

Youth Participation Handbook

Two Page Summary

A guide for young people to be politically active

Chapter 1: Introduction

Explains the event that inspired the creation of the handbook and the purpose of this handbook. It also lays the theoretical foundations and rationale behind this handbook.

Chapter 2: Barriers, Engagement Gaps & Solutions

Outlines the main obstacles that prevent young people from engaging in democratic processes and explains why disengagement occurs. It also presents general breakthroughs in youth participation and actions to increase youth engagement.

Chapter 3: A Guide to Youth Participation

A practical guide on how youth can actively participate in politics and democracies. It explains different ways of engagement, such as voting, student councils, youth parliament, and volunteering.

Chapter 4: Digital Tools for Youth Participation

A practical toolbox of digital tools. from youth initiatives and platforms to visual and organisational tools, that can young people to be civically engaged. It also outlines the roles and problems with digital tools for effective youth participation.

Chapter 5: The Future of Youth Participation

Outlines essential next steps for building an ideal future for youth participation. It calls for a shift from symbolic involvement to genuine shared power, where young people co-create, co-decide and co-manage democratic processes at every level.

Suggestions for Policymakers

1

Create permanent youth co-management boards, which should be composed at least 50% of young people nominated by youth organisations. Give these boards a formal role, such as in the model used in the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

2

Lowering the voting age and the age for signing citizens' initiatives, such as the ECI in all EU member states, and at national and local levels.

3

Build on the Commission's new Youth Check / EU Youth Test and make it a mandatory part of the Parliament's legislative process.

4

Set measurable targets for the participation of rural youth, migrants, young people with disabilities, working-class youth and those not in education or training.

5

Stronger dissemination of best practices such as the ECI, Youth Councils, the EU Youth Dialogue, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV), or the European Solidarity Corps.

6

Integrate practical democracy learning in schools through curriculum reforms, funding non-formal education projects, expanding exchange and mobility programmes, and ensuring accessible resources for marginalised youth.

7

Build a public platform with a scoreboard that tracks how often youth tests are used, how many laws have been influenced by EU Youth Dialogue recommendations and how diverse youth participation has been in each EU committee.

8

Policymakers should commit to a formal follow-up mechanism for youth dialogues: for each dialogue cycle, committees adopt a short "response report" explaining which recommendations will be implemented, which not, and why. This should not be restricted to EU level, but be done on all political levels.

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