

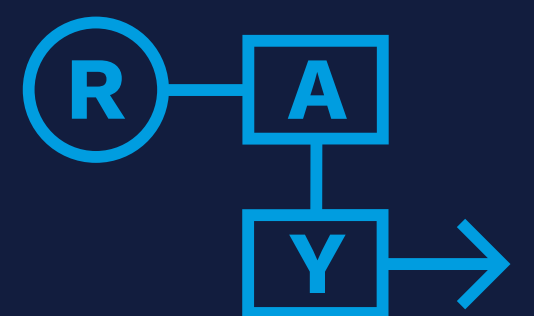
# EU NEEDS YOUTH

## KEY EVIDENCE FOR THE

## COMMON REFLECTIONS

→ **Developing the European youth programmes**

Meeting of Directors General for Youth & Directors of National Agencies  
Belgian Presidency | Brussels | 27 March 2024



Research-based  
analysis of European  
youth programmes

**INTRODUCING RAY**

**MONITORING SURVEYS**

**DATA ON DEMOCRACY AND VALUES**

**DATA ON QUALITY AND YOUTH WORK**

**DATA ON OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES**

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION**

**A FEW QUICK**

**FACTS ABOUT**

**THE RAY**

**NETWORK**

FOUNDED IN 2008 TO BUILD EVIDENCE

COVERS ALL 33 PROGRAMME COUNTRIES

CORE ARE BIENNIAL MONITORING SURVEYS


COMPLEMENTARY THEMATIC RESEARCH

ALL RESEARCH OPEN DATA & ACCESS

TRIANGULAR SUMMIT 22-24 MAY 2024

FIRST THINK TANK 19-20 JUNE 2024

“EMPOWERING TOMORROW”



**OUR**

**MONITORING**

**SURVEYS**

RESEARCH BASED ANALYSIS & MONITORING

SURVEYING PARTICIPANTS & TEAMS

2014-2020: FULL RESPONSES FROM 65.000

PARTICIPANTS & 15.000 TEAM MEMBERS

2023: FULL RESPONSES FROM 18.000

PARTICIPANTS & 5.000 TEAM MEMBERS

ONE OF THE LARGEST LEARNING MOBILITY

DATASETS IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD

**LARGE LEARNING MOBILITY DATASET –**

**COMPLEMENTED BY THEMATIC RESEARCH:**

**5.000+ THEMATIC SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

**1.000+ EXPERT INTERVIEWS**

**400+ FOCUS GROUPS**

**200+ CASE STUDIES**



**DATA ON**

**DEMOCRACY**

**AND VALUES**



**THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE  
INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST.**

# INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST.

I APPRECIATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY MORE THAN BEFORE THE PROJECT.

Two thirds of project participants appreciate cultural diversity more after their participation in the European youth programmes.

2016: 65,0%

2018: 65,7%

2020: 66,7%

2023: 71,1%

# INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST.

I GET ALONG BETTER WITH PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS.

More than 90% of project participants get along better with people who have a different cultural background after their participation in the European youth programmes.

**2016: 94,8%**

strongly agree: 57,1% + agree: 37,7%

**2018: 94,1%**

strongly agree: 57,7% + agree: 36,4%

**2020: 95,2%**

strongly agree: 61,7% + agree: 33,5%

**2023: 92,0%**

strongly agree: 54,9% + agree: 37,1% \*

\* In 2023, the Likert scale of our surveys was adjusted from a 4-point to a 5-point scale, and now includes a new response option “neither agree or disagree”.

**THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES  
ARE A BOOST FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP.**

# A BOOST FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

I ENGAGE IN CIVIL SOCIETY MORE THAN BEFORE THE PROJECT.

One third of project participants engages in civil society more after their participation in the European youth programmes.

2016: 34,0%

2018: 35,5%

2020: 36,7%

2023: 53,9%

**THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES  
ARE STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY.**

# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

I AM MORE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS.

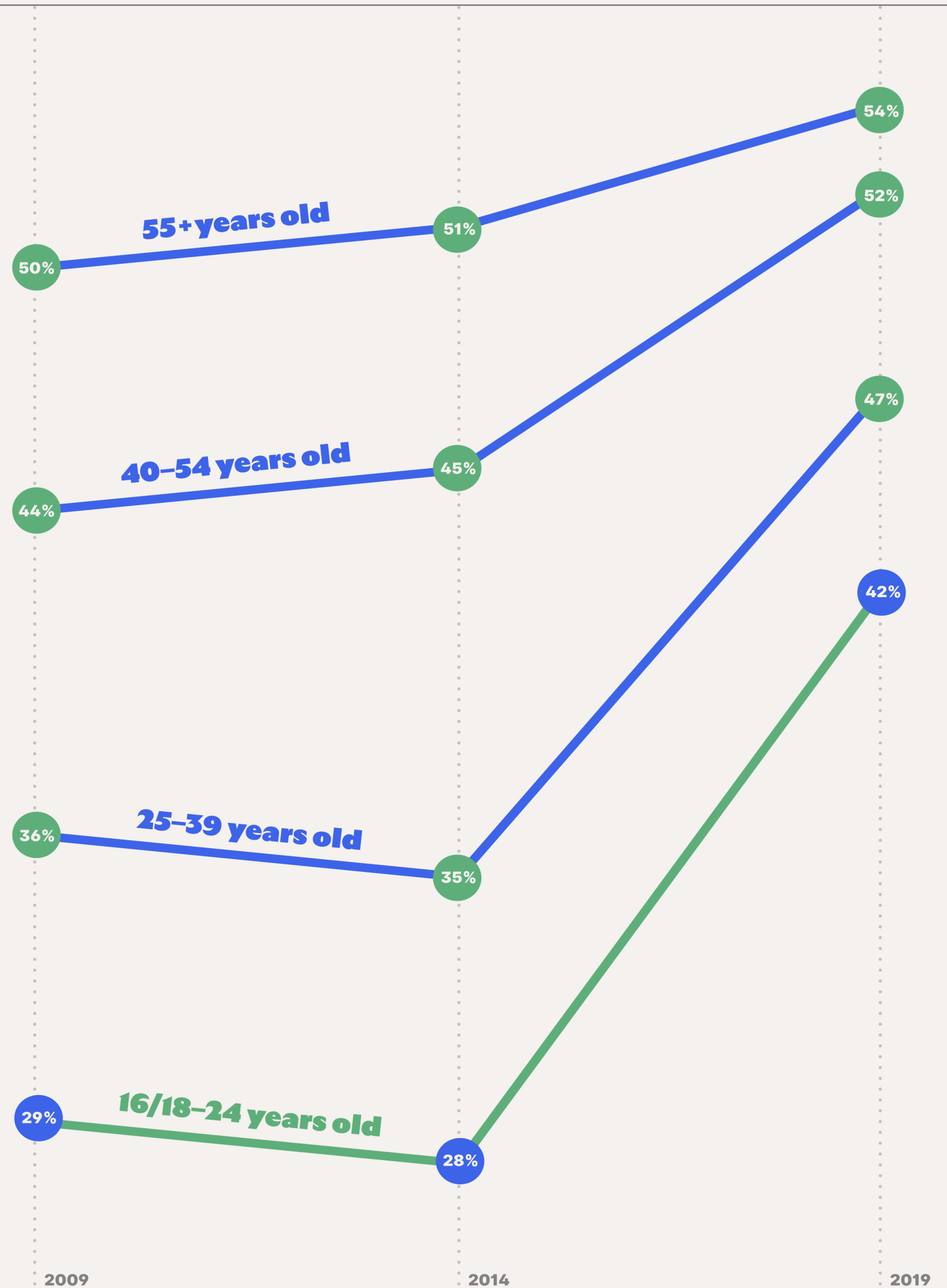
New question in 2023 » 33,5% more interested than before

I AM MORE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES.

New question in 2023 » 41,6% more interested than before

# MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE VOTE IN EU ELECTIONS

Voting-age youths under 25 are the fastest growing demographic when it comes to participating in EU elections. The share of voters in this age group has grown by 13 percentage points in the last 10 years.



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE FASTEST-GROWING GROUP OF VOTERS IN EU ELECTIONS.

SOURCE: EUROSTAT

<https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/understanding-youth-engagement-europe-through-open-data>



The European youth programmes strengthen democracy and boost active citizenship through intercultural learning.

How can we make such empowering experiences available to more young people across Europe?

**YOUNG PEOPLE DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES**

**MORE OFTEN THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.**

# YOUNG PEOPLE DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES.

WHEN YOU GET TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES, HOW OFTEN,

IF AT ALL, DO YOU DISCUSS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES...?

Almost nine in ten respondents of the 2021 Youth Survey (85%) discuss politics when they get together with friends or relatives – with 25% doing so “frequently” and 61% doing so “occasionally”.

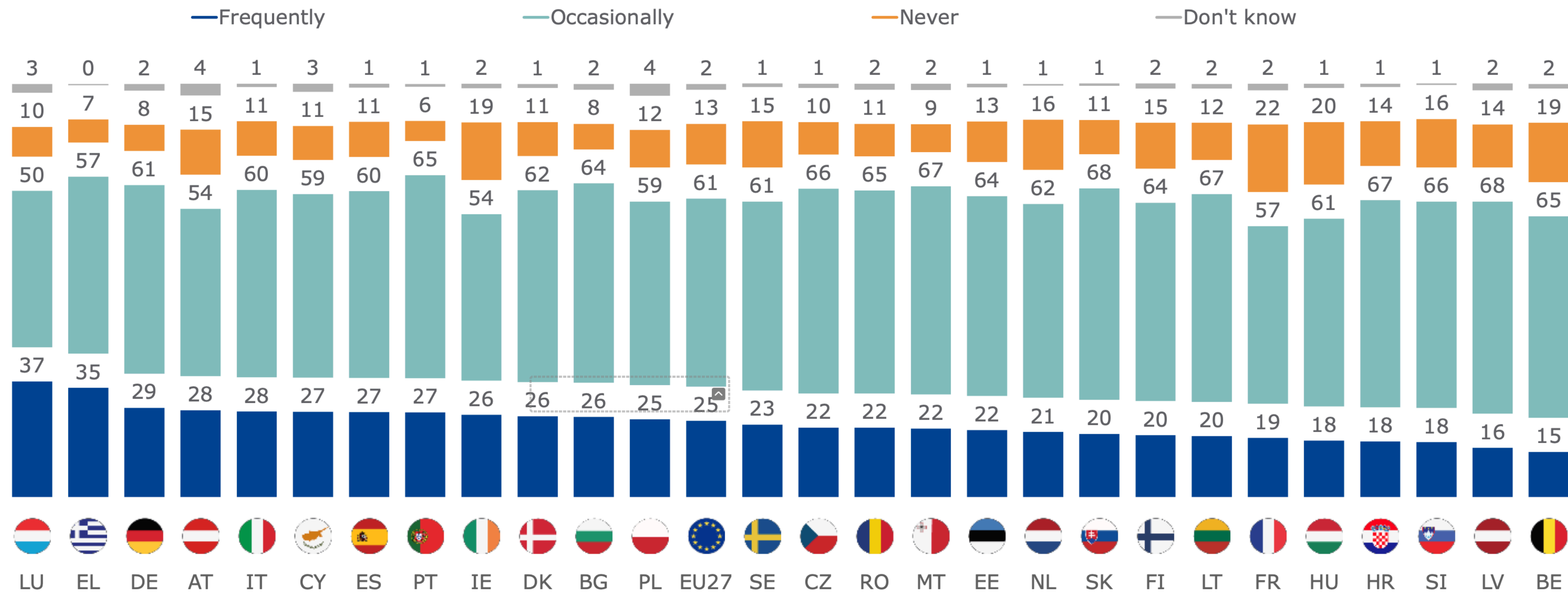
SOURCE: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT YOUTH SURVEY 2021

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/youth-survey-2021>

# YOUNG PEOPLE DISCUSS POLITICAL ISSUES.

WHEN YOU GET TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES, HOW OFTEN,

IF AT ALL, DO YOU DISCUSS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES...?



SOURCE: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT YOUTH SURVEY 2021

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/youth-survey-2021>

**YOUNG PEOPLE BRING THEIR INTEREST IN  
POLITICAL ISSUES TO THE PROGRAMMES.**

# MOTIVATIONS ARE SHIFTING

## MY REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT WERE ...

More and more participants join projects in the European youth programmes *also* to get engaged in tackling sociopolitical challenges.

27,3% of Erasmus+ Youth participants in youth exchanges

51,6% of Erasmus+ Youth participants in youth participation projects

48,1% of Solidarity Corps participants in volunteering projects

64,5% of Solidarity Corps participants in solidarity projects

Young people are political – and keen  
on tackling sociopolitical challenges.

How can we improve the European  
youth programmes to better support  
young people in addressing the key  
sociopolitical challenges of our time?



**DATA ON**

**QUALITY AND**

**YOUTH WORK**



**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE EUROPEAN  
POWERHOUSES FOR YOUTH WORK.**

# POWERHOUSES FOR YOUTH WORK

## BETTER ABLE TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORK

Close to 90% of team members are better able to strengthen the international dimension in their youth work through their programme experience.

**2016: 93,0%**

strongly agree: 53,1% + agree: 39,9%

**2018: 92,1%**

strongly agree: 51,2% + agree: 40,9%

**2020: 93,5%**

strongly agree: 55,2% + agree: 38,3%

**2023: 89,7%**

strongly agree: 43,0% + agree: 46,7% \*

\* In 2023, the Likert scale of our surveys was adjusted from a 4-point to a 5-point scale, and now includes a new response option “neither agree or disagree”.

# POWERHOUSES FOR YOUTH WORK

## LEARNED MORE ABOUT FOSTERING NON-FORMAL LEARNING IN YOUTH WORK

Close to 90% of youth workers have learned more about fostering non-formal learning in youth work through their programme experience.

**2016: 90,1%**

strongly agree: 40,8% + agree: 49,3%

**2018: 89,3%**

strongly agree: 38,8% + agree: 50,5%

**2020: 90,3%**

strongly agree: 42,1% + agree: 48,2%

**2023: 89,4%**

strongly agree: 48,3% + agree: 41,1% \*

\* In 2023, the Likert scale of our surveys was adjusted from a 4-point to a 5-point scale, and now includes a new response option “neither agree or disagree”.

The European youth programmes strengthen youth work, boost youth-led & participatory practices, and champion non-formal learning.

How can we make such educational experiences available to more youth workers & youth leaders across Europe?

**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED TO GET  
BETTER AT DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY.**

# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

A PROBLEM THAT HAS GROWN OVER THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMME GENERATION

In 2020, 88% of project team members thought that participants had developed skills to “produce media content on their own”.

2016: 73,8%

2018: 85,0%

2020: 87,8%

# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

A PROBLEM THAT HAS GROWN OVER THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMME GENERATION

Also in 2020, only 66% of project participants thought they had actually developed skills to “produce media content on their own”.

2016: 61,4%

2018: 63,5%

2020: 66,3%

# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

A PROBLEM THAT HAS GROWN OVER THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMME GENERATION

This *perception gap* has widened over the previous programme generation.

Teams in 2016: 73,8%

Participants in 2016: 61,4%

Gap: 12,4%

Teams in 2018: 85,0%

Participants in 2018: 63,5%

Gap: 21,5%

Teams in 2020: 87,8%

Participants in 2020: 66,3%

Gap: 21,5%



# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

AND A PROBLEM THAT PERSISTS IN THE CURRENT PROGRAMME GENERATION

**In 2023:**

**60,7% of project participants were satisfied with how they reflected on living in a digital culture during their participation in an Erasmus+ Youth project.**

**30,0% of project participants learned something about mis- & disinformation through their participation in an Erasmus+ Youth project.**

# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

A PROBLEM THAT IS INCREDIBLY SEVERE IN OUR DAY AND TIME

In a 2023 survey of young people conducted by Amnesty International, 93% of respondents said they had encountered mis- or disinformation while being online.

SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA YOUTH SURVEY

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/children-young-people-social-media-survey-2/>

# CHALLENGE: DIGITAL & MEDIA LITERACY.

A PROBLEM THAT IS INCREDIBLY SEVERE IN OUR DAY AND TIME

In Germany, the right-wing party AfD has the widest reach on TikTok, a platform predominantly used by young people.

SOURCE: RECHERCHE DIE DA OBEN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52LD9Ja1cpY> & <https://www.funk.net/channel/die-da-oben-12030?document=dieafdundtiktok>

The European youth programmes need to support young people better in dealing with mis- and disinformation.

How can we better educate youth workers and youth leaders around media literacy?

How can we empower young people more to deal with mis- and disinformation?



**DATA ON**

**OPERATIONAL**

**CHALLENGES**

**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED**

**BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS.**

**BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS.**

**IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC**

Our research project on the impact of the pandemic on youth work across Europe has shown how deeply the pandemic has shaken youth work. An analysis undertaken in 2022 and 2023 has also shown that recovery measures have yet to reach youth work in most European countries.

***How can we support youth work organisations better at structural level and in sustainable ways?***

**BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS.**

**COURAGEOUSLY RETHINK APPLICATIONS**

In focus and discussion groups with programme officers across all formats, there are consistent reports of organisations choosing not to apply due to the misbalance between effort and outcome, in particular in countries where national and/or local funding alternatives exist.

***How can we better align required effort and funding outcome – and introduce alternatives to writing text?***



**BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS.**

**EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER STATUS**

The 2022 “Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union” included recommendations to provide more clarity on the rights of volunteers. A key recommendation of our Programmatic Study on the European Solidarity Corps was to create a unified legal recognition of volunteers.

***How can we implement the Council Recommendation and introduce a unifying European Volunteer Status?***

**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED**

**BETTER FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS.**

**BUFFER IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC**

**COURAGEOUSLY RETHINK APPLICATIONS**

**INTRODUCE EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER STATUS**



**RECAP**

**QUESTIONS FOR**

**REFLECTION &**

**DISCUSSION**

**THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE**

**GREAT POWERHOUSES FOR YOUTH WORK.**

**INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST.**

**NON-FORMAL LEARNING AT ITS BEST.**

**A BOOST FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP.**

**STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY.**

**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED HELP TO**

**SCALE, SCALE, SCALE!**

**THE YOUTH PROGRAMMES NEED HELP TO**

**SCALE, SCALE, SCALE!**

**ACCOMMODATE SHIFTING MOTIVATIONS**

**IMPROVE MEDIA LITERACY APPROACHES**

**BUFFER PANDEMIC IMPACT ON SECTOR**

**REIMAGINE APPLICATIONS COURAGEOUSLY**

**INTRODUCE EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER STATUS**

**EU NEEDS YOUTH**

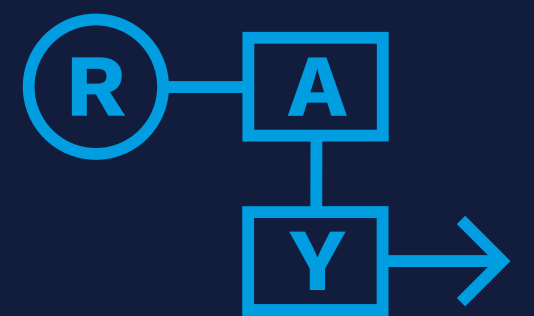
**THANK YOU!**

→ **How to reach us**

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Research-based  
analysis of European  
youth programmes