesting to stick with national level initiative, and avoid international dimension of the travel card, the danger of people misusing the card for holiday trips, suggesting the travel card should be for a reasonable price (e.g., suggesting a system of discounts which would equalise the different economic realities in various EU Member States), importance of advertising in order to support citizens in using the card, and to use a virtual travel card to lower the implementation costs of the initiative.

As a result of the discussion above, the following recommendation and abstract have been prepared by the conference delegates.

Recommendation:

“We recommend the EU Commission and the Member States to provide an affordable and accessible “Youth Climate Ticket” as a universal multimodal tool for public transportation at the regional, national and international levels, and the EU commission to support Member States in advancing sustainable ways of public transportation.”

Supporting abstract:

“Despite existing transportation discounts, due to regional differences, transportation is still an obstacle in the daily life of many young people, especially in rural areas due to it being old and/or insufficient. Transportation affects studying, work, and the daily lives of the youth. Availability, affordability, and universal accessibility are key to advancing our public transportation systems. Utilising public transport by youth decreases rural to urban migration. This helps maintain rural population by decongestion and incentivizing youth to stay while promoting sustainable housing in both rural and urban areas.

The Youth Climate Ticket initiative aims at implementing a simple system for providing young people with accessible, affordable and available public transport on a regional, national and international scale. We believe in a holistic approach to social and environmental sustainability. We also aim at enabling young people to choose sustainable travel options more frequently, Member States to build more sustainable infrastructure in the long term and enhance mobility and solidarity between Member States.

The EU Youth Climate Ticket is a pilot initiative that works on creating a single digital platform on three different levels: regional, national and international. The first two would be optional, supported by the European Commission only in willing Member States. The international level would be subject to EU harmonisation. The platform will have the function to adapt to national prices and will serve as a forum to showcase best practices. When it comes to sustainable public transportation, we want youth to thrive and not just survive.”

Plenary speech by Ms. Maryna Popatenko, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports, Ukraine

Ms. Maryna Popatenko thanked the conference organisers for inviting the Ukrainian delegation to participate in the conference. She highlighted the terrible impact of the war in Ukraine on young people and the youth sector there. 40,000 Ukrainian young people have left the country as refugees and many now have no homes to return to due to the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure. Before the war Ukraine had 300 youth centres were open, but now 13 have been completely destroyed, 31 damaged, and only 160 remain open to focus on offering humanitarian aid. Ms. Popatenko highlighted how their young people inspired and impressed them with their eagerness to help, and to bring victory. She is convinced that peacetime programmes for civil society and youth have led to a strong wartime youth movement made up of young people standing up for human rights and democratic values. She noted that the issue of youth participation now acquired new meaning, since youth fight for their future in Ukraine.

Looking forward, Ms Popatenko highlighted how their youth strategy aligns with the EU youth strategy, but included specific priorities such as, health, safety and resilience of young people. Addressing security challenges for youth and the successful implementation of the strategy is an important part of Ukraine's integration process to the EU. Ms Popatenko called on the European Commission to consider creating a youth policy programme with Ukraine that would develop a plan for integration by focusing on rebuilding and upgrading youth centres and youth participation through activism and capacity building. She made delegates aware that Ukraine is seeking international partners to create a Ukrainian youth fund to develop youth entrepreneurship, tackle post-traumatic stress, the reintegration of 10,000 expected young veterans, and to help young people feel they have the support of the state. Ms Popatenko closed by thanking everyone for their help and solidarity with Ukraine.

Closing panel

Panel members:

- Ms. Laura Verstaete - Flemish Youth Council (Belgium)
- Mr. Jorge Moral Vide - Spanish National Youth Council
- Ms. Enkő Gosztom - Hungarian National Youth Council
- Ms. Christiana Xenofontos - European Youth Forum

This panel reflected on the progress of conference and the 9th Cycle of EUYD, focusing on how the EUYD could develop in future. Panel members were youth representatives from National Youth Councils of the upcoming Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian Trio Presidency countries, who would host the 10th Cycle of EUYD, and The European Youth Forum.

Ms. Enkő Gosztom summarised her experiences in this cycle as complex, being both exciting with times of both motivation and demotivation. Her expectation to become more deeply involved in policy making had been fulfilled, but she also retained the feeling we could still do more to enhance outreach and inclusion within the cycle. **Mr. Jorge Moral Vide** reminded delegates that the cycle had begun shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic and the experience of having over 200 participants heavily engaged in a face to face programme was motivating. He reflected on limits of financial resources to achieve the cycle's goals, and the need for greater recognition from institutions and other stakeholders for the process.

Ms. Laura Verstaete highlighted the successes her National Working Group had achieved using the cycle outcomes to advise their Government on climate education and climate justice. She reminded delegates that the impact of the cycle will continue to grow after it has finished, recognising that outcomes from the 8th Cycle of EUYD around votes at 16 were only now making progress within Belgium. **Ms. Christiana Xenofontos**, attending her 15th EUYC reflected on the long-term progress of the EUYD. She highlighted the EU Youth goals as a milestones and discussed the long-term changes and impact that can be seen from the EUYD over time. She praised the increased collaboration between Presidencies and between cycles, and the role EUYD had placed in building links between National Youth Councils and Ministries as a co-owned process. She noted that many policy makers were now committed to listening to young people, but there is still more work to do expanding EUYD into a cross-sectoral approach beyond the youth policy. She reminded conference delegates that EUYD does not exist in isolation, and further projects and initiatives can be implemented to carry forward the objectives of the cycle.

Ms Verstaete argued that to improve EUYD we need to have better representation and more inclusion of diverse voices, both during the consultation but also at the conference. She highlighted the importance of direct representation of young people who may be currently excluded, and the work being undertaken by a range of National Youth Council to address this. She noted that more visibility of the process is needed and that youth delegates need to be informed and prepared for the conference. She highlighted that for the 10th cycle we want more representation and more inclusivity, and is pleased with the evaluation of youth researchers on this.

Considering the lessons that can be learnt from the 9th Cycle, Ms. Gosztom raised the importance of recognition of the volunteer work undertaken by young people within the process, as well as recognition of INGYO and National Youth Councils. She hoped the 10th Cycle would have strong co-operation between National Youth Councils, National Agencies, and Ministries in how to operate to support the 10th cycle's theme of inclusion. Ms Xenofontos called for further financial support for National Youth Councils to ensure that EUYD National Working Groups were youth led in all countries, as well as for funding for INGYOs. Mr. Moral Vide stressed the need to raise visibility of the process, in order to expand access to learning environment, foster social cohesion and place young people with fewer opportunities at the centre of the process in the picture during the 10th Cycle. He emphasised the need for ambitious communication strategy, on social media, in newspapers and using youth friendly language to broader space for conversation about EUYD

Closing speeches and handover to next Presidency TRIO

The Swedish youth delegate **Ms. Emma Wedner** started the handover ceremony, inviting others to share some of the positive moments from the current cycle. A French delegate mentioned a French festival that, on the national level, works in a similar way that the EUYC, celebrating it as a positive development in introducing new political participation mechanisms. A Czech delegate shared that the EUYC in Prague was the highlight, and recommendations created during the EUYC in Sweden are an important step, albeit only the first one on the way to implement necessary changes. The Swedish delegate reflected that it is important to still deliberate on the European Youth Goals, in order to keep their meaning alive, and explore them again in the demanding and changing times. The Spanish delegate thanked the current Trio and revealed the venue of the Spanish EUYC: Alicante, Spain (October 2023). The Belgian delegate invited everyone to the Belgian EUYC, and the Hungarian delegate to the Hungarian EUYC, and to the EUYD10 as such.

Mr. Ignacio Álvarez, Secretary of State for Social Rights, Spain reached out via a video message and outlined the priorities of the upcoming Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The priorities include supporting the European Youth Agenda, strengthening cooperation across the EU Member States, supporting systematic impact assessment, encouraging the youth mainstreaming, supporting the EU Youth Coordinator, and supporting the youth mobility domain. Mr. Álvarez cordially invited all to Alicante for the EUYC which will take place 1-4 October 2023, as well as for the Director General's Meeting taking place in synchronicity

Ms. Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot, Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+ at the European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, thanked the facilitators and the Swedish Presidency for EUYC organisation, including valuable social programmes and an important invitation to the Ukrainian delegation. Ms. Eriksson

Waterschoot also thanked the previous Presidencies within the current Trio for fruitful collaboration. Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot mentioned that the EUYD9 held a difficult position of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and also events related to the war in Ukraine. Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot stressed the need that the young people have the opportunity to influence policy processes and highlighted the EUYD as a world-wide unique participatory mechanism, underlining the need for higher visibility, transparency, and ownership of the process in the youth sector. Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot also mentioned the European Year of Youth Legacy as a space that can and should also include further deliberations on potential upgrades of the EUYD. Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot summarised impressive statistics related to the European Year of Youth, linking it also to the mid-term review of the EU Youth Strategy.. She stressed there is the need to also follow-up on the EUYD9 outcomes, and implement activities in line with these outcomes to ensure continuation and impact.

Ms. Petra Noreback, State Secretary to Swedish Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health, stated that the recommendations were heard “loud and clear” and that they will be debated during the upcoming Director General’s Meeting as well as creating ripples beyond the EUYD. Ms. Noreback thanked everyone for the energy and hard work of all delegates and the National Working Groups. Ms. Noreback stressed contemporary challenges, such as the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the energy crisis in Europe. Social dimension of sustainable development was one of the priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU, highlighting also the relevance of mental health and well-being. Ms. Noreback underlined that European Youth Goal #3 and #10 have been moved forward by means of outcomes of the EUYC in Sweden, namely the recommendations created by the youth delegates. Ms. Noreback stated that the EUYC outcomes will feed into the Council Resolution with the aim to influence cross-sectoral policy making in Europe. Ms. Noreback finished wished the upcoming Trio Presidency a fruitful time.

Annex 1: Results from open space sessions: “The EUYD in 10 years’ time”

During the EUYC an open space session was hosted to explore how EUYD could be developed and improved. Participants were able to suggest their own topic groups for discussion under the frame of “The EU Youth Dialogue in 10 years’ time”. Across the topics proposed by youth delegates three distinct themes could be seen: Outreach and inclusion, Impact, follow-up and dissemination, as well as Organisations and structures.

Theme 1: Outreach and inclusion

The discussion topics in these groups focused on how the EUYD could be as inclusive and accessible as possible. Participants considered things such as how the learning process should look, what support is needed for young people who take part, how EUYD can be presented as understandably as possible for those who are new to the structure, and how outreach activities should take place.

Specific topics proposed by the delegates related to this were:

- Quality information for young people to learn about the EUYD,
- Increasing inclusion in the consultation phase,
- Accessibility of EUYD activities and EUYC conferences,
- Representation amongst conference youth delegates,
- Visual identity of EUYD.

Note: Conference delegates used a range of different terms to refer to marginalisation and exclusion of different social groups of young people. For consistency, this document uses the term “young people with fewer opportunities” throughout, though other terms are used when needed.

Delegates considered **how to make EUYD activities more accessible**. It was identified that this means **making EUYD more popular and well-known**. To attract newcomers, EUYD needs to be presented in a way that doesn't look so “far away and distant” from most young people. This was particularly related to reducing the complexity of language that is used. It was identified that information about EUYD is too complex, with unclear terms like “cycles” that are not engaging for young people with fewer opportunities. EUYD needs to become “continuously” communicated and desirable to young people that are not currently informed about the process.

Supporting this, the **need for quality information to enable young people to learn about EUYD** was noted. This was especially for “youth who don't take part in this kind of summits or events”. Access to information about EUYD was said to be important to enable outreach to potential new participants to enable them to learn about the process, and to help with onboarding and support of participants once they had joined.

There was said to be a need to work on **making information more inclusive and digestible**, for example infographics and other non-formal methods of communication. Information should be summarised and visualised. It is important to be clear who is providing the information and

how these impacts on how it is received. Young people value consuming information coming from their peers, and peer-to-peer delivery can be highly effective. It was said we can make use of existing peer-to-peer channels, such as youth ambassadors, to share information with other young people. Social media presence is important, but was said to mostly reach people who are already engaged. Information can also be distributed through youth councils and youth organisations, not just from official top-down Government sources. However, it is important to acknowledge National Youth Councils have different conditions in different Member States, local (pre)conditions need consideration in all aspects. There is a need for best practice sharing between these structures. There was a call for **a common visual identity and logo for EUYD** to help better communicate the process. This would create continuity between cycles, and support recognition and exposure. A format with a common layout or logo that is customisable to each country is needed.

Inclusion and diversity within the consultation phase of EUYD was discussed. The need for consultation activities to be proactive in contacting young people from low income backgrounds was highlighted. Approaches to this could include, for example, running activities at football events, activities in high schools that aren't considered "good", and "pop-up consultation" online surveys. A call was made for specific funding to enable participation of young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in EUYD consultation activities. Clear criteria for this would be needed for this, which may be complex (e.g., how to define what is meant by "low income"?). Political challenges may also create implementation issues when targeting funding at some groups such as low income or rural young people. The need to identify "what's in it for young people" taking part in the consultation was raised. Many young people do not feel their voices are heard during consultation, so making their involvement personally fruitful is hard. Consultation activities need to be a beneficial experience for people taking part in order to help include and activate new young people. Therefore ensuring consultation activities provided rewards and incentives was valuable. This could include opportunities to socialise, make friends or even win awards and prizes.

The topic of **representation within EU youth conferences** was debated. Here participants acknowledged that the EUYCs were not representative. It was challenging for youth participants to act to speak on behalf of "all" young people, and there was also a lack of diversity amongst the youth delegates. The need for EUYCs to move outside of the current "bubble" of participants was identified. Alongside this it was said to be important for EUYC delegates to engage more substantially with the consultation activities prior to the conference.

To **improve diversity of EUYC participants**, it was said to be necessary for Ministries / National Working Groups (NWGs) to reconsider what was prioritised when they selected youth delegates. There was a tendency to select the most experienced with participants, which leads to prioritising those who are already experienced and from more privileged backgrounds. It was suggested that quotas or reserved places for young people with fewer opportunities could be used.

Delegates identified **specific barriers for young people with fewer backgrounds who are currently taking part in the EUYCs.** The conference requires the financial stability and resources to be able to volunteer for several days, use of English is a barrier and the size of the event can be daunting. Within the conferences there is a need to consider and manage who is speaking and how patterns of social exclusion are replicated during conference

discussions. Some young women identified experiencing the conferences as male dominated spaces where the inputs of young men were more frequently heard and praised. There were similar experiences for those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Resolving these issues was said to require greater use of reflexivity by youth participants. This could be achieved by providing training and onboarding sessions designed to enable young people in more privileged positions to understand how they may exclude other voices within the conference space. Alongside this, creating dedicated conference sessions to bring together young people from specific backgrounds (e.g. working groups for people of colour) could potentially help support these young people to have their voices heard more freely. However, there was a risk of negatively labelling and side-lining participants as “the young people with fewer opportunities delegates” whose input could become unfairly limited to topics of inclusion.

There was a call to **diversify the range of INGYOs supporting the EUYD process**, in order to increase inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities within the EUYCs and NWGs. This meant revising the criteria of selections for INGYOs to include more international organisations representing or led by young people with fewer opportunities.

Theme 2: Impact, follow-up and dissemination

The discussion topics in these groups focused on impact and follow-on. Participants considered how the influence of EUYD on policy and practice can be maximised and identified. They also considered how feedback can be given to young people on the changes that occur as a result of EUYD.

Specific topics proposed by the delegates were:

- How youth delegates can introduce youth policy to their peers,
- Continuity between EUYCs,
- Transparency of the EUYD,
- Practical ways to implement results,
- Dissemination of results,
- Results and impact of the EUYD.

Awareness of the youth policies in general, and the EUYD in particular, amongst young people was identified as one of the challenges. This is also connected to young people not being aware of the mechanisms they can use to participate in public matters, and hence it can be hard for the **youth delegates** to increase EUYD and youth policy awareness. Youth policy itself is a topic that often does not come with a single definition, making it hard for the youth delegates to communicate about the EUYD to their peers. In some contexts, young people are influenced by older generations who believe the political situation cannot be changed, and neither can policies. This should be taken into account when designing tools to help youth delegates increase awareness of the EUYD among their peers. Research was suggested as a key mechanism to support youth delegates in spreading awareness of the EUYD.

Youth parliaments (on various levels, including the local ones) were identified as a very useful body to support youth policy development and implementation, if connections are created between the youth parliaments and policy makers. A role of a youth mediator can be created at municipal levels to help create and manage relationships between the policy makers and the youth parliaments. Municipalities should also support youth initiatives directly (e.g., via

funding), and serve as gateways for the young people to the world of policy making. All of these suggestions can help implement EUYD results on local and other levels of the EU Member States.

When debating how to support **EUYC continuity**, it was suggested that EUYCs could use one universal logo to establish a brand and good visibility among young people. The Youth Delegates might also stay the same within the cycle, ensuring the debates are continued and not repeated at the EUYC. Online presence should be ensured over the long-term, perhaps by creating a single website at which all EUYCs share their content, including all reports from various phases of a given cycle.

Transparency was debated on two levels: between the NWGs and the European level (i.e., in terms of reporting), and in the wider sense of communicating transparently back to youth and wider populations in the Member States. In the first case, more efforts should be made to clearly explain how national reporting is translated into European reports (e.g., mid-term report, consultation report, implementation report). A suggestion was also proposed that NWGs could be asked to comment on draft reports, for example. Time constraints were also mentioned, influencing the amount and quality of impacts reported by the NWGs. In the second case, wider transparency was debated: Who should be the target group at national levels? Who should be the responsible body for ensuring transparent communication to that target group? Where should funding come to make such an exercise realistic? Lastly, how can transparency be ensured in terms of policy makers taking the EUYD outcomes into account? Podcasts and social media communication was suggested to be put in place to track changes related to EUYD outcomes, such as recommendations.

When deliberating on **practical ways to implement results**, the participants pointed out that the key question is how to reach out to the youth field actors (e.g., youth organisations, young people) to achieve as wide impacts as possible, and also who these actors should be (i.e., who should be the key implementation stakeholders). A suggestion was voiced that cycles for the EUYD implementation phase could run considerably longer than the EUYD timeline, for example 24 months (i.e., overlapping with the new cycle of the EUYD), within which youth organisations in Member States would be supported to implement different activities towards goals outlined by the EUYD. This would also mean creating (political) processes, and dedicating resources to supporting local organisations towards such activities as local youth organisations are often tied up, and a resource-boost would be needed to create capacities for implementation efforts related to EUYD. Appropriate communication of the EUYD results to the local level youth organisations would also be needed via various channels to ensure local youth organisations have the necessary information to create activities related to the EUYD results in the first place.

Sharing of good practices and coordination of follow-up processes of the EUYD was also debated, raising questions such as: How to proceed with implementation of recommendations in different Member States? One of the suggestions was to put in place a system of follow-up work with the youth delegates, and also to put in place mechanisms to monitor and take stock of follow-up activities related to the EUYD. This closely links also to another suggestion: to put in place evaluation mechanisms for EUYD at large. Some of the EUYD outcomes, for example the recommendations which are to be the outcome of the EUYC

in Sweden, should also be elaborated on in terms of concrete ways in which they can be implemented at the national levels. This would help implementation efforts.

In relation to the **dissemination**, the tight timeline of the EUYD has been mentioned as one of the factors that negatively influence dissemination efforts, as there are many things that need to be done in a short timeframe which pushes the NWGs to prioritise, sometimes at the expense of the dissemination efforts. It was pointed out that **there is relevant experience in the youth field to learn from**: European Youth Parliament, for example, and how they cooperate with journalists in their dissemination efforts. EUYD could use such examples of good practices to improve its own dissemination processes. Including various channels; social media, was also recommended, especially in combination with result-oriented publishing (i.e., less focus on processes and more on end-results). Creating a dissemination strategy which would take into account all previous suggestions was also mentioned.

Implementation of recommendations and other **EUYD outcomes and results** (as well as processes, e.g., numbers of reached young people) should be monitored, and overall, as much information as possible should also be published. These suggestions are closely linked to problematic areas such as absence of visible changes resulting from the EUYD processes (and hence also accusations of youth washing), inclusion within the EUYD processes, and transparency of the EUYD proceedings, outcomes, and impacts.

Theme 3: Organisation and structures

The discussion within these groups focused on the supporting organisation and structures within the EUYC, as well as other practical aspects.

Specific topics proposed by the delegates were:

- Organisation of the EUYD cycle,
- Support/role of National Youth Councils,
- Sharing best practices between countries,
- Sustainable travels to the EUYC,
- Support/role of INGYOs,
- Enlargement of EUYD to neighbouring countries,
- Implementation of youth tests.

When it comes to **organisation of the EUYD cycle**, the time restraints were mentioned (e.g., in how the national consultations are designed), and continuity with previous EUYD cycles was also quoted (e.g., how to interconnect EUYD cycles to support each other). It was also mentioned that two European Youth Goals as targets of one EUYD are too ambitious and difficult to achieve, and perhaps also causing confusion as to what the aims of the EUYD cycle really are. A suggestion was made to connect experienced countries (i.e., those who already implemented EUYD as part of a Trio) and newcoming Trio countries to provide space for as much know-how transfer as possible. Absence of policy makers and politicians at the EUYC was seen as an issue, as the EUYC is considered a space at which youth delegates also meet with policy makers and politicians and engage in direct dialogue. In terms of practicalities, importance of clear emailing (e.g., not having multiple emails, but one clear with attachments, etc.), as well as the need to balance accommodation and travel options in order to (a) be sustainable, and (b) be inclusive (e.g., accommodating youth delegates in single rooms).

There are difficulties at some **National Youth Councils**, such as absence of contact with government officials and Ministries, funding problems (e.g., making it impossible to employ full time persons for the EUYD-related matters), or even functioning in times of war. A proposed solution was funding which would overlap EUYD cycles, so one personnel can focus on finishing one EUYD cycle, while another is preparing and starting work on the new one.

Delegates identified that **the organisation of the EUYD differs a lot between Member States**. Some have a dedicated secretariat and a strong NWG that chooses youth delegates for the whole trio. Other member states choose youth delegates ad-hoc for each conference. It was noted that all Member States should include National Youth Councils in the EUYD processes. To ensure a better, more representative and inclusive process, there is a need to share best when it comes to the organisation of the EUYD. These **best practices** should be shared, not only among the NWGs, but also among the National Youth Councils, and among the relevant Ministries. This should also include available research data.

It was highlighted that **travel to the EUYC** should be conducted in a sustainable manner, and options should be available to also attend online, as well as to adopt innovative approaches, such as “a climate train” that would be organised to go through Europe and pick up EUYC participants along the way.

Currently, **INGYOs report that they take a limited role in the EUYD consultation processes and structures**, something they would like to change. Ideally,, INYGOs would like to have their own consultation process similar to NWGs to give them a “chance at the table”. A budget would be required for this. INGYOs also identified the current challenges they would have in cooperating and conducting consultations together. Creating a report between around 20 different organisations in different fields requires extended time and multiple layers of authorisation. INGYOs are all different with different possibilities, abilities and capacities, so strong cooperation is needed.

Enlargement of EUYD to neighbouring countries was also mentioned with EUYC participants stressing the need for consistency between the different cycles (i.e., to establish a list of countries which are invited to participate beyond the EU Member States), and also considering long-term cooperation with countries which are neighbouring the EU Member States (e.g., Ukraine, Eastern Partnership Countries, etc.).

Even though the EUYC participants consider **youth tests** a positive development, they also underlined that it was hard to see direct connection between the youth tests and the EUYD.

Annex 2: Results of side plenary with Ministerial Delegates on the functioning of EUYD

This side plenary session created space for Ministerial Delegates to discuss the working of the EUYD.

Mr. Anders Lindholm, chair of the EU Youth Working Party during the Swedish Presidency opened the stage, introducing the session as a space for reflections on how ministerial delegates are working within the EUYD setup, and especially at the EUYCs, stressing that youth mainstreaming is a key aspect that the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU is to underline in relation with all EU youth policy tools (e.g., European Year of Youth, EUYD, etc.). Mr. Lindholm stressed that youth mainstreaming is a difficult process to implement, and that this is a space for sharing good practices to see what is done in different countries, and to inspire each other. Participants were subsequently divided into groups of six, forming working groups to reflect on questions posed during the session. Outcomes of the group reflections are noted below as part of this report.

Initial individual reflections focused on how well the EUYD is implemented in various countries, a delegate from Belgium informed that the EUYD is implemented very well, seeking and finding also synergies with processes beyond the EUYD. A delegate from Cyprus informed that the National Youth Council works very well, as does their NWG in general, but improvements can be made in the domain of inclusion, to ensure youth from all walks of life are represented in the EUYD processes.

The first question debated in groups read “How do you work with mainstreaming youth policy?”. A Spanish delegate informed that in their group, they identified having a national youth strategy as being a good practice: such strategy includes work of different Ministries, and there is also an input from a National Youth Council. This is already in place in Portugal and in Spain. A French delegate informed that in France, there is an “inter-ministerial delegate” who overlooks cross-sectoral cooperation, including mainstreaming the youth policies across different Ministries. A Slovenian delegate mentioned that “youth sessions” are currently being implemented, featuring competent Ministry representatives, collecting ideas to be included in the upcoming youth strategy. A cross-sectoral body also exists in which representatives of Ministries as well as youth sector representatives take part. A delegate from Luxembourg informed that there are very different approaches to youth mainstreaming, systematic in some countries, but ad-hoc in others. A Bulgarian delegate informed that foundations for youth policy design is present, but cross-sectoral cooperation needs to be established. An intergovernmental committee is present in Cyprus, coordinating efforts across different Ministries. A Hungarian delegate mentioned national youth strategy as well as YouthWiki as two key tools that are used in youth mainstreaming.

The second question debated in groups read “What opportunities do you see and what challenges have you identified?”. A Spanish delegate stated that the main challenge is cooperation across Ministries, and also cooperation with Municipalities and autonomous regions, as these are key actors in mainstreaming youth policies. A French delegate informed that inclusion of youth from different backgrounds in EUYD processes is perceived as an issue, but it is not based on statistical evidence, and such evidence would be beneficial to enhancing inclusion in EUYD. Other delegates added that, similarly, immigrant youth is one

of key groups to be still included in the youth policy processes and in the EUYD as well. Other delegates also added that reaching new young people to be involved in the EUYD processes is one of the challenges when implementing EUYD. Connections between the youth bodies and the ministerial bodies can also be seen as problematic within the EUYD processes, delegates informed. Similarly, limited financial resources are broadly seen as problematic, but at the same time there is no clear picture as to what should be done with any funding increase, apart from widening the scope of current national EUYD activities.

The third question debated in groups read “How do we, as Ministerial delegates, secure feedback for the youth delegates after the third meeting of a cycle and the Council Resolutions?” One of the delegates mentioned clear communication of the Council Resolution contents to the young people, admitting that this does not present full feedback, but is more of an information and dissemination exercise. Since implementing concrete actions based on a Council Resolution is a long-term exercise, even responsible persons can change, and therefore tracking changes and implemented actions is difficult. A question as to who should be the target audience for such feedback was raised, pointing out the need for multipliers to be targeted.

The fourth question debated in groups read “How do we, as Ministerial delegates, support the youth delegates to spread information and increase recognition of the EUYD?”. A German delegate pointed out the importance of youth ambassadors in different regions, and also informing regional authorities of the EUYD results and outcomes, so they can be reflected in their work. A Dutch delegate mentioned the importance of creating relationships between the youth delegates and the Ministerial delegates to ensure the needs of both groups are clearly communicated. A Bulgarian delegate mentioned that the NWG is the main reflection body, and also the main body responsible for sharing outcomes of the EUYD among the young people. Importantly, financial means need to be present in order for the information and dissemination activities to take place.

Mr. Ondřej Bárta, one of youth researchers accompanying the EUYD9, shared his reflections, pointing out that it seems good practice examples of youth mainstreaming processes exist. It might be useful to utilise some of the Trio Presidency events to share these examples (e.g., Director General Meetings), and facilitate spreading these examples to other countries as well. Some form of consultation process might also be helpful to identify the needs of the ministerial delegates and determine how the EUYC can also contribute to their capacity building and networking. In the domain of cross-sectorality, Mr. Bárta pointed out that the EUYD should consider inviting delegates from Ministries beyond those responsible for youth (e.g., Health Ministry in case of mental health topic, etc.). Mr. Bárta also underlined that cross-sectorality has been debated for some time, and it would be worthwhile to create a structured insight into how different countries deal with this topic (e.g., via research). Mr. Bárta also pointed out that in order to provide insightful feedback on EUYD processes, activities, and impacts, systems of data collection for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation need to be established.

Annex 3 Conference Programme



Swedish Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union

Program
2023-02-20

Program

EU Youth Conference

19-22 March

Växjö, Sweden

SUNDAY 19 MARCH 2023

Arrival day

Accreditation at Växjö Konserthus

15.00-18.00

Meet up and mingle dinner

18.00 – 22.00

Bergendahlska Gården

Liedbergsgatan 14-16, Växjö

MONDAY 20 MARCH 2023

Morning coffee and accreditation at Växjö Konserthus

08.00 – 08.30

Växjö Konserthus, Konferens & Kongress
Västra Esplanaden 14, Växjö

Official opening of the Conference

08.30 – 09.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Panel discussion

09.30-10.00

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Introduction to working group sessions

10.00-10.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Coffee break

10.30-11.00

On-boarding of working groups

11.00-12.00

Lunch break

12.00-13.30

Thematic working groups – session A

13.30-15.00

Coffee break

15.00-15.30

Tool introduction: Open space format

15.30-15.45

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Open space format: Reflections on the process of the EU Youth Dialogue

15.45-17.15

Summary of the day

17.15-17.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Departure to Kungsmadsskolan

18.15

Pre-drinks at Kungsmadsskolan

18.30-19.00

Sandsbrovägen 21 R, Växjö

Dinner at Kungsmadskolan

19.00-22.00

Sandsbrovägen 21 R, Växjö

TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2023

Morning coffee

08.00 – 08.30

Växjö Konserthus, Konferens & Kongress

Introduction to day two

08.30-09.00

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Working groups – session B

09.00-09.30

Thematic working groups – session C

09.30-10.30

Coffee break

10.30-11.00

Parallel session: **Thematic working groups – session with political decision makers**

11.00-12.30

Parallel session: **Group discussion for ministerial delegates**

11.00-12.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen (for ministerial delegates)

Lunch break

12.30-14.00

Thematic working groups – session D

14.00-15.00

Plenary discussion with political decision makers

15.00-16.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Working groups – session E

16.30-17.00

Summary of the day

17.00-17.15

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Theatre performance: LÄNK – “Is my microphone on?”

18.00-19.00

Palladium

Storgatan 12, Växjö

Transportation to the dinner at KÖK11

19.00-19.30

Pre-drinks at KÖK11

19.30-20.00

Honnörsgatan 15, Växjö

Dinner at KÖK11

20.00-22.30

Honnörsgatan 15, Växjö

Transportation back to Växjö Konserthus

22.30

WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2023

Morning coffee

08.00 – 08.30

Växjö Konserthus, Konferens & Kongress

Summary of the Conference: Presentation of recommendations from youth delegates and reflections on the EU Youth Dialogue

08.30-10.00

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Feedback session

10.00-10.45

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Coffee break

10.45-11.00

Closing panel discussion

11.00-11.45

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Closing speeches

11.45-12.30

Main plenary hall – Christina Nilsson salen

Lunch on the go

Will be handed out when boarding the buses

Departure to Kastrup Airport

13.00