EYE
2016

TOGETHER
WE CAN MAKE
A CHANGE

THE EUROPEAN
YOUTH EVENT

Shaping Europe:
50 ideas for a better future

The EYE report 2016

**Written by the
European Youth Press**

**With commentaries from
the European Youth Forum**

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
STRASBOURG
20-21 MAY 2016
#EYE2016**

European Parliament

Thank you

Introduction

War and Peace: Perspectives for a peaceful planet

Apathy or Participation: Agenda for a vibrant democracy

Exclusion or Access: Crackdown on youth unemployment

Stagnation or Innovation: Tomorrow's world of work

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Meet the authors

Forewords

Mairead McGuinness and Sylvie Guillaume
Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament responsible for Communication

The European Youth Event 2016 was unique and inspirational. For the second time, the European Parliament opened its doors to thousands of young people from across the continent and asked them to present their ideas on Europe and its future.

Roles were reversed during the EYE: young people led the conversation and MEPs listened.

The two-day event saw a wide range of stimulating discussions and debates, at their core a strong desire among young people to be agents for change and to be actively involved in shaping their futures.

These exchanges are critical at a time when Europe is facing many big challenges, including the refugee crisis, recovering from the economic crisis and the ever present threat of terrorism.

It was clear from the EYE that young people are keen to take on these challenges and work for a better future.

We are confident that these ideas can be a source of inspiration for all MEPs.

Young people can make a difference and we are sure their contribution will lead to an increasingly vibrant European democracy.

It is now up to MEPs to take their lead and to continue this important dialogue with the youth of Europe.

Mairead McGuinness   **Sylvie Guillaume**
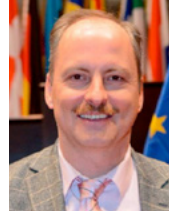
Klaus Welle
Secretary-General of the European Parliament

After the first edition of the European Youth Event in 2014, participants sent a loud and clear message that they wanted it to become a regular event. Parliament has responded: following the repeated success of the EYE in 2016, a third edition will be held in May 2018.

Parliament's leadership has decided to establish the EYE as a central hub from which to develop an open, structured and continuous dialogue between MEPs and young people.

The EYE is a great platform for young Europeans. The authors of this report, selected with the help of the European Youth Press, have captured the impressive range of ideas that were brought forward in Strasbourg on 20-21 May 2016.

The success of the EYE rests on several elements: Parliament's political leadership, Parliament's services who ensured its realisation, our partners, the large number of volunteers and, of course, most of all the participants themselves who engaged enthusiastically before, during and after the event.

Editors' notes

It is easy to view young people's place in Europe as increasingly jeopardised. In almost every corner of Europe youth unemployment is stagnating at a two-digit percentage across Europe, and inequality of prospects is growing. Many young people feel opportunities are being taken away for them and it's increasingly hard to get on in life. Therefore, it's perhaps not surprising that young people all too often feel under-represented, disenfranchised and apathetic when it comes to national and EU politics.

But despite this they are not agnostic.

This report is a collation and culmination of ideas, workshops, talks, speeches and discussion at this year's European Youth Event in Strasbourg; a unique meeting of 7,500 young people from across Europe to discuss the continent's greatest challenges and suggest innovative solutions.

It contains three core sources of contribution from young Europeans: written and qualitative information gathered during the EYE2016, a 606-person strong questionnaire surveyed during the event and a Eurobarometer 2016 youth survey. Additionally, it contains data from a wide range of sources at European level.

The questionnaire forms the lion's share of findings in this report which are a representative overview of the opinions of EYE participants. While participants were young people, it's important to remember that this is not necessarily representative of the entire European youth.

The Eurobarometer survey was conducted among 10,294 people across Europe between the ages of 16-30 and was published on the eve of the European Youth Event. This allowed for some external data to back up some of our findings at the EYE.

One recurring theme is clear for all to see: an eagerness for change and a hunger for social action binds young Europeans together. This hunger may sometimes appear angry and directionless, and sometimes it is. But it is more often constructive and convincing.

Bringing a unique perspective to often stagnant and repetitive policy debates young people have presented ideas on topics as diverse as improving computer literacy in schools to enabling inter-faith dialogue in local communities. Many of these ideas are grassroots, workable solutions to some of Europe's biggest problems.

Collaboration is a recurring theme that runs throughout the ideas presented here. Young Europeans who have grown up after the collapse of the Berlin Wall are the most inter-connected and interrelated generation ever. Globalisation may have led to many of the problems we currently face in Europe, but it is also a profound opportunity to improve the conditions we find ourselves in. This both positive and negative narrative runs throughout our work.

Another distinctive aspect of this report is just how differently young people view socio-political issues from their parents. This is not merely an act of rebellion. The hyper-mediated world of today's youth and distinctive cultural landscape has created unique viewpoints and perspectives on global issues. Take migration, while an inclusive attitude is in no way universal, by comparison to their parents' generation more young people are in favour of accepting refugees and migrants into their societies. Furthermore, they are steadfastly pro-Europe at a time when the EU is facing unprecedented internal divisions.

Policy makers must look at these ideas with an open mind and a will to understand the youth perspective. We hope you will find a rich and unique set of solutions with big ambitions and workable applications.

Greg Bianchi , Chief Editor   **Hugo Winn , Chief Editor**

50 ideas for a better Europe

War and Peace:
Perspectives for
a *peaceful* planet

1. Matching migrants with the best possible country for their skills and culture would control the impact on labour markets and help improve relations with the local population *(see p. 20)*

2. Refugee mentors: Encourage volunteer youth schemes to provide a powerful framework for integrating refugees into their new societies *(see p. 21)*

3. Allow embassies from all European countries to receive asylum requests directly in order to prevent people from dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean *(see p. 22)*

4. Encourage open-minded religious education - all children around the world should have access to and equal opportunities in education, with renewed focus on ensuring tolerance for people from different religions and cultures *(see p. 23)*

5. Open internal borders - protect external borders to prevent the breakdown of the Schengen area whilst maintaining security *(see p. 27)*

6. Strengthen youth organisations that offer meaningful activities to young people who have lost all sense of meaning in their lives *(see p. 28)*

7. Boost inter-faith relations to stimulate commitment and to prevent the breeding of all types of superstition in Europe *(see p. 29)*

8. Foster clubs and societies that build bridges between minorities and majority demographics in mixed schools *(see p. 32)*

9. Promote events that challenge stigma towards disabled people and help realign popular misconceptions of disabled people in European society *(see p. 33)*

10. Appoint 'diversity ambassadors' to ensure minorities are represented in local and EU level politics *(see p. 34)*

Apathy or **participation:**
Agenda for
a ***vibrant*** democracy

11. Invest in e-voting at the EU level to offer a 21st century method of voting and encourage greater participation *(see p. 39)*

12. Develop a community app that proposes and debates policy in real-time *(see p. 41)*

13. Improve internet education to make the internet a more democratic and accessible place *(see p. 41)*

14. Teach advocacy and lobbying in schools to improve democratic participation amongst young people *(see p. 42)*

15. Create a prize in memory of Giulio Regeni to allow more young people to explore the world through study and understand civil society better *(see p. 43)*

16. Teach EU politics in schools to help improve democratic participation among young people *(see p. 43)*

17. Be Glocal (global and local): help found a three year campaign to raise the leaders of tomorrow *(see p. 44)*

18. Improve spoken English in schools to harmonise the many voices of Europe *(see p. 47)*

19. Improve transparency and accessibility of EU documents and legislation so young people can understand and engage with them *(see p. 48)*

20. Implement a quota system for young people in local government and national representation committees to improve representation *(see p. 48)*

21. Broaden the Erasmus scheme to offer it to young people who chose different routes than higher education *(see p. 50)*

Exclusion or access:
Crackdown
on *youth* unemployment

22. Bridge the gap from education to employment to strengthen young people opportunities for paid and high quality internships *(see p. 55)*

23. Improve online career advice and unemployment resources to provide unemployment outreach to young people *(see p. 56)*

24. Improve mobility and skills transferral so that young Europeans can explore the EU wide job market *(see p. 56)*

25. Facilitate more work experience and first-chances in the labour market by creating closer cooperation between universities and companies *(see p. 58)*

26. EU wide coding requirements to boost core digital skills across the region *(see p. 58)*

27. Boost volunteering organisations and explain to young people that volunteering is a route to employment *(see p. 59)*

28. Diploma system for informal education to reduce the EU wide bias for traditional education paths *(see p. 60)*

29. Centralise collaboration of Europe-wide NGOs to encourage employment and cohesion in tackling pan-European issues *(see p. 61)*

30. Create a young person rights site/App to educate young people as to their employment rights and expectations *(see p. 61)*

31. Formalise and create incentives for more remote working across the EU to reduce the number of young people with disabilities currently locked out of the job market *(see p. 62)*

Stagnation or innovation:
Tomorrow's
world of *work*

32. Boost project based learning in schools to develop soft skills along with science and technology *(see p. 67)*

33. Create a universal citizen's income to harness the full potential of the digital revolution *(see p. 68)*

34. Enforce European labour rights as the existing laws are becoming outdated by digital technologies *(see p. 70)*

35. Unify entrepreneurship resources and requirements to help young businesses get started *(see p. 72)*

36. Reform bankruptcy legislation to support second-chances for entrepreneurs *(see p. 72)*

37. Create more equal and deliberative workplaces to help boost young employees' entrepreneurial skills *(see p. 73)*

38. Twin universities so that students can study undergraduate degrees in two different locations *(see p. 74)*

39. Strengthen education and awareness of alternative economic models to boost innovation in this key sector *(see p. 76)*

40. Adopt the collaborative economy into the tax system to unlock the social benefits of the collaborative economy *(see p. 77)*

41. Encourage junior enterprises to seek and represent young people's opinions on global matters *(see p. 78)*

Collapse or success:
New ways for
a *sustainable* Europe

42. Pool energy resources and invest in smart-grids to face up to Europe's growing energy demands *(see p. 86)*

43. Increase Europe's commitment to tackling climate change and set more ambitious targets – 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 *(see p. 86)*

44. Put zero-carbon homes back into planning to develop a European wide project for a commitment to energy-efficient homes *(see p. 86)*

45. Build legislation that binds fair trade within the industry to ensure stability and fairness in the market *(see p. 88)*

46. Market fair trade clothing as quality over quantity to improve the marketing of clothes based on price *(see p. 89)*

47. Implement more codes of conduct to serve as an example to other brands and set a standard code of practice *(see p. 90)*

48. Buy local: Encourage more people to buy food locally to reduce the carbon footprint and promote local produce *(see p. 90)*

49. Promote sustainability and healthy living courses in schools so that young people are able to make informed choices on what they buy and eat *(see p. 91)*

50. Fight world hunger by introducing a financial transaction tax to finance campaigns, such as improving the self-sufficiency of farmers *(see p .91)*

EYE key findings

NOTE: The figures included in these key findings are taken from a 606-strong person questionnaire which was handed out at the EYE. Therefore, these findings are representative of EYE participants only, and not the entire youth of Europe.

YOUNG EUROPEANS AGREE IT'S A EUROPEAN DUTY TO ACCEPT MORE MIGRANTS

23 year olds are most supportive of the EU pressuring member states to accept more migrants.

76%

EYE participants overwhelmingly think that society is preventing better integration of migrants, not the migrants themselves. When you pass the age of 25, this stance begins to change.
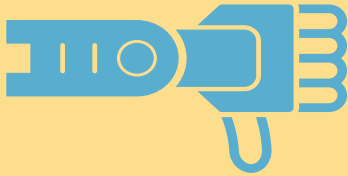
A MAJORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE EYE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT CO-WORKING WITH ROBOTS

This concern is greatest amongst those under 25, and it appears attitudes soften with age.

YOUTH GUARANTEE SCHEME

LATVIA 77.5%
FINLAND 50%
BELGIUM 80%
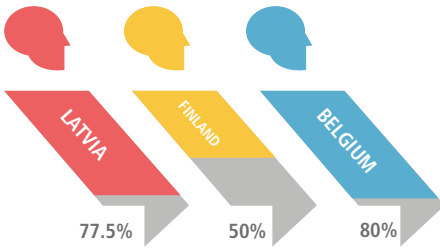
Young people are not well informed about the Youth Guarantee Scheme; however, the awareness rises with age.

EUROSCEPTISM

SPAIN ● GREECE ● PORTUGAL ●

Young Europeans who were questioned are more Eurosceptic than five years ago. Respondents in their early-mid 20's were most likely to report feeling more Eurosceptic. Also, those countries that have faced a tough economic crisis in recent years are more likely to have a Eurosceptic youth.

AVERAGE UNDERSTANDING OF THE EU AND HOW IT WORKS

The most knowledgeable age is 25.
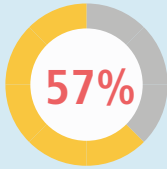
57% THINK THAT, IN THEIR COUNTRY, THEY HAVE BEEN MARGINALISED AND EXCLUDED AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

84%
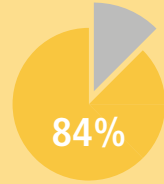
The vast majority of young people at the EYE WOULD LIKE TO BE THEIR OWN BOSS IN THE FUTURE.

ARE TAUGHT ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AT SCHOOL

30%

DON'T THINK THAT THE EU IS DOING ENOUGH TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT (FLEXIBLE WORKING, FREELANCE WORK, HOT DESKING)

49%

67%
LATVIA

50%
ROMANIA

50%
SWEDEN
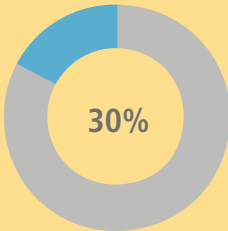
75%
FINLAND

70% of those at the EYE do not believe they are taught entrepreneurship skills in school.

85%
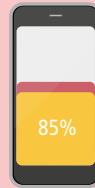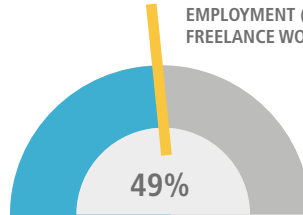
UNDER THE AGE OF 28 FEEL FREE TO EXPRESS THEMSEVES ONLINE

Less than 15% on average felt unfree. However after the age of 28 the percentage of those expressing concerns increases significantly.

77.5%
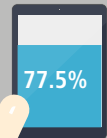
USE ONLINE PLATFORMS TO BUY AND SELL GOODS

This increases with age, perhaps reflecting the greater spending power as young people get older.

72.6%
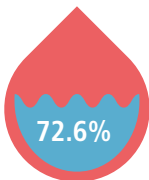
BELIEVE THEIR LEADERS ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO PREVENT CLIMATE CHANGE.

War and Peace:
Perspectives for
a *peaceful* planet

It is easy to understand why young Europeans often feel the European project is falling apart. Alongside the reverberations of the 2007/2009 financial crisis the chief reasons for this instability are security and external threats. Terrorism and migration – the two defining EU security issues of the day – have fundamentally transformed the way Europeans view their neighbours and the social fabric of their own communities. This re-evaluation of European morals and values is both a threat and an opportunity for the European project.

These topics were prominent amongst the debates, workshops and even artistic performances held during the two days of the EYE 2016: The heated ideas check in the hemicycle on "Migration: Across the Universe" and the ideas lab "We are not afraid" debated whether Europe should answer terrorist attacks with increasing security measures or, instead, insist on the principle of individual freedom in our societies. Workshops on whether refugees are indeed welcome, alongside the role of faith and belief in humanity and a need to ensure diversity while tackling discrimination, are just a few examples of activities from which ideas in this report were drawn.

Migration - working towards a common goal

Europe is engulfed in the largest refugee crisis since World War II. More than a million refugees, typically fleeing Middle Eastern conflicts, crossed into Europe in 2015. This year is expected to see a further increase in numbers with warming Mediterranean temperatures and little sign of a de-escalation of violence in the Middle-East. This migration crisis has been and is still testing European cohesiveness and the European Union's moral foundation to its core.

At the EU level cracks have already appeared, more than a third of asylum seekers have sought refuge in Germany[1], whose politicians are divided on whether to welcome more and how to integrate them with the local population. Contrasting with Germany's relative openness other member states have maintained a 'closed door' policy throughout the crisis. This lack of cohesion belies wider and more entrenched differences amongst European member states, leaving many bitterly resentful that the principle of 'collective responsibility' has been permanently undermined.

[1] Eurostat, 2016. Asylum in the EU Member States. [online] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/ p. 2.

Young people appear to be less divided than policy makers and would like to see politicians do more to welcome and integrate refugees into the fabric of European society. Young people are the only age group in Europe who show large support for migration and should therefore be viewed as a crucial asset to policy makers, particularly when trying to integrate asylum seekers into European society.

Despite this, a vocal minority of young people argue strongly against any further integration of refugees. These arguments, much like those for increased acceptance of refugees, is also fundamentally moral. Those arguing it claim that increased acceptance will encourage unnecessary risks from migrants and ultimately cause more deaths on the perilous journey to Europe.

For young people on both sides of the debate the question of whether to welcome refugees is inherently moral and is an obligation tied to what they see as shared European values of freedom, equality, tolerance and acceptance. The migration crisis has also taken on wider political significance for young people who increasingly view the success of the European Union by its ability - or the ability of its constituent member states - to work together towards a common goal. In many ways this has highlighted the lack of cohesiveness and cooperation within the European Union. Something young people are resolute in wanting to re-establish.

Is supporting refugees a European duty ?
Source: Hemicycle e-voting, 'migration across the universe'
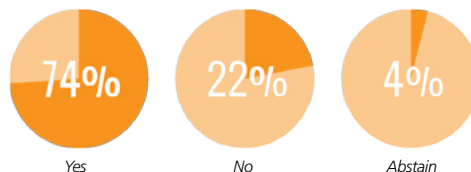
74%	22%	4%
Yes	*No*	*Abstain*

1. **Matching migrants** with the best possible country for their skills and culture would control the impact on labour markets and help improve relations with the local population

The current system of unregulated immigration is having a profound effect on labour markets, which have suffered a long period of wage depression as a result of the surplus of labour in the market. This "compositional change in employment"[2] - as the IMF puts it – has been seen across Europe and is leading to a deep-set resentment amongst blue-collar native workers towards the new influx.

Despite this, migrant workers should not be viewed as one homogenous group. Policy makers have a duty to tease out individual skills and match these with existing gaps in the market. This idea is closely linked to the economic reality; wage depression is damaging not just for native workers but also for the migrants themselves. The problem lies in the fact that migrants often do not understand the effect they are having on wage levels and the true nature of the labour markets they are hoping to enter.

One solution would be for migrants to choose the country they wish to eventually settle in. This would allow authorities to identify together with them a suitable foster country with the best economic, social and cultural mix to suit them and their families' skills and language abilities. Such a system would need to inform refugees that there are competing strengths and weaknesses of certain job markets across the different EU member states. This system could work very well together with the proposal explained in Idea 3.

Majority of people agree that the Eu should have the power to pressure countries to accept migrants (by country)
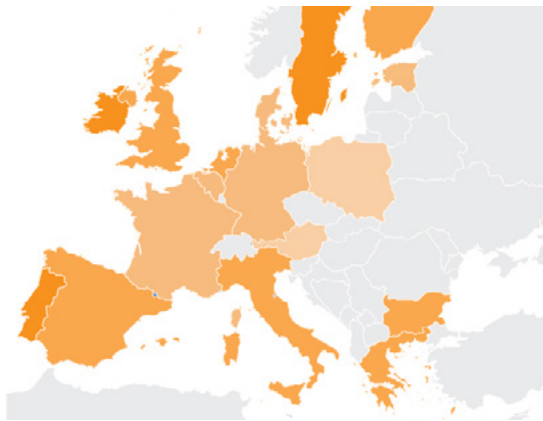
Low pressure ▬▬▬▬▬ High pressure

[2] *International Monetary Fund, 2016. The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges. [online] Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1602.pdf>*

The EU should have the power to pressure countries to accept migrants (by age)
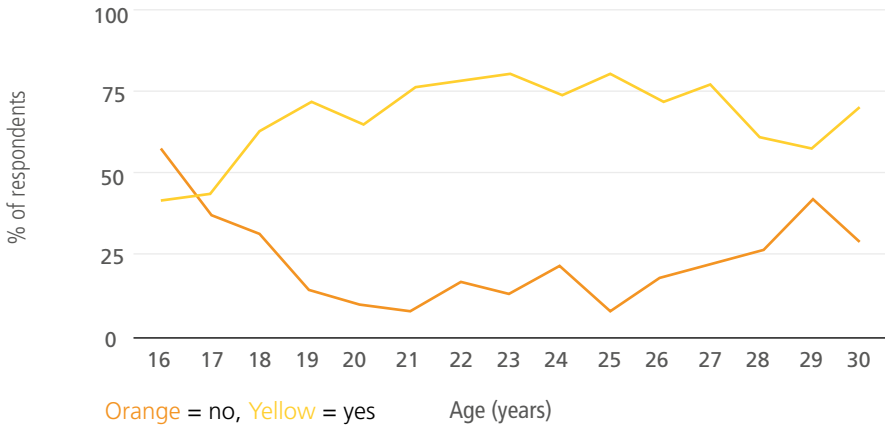
Orange = no, Yellow = yes   Age (years)

2. Refugee mentors: Encourage volunteer youth schemes to provide a powerful framework for integrating refugees into their new societies

Many young people view integration policies as the crucial missing link in transforming refugees into active economic members of the European community. Policies directed at newcomers are insufficient over the long run in realising refugees' economic potential and societal participation.

To be effective, integration of refugees must take into account the needs of both migrants and local communities. When refugees from outside Europe arrive in a country, one of the main requirements is that they integrate themselves into the new society; learn the language, work and respect local customs. This is often where stand-alone integration policies end. Too little thought is given as to how the European society understands and welcomes them, and indeed how it adapts to new waves of refugee migration in the future.

68% of young people questioned at the EYE believe the EU should have the power to force countries to accept more refugees. This enthusiasm for welcoming and integrating refugees means the youth are uniquely positioned to build bridges between their own communities and newcomers. Volunteering, particularly on the local level, is one area where young people are already highly organised and networks of volunteers have already proved effective in bridging the divide between new migrants and native communities. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been running a mentoring scheme that pairs volunteers with new refugees arriving in the U.S. Mentors educate newcomers on how to use local transport and teach them core skills like how to perform well in job interviews and how to

use the Internet. In the UK the Refugee Support Network (RSN) has been running a similar scheme since 2009, focused on young asylum seekers and refugees in North West London. Similar schemes, often founded by local organisations, are springing up throughout Europe.

This kind of one-to-one volunteer mentoring is recognised by national governments throughout Europe. In the UK the Department of Health recognises the importance of one-to-one support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and states: "given the nature of the situation unaccompanied children find themselves in… the appointment of an independent visitor will be considered advisable". Mentoring is advised in the Children Act (1989). Yet few social services departments throughout Europe offer mentoring schemes of any kind to new refugees.

Stand-alone integration policies place the sole burden of integration on refugees. Youth volunteers should be encouraged to work as bridge builders between native residents and newcomers.

" I think Europe needs to rethink its strategy on how we deal with migrants, and how we categorize migrants…we are tarring everybody with the same brush… Europe needs to have a consistent policy when dealing with other international powers". - Adam Aslam, Student and Imam at the University of Leeds, EYE participant.

3. All embassies should be able to receive asylum requests: Allow embassies from all European countries to receive asylum requests directly in order to prevent people from dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean has become a place of great danger in the last few years. Refugees fleeing conflicts have made the dangerous crossing with the help of illegal human traffickers who have only profit in mind with safety often an afterthought. All too often, people lose their lives in this perilous journey, most notably last year when 3-year old Syrian Alan Kurdi's lifeless little body was washed up on a Turkish beach.

One way to stop these dangerous illegal crossings would be for European countries to receive asylum requests directly from affected areas. This could help reduce the number of people making the journey and offer them the prospect of a safe haven if they apply through these channels. This approach is in use in Canada.

4. Encourage open-minded religious education - all children around the world should have access to and equal opportunities in education, with renewed focus on ensuring tolerance for people from different religions and cultures

Across Europe, there are claims that the continent is divided between its communities. Certainly, there has been a rise in Islamist terror attacks perpetrated by Europeans, as well as a growing far-right movement in opposition to multiculturalism.

In order to ensure that Europe remains strong, more needs to be done to improve relations between communities.

One way of addressing these divisions could be to ensure equal opportunities in education across Europe, with a renewed focus on tolerance and understanding of those from different religions and cultures. In doing this, Europe can begin to bridge divides that have created tensions in communities, and in turn work towards a more tolerant and united Europe.
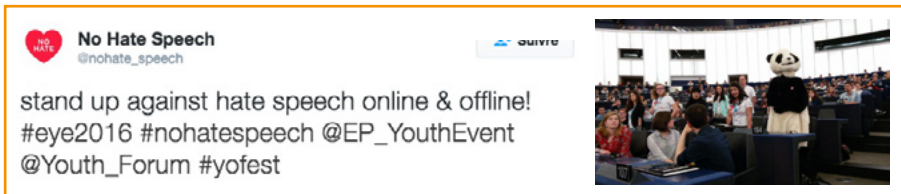
Interview: Nour Machlah
A Syrian architect who sought asylum in Portugal in 2014
Young idea giver at panel 'Migration Across the Universe'

How was your arrival to Europe two years ago?
I didn't know much about Portugal or how people would react. But the arrival was good and I started getting to know Portuguese people who are very nice.

What was the most difficult to cope with at your new home?
I faced a couple of challenges. One of them was the language and also the lack of information on both sides. I thought I knew a lot about Europe but I discovered how little I knew and it was like that also the other way round. [...]But I started to answer questions. When people ask questions, it means they are interested and that's nice.

What did you do to integrate yourself into your new environment?
It came from the locals. They started asking questions when they saw me praying or when I went out dancing because they thought that as a Muslim I was not allowed to do that. We are still getting to know each other; it happens naturally.

Would you ask society to do something to make integration easier?
From the people themselves, no. They are nice, respectful and curious about my religion and culture.

And on a general note, not only from your personal experience, what can we do?
Refugees should be let go to countries where they already have relatives. Refugees who already live in Europe can help others to settle down and integrate themselves. I believe a huge family reunion project is necessary.

How does Portuguese culture go together with yours?
It is different but it just means that I have to learn something new. This is the attitude we should have, not that differences tear us apart. The beauty of Europe consists in its diversity but people tend to forget it. We've reached the moon but nowadays we are not able to reach out to a person in front of us. We must learn again how to relate to others.

Do you agree with the way in which the EU deals with the migration crisis?
The reaction of some countries is not one of a union. There are countries that are welcoming and others close borders. Why are people coming mainly to Germany? Because Germany welcomes them. If other countries were willing to receive immigrants, there wouldn't be pressure only on some countries. The EU must work in unity.

What are the benefits migrants bring to Europe?
It will take time to make people understand that they do not only help us but that we can offer something too. But it will happen. We can learn about each other's cultures. And it is also a chance to learn to be human again. Because people sometimes forget what this actually means.

Interview: Dr Denis Mukwege
Sakharov Prize Laureate 2014
Speaker at panel 'Human Rights: Heroes of our time'

What steps should be taken by the international community to protect those fleeing war zones?
The international community can be of help to these refugees. But there is one thing that we must keep in mind - first and foremost it's the responsibility of prevention of these conflicts to begin with.

Helping refugees is fine. Avoiding that people should want to become refugees, should want to leave everything they have behind them, should want to tear themselves apart from their own home countries, going to entirely different cultures that they know nothing about, languages that they do not speak but they have never been exposed to, traditions and customs that are totally alien to them, this is tantamount to destroying the very identity of a person.

So whatever we can do to help them once they are out obviously must be done but it would be so much wiser and so much better if the international community (IC) finally understood that we have to go to the root cause of these refugees fleeing from war areas, the root cause being obviously preventing that war, preventing that conflict, enabling people to stay home instead of leaving everything behind them and in desperation seek shelter and seek refuge elsewhere because that means that the trauma will be theirs forever, as it'll be very difficult for them to go back to what they had before.

So indeed, that would be the very first mission of the IC today. We speak a great deal of globalisation, we've globalised the economy, we globalise everything. Why don't we try and globalise prevention - why don't we try and globally put an end to these conflicts and allow the people who are in their homes to remain in their homes and not be forced to flee - shouldn't that be the first mission of the IC?

Instead of globalising the economy, which is a fine thing probably, why not globalise conflict prevention - ending these conflicts, enabling these people to stay in their homes? So, indeed once they're out, obviously they must be welcome, but let us not forget that it is not just those who flee who find themselves in a hostile environment, also those who welcome them, those who are hosts to those who flee may not be totally familiar with these people coming in, may have some kind of hostility which they may develop because after all, there's so many of them coming in at the same time.

So it's only a matter of logic and reason and of humanity to make sure that the first and foremost mission of the IC should be conflict prevention.

Terrorism - an opportunity for better understanding

In many ways Islamist terrorism is the defining existential threat of the post-cold war world. Young Europeans born since 1990 have lived under the almost constant threat of civilian attacks, made all the more pertinent since the rise of Islamic State in Syria/Iraq in 2014. Europe seems increasingly exposed to the threat of Islamist attacks as well as the principal centre for radicalisation and exporting jihadist fighters to the new 'caliphate'.

The beheading on or around 19 August 2014 of James Foley, an American journalist, by a hooded fighter with a London accent, has put a spotlight on Britain. The arrest of Salah Abdeslam, resident in Molenbeek/Belgium and the so-called 'mastermind' of the 2015 Paris attacks which left 137 dead, was another chilling reminder of radicalisation.

A report by the European Parliament last year estimated that thousands of young Europeans had travelled to fight in the civil war in Syria[3].

This issue of radicalisation particularly resonates with young people, who see the tendency in Europe of 'Muslim demonisation' and the rise of nationalist politics across Europe as fuelling rather than resolving Islamist radicalisation. For many young people radicalisation is a consequence of isolation and alienation.

Others point out the importance of introducing tighter controls at European borders and enforcing tougher internet controls, particularly on password-protected specialist forums which breed radicalisation and superstitions.

Programmes that help radicalised individuals re-integrate into mainstream society are particularly interesting.

5. Open internal borders - protect external borders to prevent the breakdown of the Schengen area whilst maintaining security

The rise of Islamist attacks and fear that among the migrants flowing into the European Union there may be individuals intending to attack Europeans has re-ignited nationalist tensions within member states. The problem has been compounded by the discovery in late 2015 that at least two of the three suicide bombers who blew themselves up outside of Paris' Stade de France arrived at the Greek island of Leros posing as refugees.

These revelations although important misunderstand the wider reality. The majority of extremists currently posing a threat to European citizens are home grown.

[3] European Parliament, 2015. Foreign fighters. [online] Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-548980-Foreign-fighters-FINAL.pdf>

Even if European voters were to put up with border controls, it would for instance be impossible to check the roughly 200 road crossings between Belgium and France alone. Mr Abdeslam is said to have slipped past several police checkpoints as he fled Paris.

"In an area of free movement without internal borders, managing Europe's external borders must be a shared responsibility. The crisis has exposed clear weaknesses and gaps in existing mechanisms aimed at making sure that EU standards are upheld." - Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission.

The solution is not abandoning Schengen but reinforcing the external EU borders. This thinking is closely in sync with senior policy makers and broadly supportive to toughen Europe's border controls.

One concern is that a strengthening of the EU's external borders will undermine humanitarian efforts to welcome and provide a safe haven for refugees fleeing war. Therefore, young people would recommend comprehensive external border controls that take the humanitarian aspect into account.

6. Strengthen youth organisations that offer meaningful activities to young people who have lost a sense of meaning in their lives

The reasons for western religious radicalisation are complex and multi-faceted. Although sometimes issues of unemployment and discrimination are direct causes of Islamist radicalisation, cumulative evidence suggests that the wider cause of radicalisation lies outside of Islamic puritanism and economic marginalisation.

In June 2016, a French parliamentary report pointed to more personal factors: "an existential quest" for identity and belonging undertaken by those with "psychological and social malaise"[4].Those heading for Syria are often petty criminals. But there are also middle-class youngsters, young girls and converts, says Dounia Bouzar, who runs a French deradicalisation centre. This "psychological and social malaise" may partially lie in the breakdown of youth organisations, which has left young Muslims with abundant time for self-radicalisation online and in small groups. Across Europe, youth clubs and services are rapidly disappearing both due to a slow-down in public funding and a lack of demand by young people.

In Vilvoorde, Brussels, a suburb suffering until recently of Islamist radicalisation, a programme enacted since 2014 to give young Muslims a stake in their community and the introduction of specific youth schemes aimed at providing young people with occupations and hobbies, has yielded exciting results. Since May 2014 no further ISIS recruits have left from Vilvoorde[5].

[4] Author unknown, 2015. 'Jihad at the heart of Europe'. The Economist, [online] 21 November. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21678840-brussels-not-just-europes-political-and-military-capitalit-also-centre-its>

7. Boost inter-faith relations to stimulate commitment and to prevent the breeding of all types of superstition in Europe

Dialogue is key in every healthy relationship. Silence, more than anything else, breeds distrust and resentment. Nowhere is this truth more relevant than in inter-faith relations where the breakdown in dialogue does not only lead to distrust but also to the radicalisation of young people. There is more that binds the monotheistic religions of the west together than what separates them.

The youth interfaith work in the post-conflict dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be seen as an example of collective healing through communication. In workshops organised for people of different faiths, or without any religion at all, people would come together to be trained in constructive and peaceful communication or non-violent social action, or sometimes simply to get to know each other better.

The challenge for inter-faith dialogue in the current European climate is huge but not insurmountable. Examples of successful initiatives are often spontaneous and born out of solidarity following attacks. In Denmark, following an attack on a synagogue in February 2015, local Muslims gathered around the building to show solidarity and to protect the worshippers from acts of extremism.

One important dimension is the need to include secular citizens in interfaith initiatives, especially citizens who might have little understanding of religion and might feel uncomfortable with religious expression in public. This kind of action calls for greater public funding for youth interfaith groups and a further strengthening of initiatives such as the European Network of Young Interfaith Leaders (a project founded by United Religious Initiative). Young people are adamant. Wherever opportunity exists for youth interfaith dialogue, it must be taken.

What is more important? Stronger online surveillance or increased privacy?
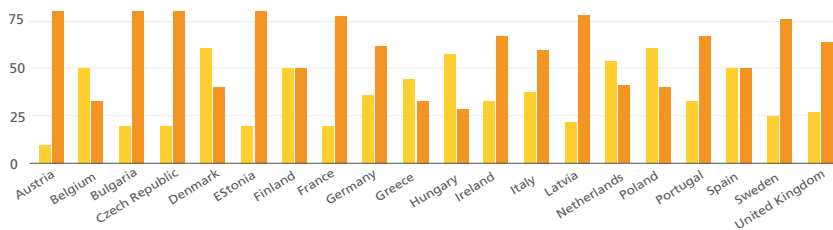
Orange = increased privacy, Yellow = stronger online surveillance

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[5] *Cendrowicz, L., 2015. 'Vilvoorde: The Brussels district fighting radicalisation with kindness'. The Independent, [online] 30 December 2015. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vilvoorde-the-brussels-district-fighting-radicalisation-with-kindness-a6791186.html>*

Interview: Asmaa Jaber
A lecturer in political science in Sciences Po Paris
Speaker at panel 'Destination «Holy War» – roundtrip'

In your opinion, what are the motives for young people to join radical groups?

What we call '' radicalism" these days is actually just another form of anti-system political attitude. As the name itself shows, one becomes '' anti-system" when you have a problem with the system: the political system, the social and economic rules, the policies, etc. What I argue is that young people who find themselves vulnerable to Daesh propaganda are disappointed and even heartbroken by the system. They're left out, they're discriminated, they're excluded, they have no hope, no horizon, and they don't know where to go with all this. And this is where the very powerful propaganda plays its role...

Do you think it comes from some kind of frustration or a feeling that they are not accepted by the society they live in?

No one needs to be accepted by the society as a whole. Everyone is disliked by someone or has a problem of some sort. The problem is when nothing works out for you. You know your school is the worst, and so are your future perspectives, the way you are perceived, your neighbourhood, the house you live in. When you know that you got the worst share of everything in your life and, in addition to that, your chances of getting out of that and improving those aspects of your life are almost none, then you're angry, disappointed and vulnerable to any anti-system propaganda.

In the debate, the answer was that education is key in this aspect. How can young people be educated to stop them from joining radical groups?

I think the top priority is to implement more efficient policies and to focus on the local level. There is no use in focusing on education if afterwards those young people will still discover that there is absolutely no equality of opportunity. Education alone doesn't make up for economic, ethnic or social segregation and the total lack of any opportunities or inclusion. Still, to answer your question, I would recommend that we talk to children, even at a very young age, about the "sensitive" topics (such as Daesh, propaganda, etc.) so that we give them some sort of a political vaccine. At least next time they'll hear about it they will already have an idea what it is about and they would have been warned against it. I would recommend only that for now, because I attach great importance to giving realistic policy recommendations, ones that could be applied the next day.

At your work you focus on children. Why is the emphasis on children regarding radicalisation so important?
Because it's way better to prevent than to react, and to participate in building the person's political and social identity while they're growing up than to try to demolish what was badly built and correct it, after it's already very late.

Do you see any link between radicalisation and the current migration crisis?
Absolutely no link except that both phenomenon can be used by national-populist propaganda.

United in diversity – towards an end of modern discrimination

Discrimination in whatever form it takes is blight on the consciousness and moral fabric of European society. That is the conclusion of discussion and talks of young people from across Europe at this year's European Youth Event.

By its very nature Europe is a multicultural society. Out of a population of over 770 million, an estimated 14% of Europe's population are minorities, which are around 105 million people. Yet multiculturalism, for so long heralded as a benchmark of European openness and acceptance, is increasingly viewed as a negative. Fear of terrorism and increasing external migration have caused large swathes of mainstream society to reassert its perceived norms and values; widening the gulf between 'them' and 'us'.

Multiculturalism is a gross benefit to European society. By-and-large immigrants, when left to their own devices, prosper, and have enriched European culture. The current rise of right-wing nationalist parties in EU member states is a worrying trend that might encourage negative attitudes towards minorities. Against this backdrop young people call for policies that focus on integration in general (rather than favouring one community over another).

This is not to say that young people support all aspects of multiculturalism. There are examples where foreign cultural practices have no place in European society: female genital mutilation, honour killings and forced marriages, are but a few singled out for criticism. Nor is it to say that young people believe it is solely the 'up to the dominating community to end discrimination. Discrimination is by its nature a two-way stream; therefore more responsibility should be placed on minority groups to integrate themselves.

8. Foster clubs and societies that build bridges between dominant and minority cultural groups in mixed schools

Mass immigration has transformed European societies: even in once-homogeneous countries, such as Sweden, foreign-born people make up 14% of the population. While nationalist parties across Europe implicitly, and also increasingly explicitly, promote a message of community isolation and cultural absolutism, young people do not share this view.

Despite the rhetoric of many politicians, cultural assimilation is inevitable in Europe. Migrants are mixing with new immigrants from continental Europe. Yet, and regrettably, education is one of the least inclusive areas of modern society. Failure to build bridges between minority and majority communities at this stage of life leads to entrenched views and apathy towards integration.

Young people propose that schools should promote integration rather than prevent it, and want to see more done to improve mixing within schools. One area of interest is interfaith and intercultural clubs within schools that help expose students to other cultures and beliefs. Furthermore, the existence of private faith schools, which do not provide pupils sufficient opportunity to learn about and consider the lives of those who have a different religious faith or no faith, are also worrying as they block integration and perpetuate discrimination.

Society, and not themselves, is preventing minorities from integrating (by country)
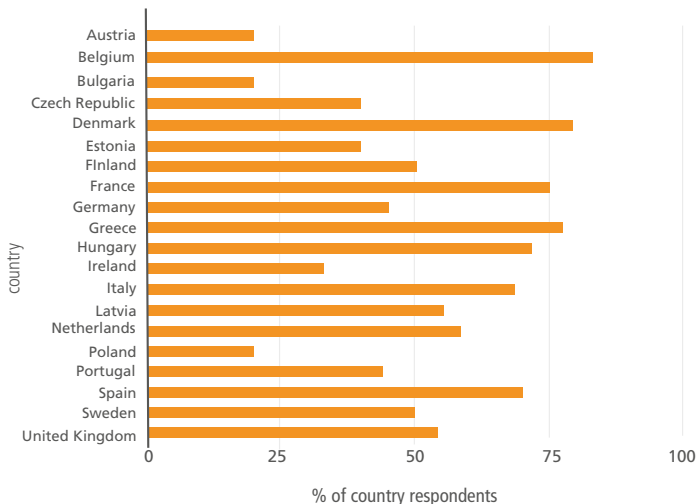
Society, and not themselves, is preventing minorities from integrating (by age)

Orange = no, Yellow = yes   Age (years)
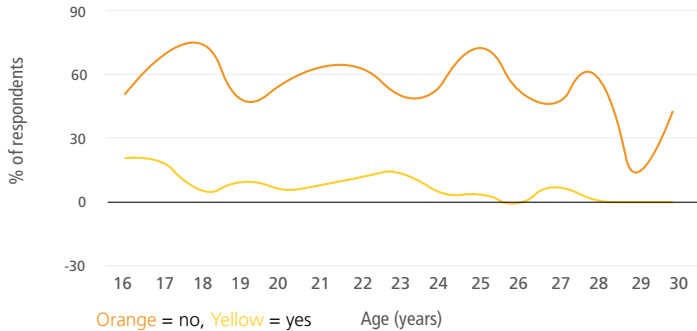
9. **Promote events that challenge stigma towards disabled** and help realign popular misconceptions of disabled people in European society

Disability discrimination is one of the true blights on Europe's moral conscience. According to the latest Eurostat figures, in the EU-28, 44 million people aged between 15 and 64 (14.0% of that age group) report a basic activity difficulty[6], with 35 million EU citizens suffering employment troubles as a result of their disability. This figure is almost certainly an understatement, particularly given the large number of people who hide mental disabilities and depression and particularly amongst men who report significantly lower levels of disabilities than women. Over three-quarters of those suffering severe mental conditions, and over 90% of those with moderate ones, are treated by non-specialists or not at all. Discrimination against disabled people happens at every stage of life, from school bullying to transport access or employment opportunities. And although most member states have enacted some form of disability discrimination legislation, stamping out the issue of disability discrimination seems far from being achieved.

Young people report signs indicating that things are beginning to look brighter for disabled people. The main driving force to end disability discrimination is not a direct policy, but a change of narrative. The Invictus Games and Paralympic competitions stand out as successful 'narrative changing' operations.

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[6] *European Commission, 2015. Discrimination in the EU in 2015. [online] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/Public Opinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077>*

According to a report from the European Commission in 2015, 69% of Europeans said they would be comfortable with a disabled person holding high office in their country[7]. A wider and more tolerant perception of mental illness and the coverage of issues of mental health in the media has contributed to this improvement.

Young people are optimistic that disability discrimination may be one of the first areas of discrimination to be wiped out, but for this to happen policy makers and legislators should do even more to support initiatives that realign the narrative so that people see the person not the wheelchair.

10. Appoint 'diversity ambassadors' to ensure minorities are represented at local and EU level politics

While there has been progress in improving diversity in Europe's institutions, for example Jean-Claude Juncker's commitment to having 40% female representation in the European Commission's senior management, there is often criticism that the EU doesn't 'look like Europe'. This in turn can give the impression that the European Union is a closed group and fails to take into account issues which affect different communities across the EU.

One idea to help tackle this is the appointment of 'diversity ambassadors'. This could improve dialogue around issues of diversity and hold the European institutions accountable for the commitments they make regarding diversity, and in particularly regarding the role of young people. It could also facilitate high-level talks, ensuring that youth-related policies are at the forefront of discussions within the EU.

[7] *European Commission, 2015. Discrimination in the EU in 2015. [online] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/Public Opinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077>*

Youth, Peace and inclusion
A commentary by the European Youth Forum

The achievement of peace requires more than the simple absence of armed conflict. Taking a broad approach to the theme of War and Peace, the activities at the EYE delved into issues of non-discrimination and the root causes of violent extremism as well as analysing specific armed conflicts and the European response to the refugee crisis.

Migration

More than a dozen conflicts have broken out in the past five years including in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and Ukraine. Almost one in three asylum seekers arriving in the EU since 1 January 2016 are young people and children under the age of 18[1], who are deprived of their childhood and are at a high risk of their rights being violated and neglected. Europe's response has been inadequate, with politicians often primarily focused on stemming migration flows into the continent. In order to address this spiralling crisis, the following steps should be taken:

• **Ensure that the fundamental rights of asylum seekers are upheld throughout the asylum procedure.** To avoid the further loss of lives at its doorstep, the EU and its Member States must ensure that the fundamental rights of asylum seekers are upheld throughout the asylum procedure. Attention must be given to the rights of the child in particular, following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and guided by the child's best interests and independent will. The detention of minors must be avoided and proper psychological care should be offered to unaccompanied minors.

• **Support the long-term inclusion of refugees.** Integration into education, vocational training or employment should be facilitated as quickly and smoothly as possible and should draw on good practices where they exist, ensuring inclusive societies for all young people. To support the long-term inclusion of young refugees, it is crucial to promote this understanding throughout the whole population, and in all basic institutional structures, such as kindergartens, schools, offices, governments and hospitals. Furthermore, an objective debate based on tolerance and respect in the media and in politics is an important step.

• **Recognise the role of young people and youth organisations in welcoming young refugees.** Youth organisations have often been at the frontline in welcoming young refugees and promoting integration through their activities, which promote inter-cultural dialogue and non-discrimination while fostering citizenship education. The role of young people and youth organisations must be recognised and further supported by governments across Europe.

Violent extremism

While violent extremism in the form of religious fundamentalism is a growing concern for Europe, other forms of violent extremism, based on xenophobia or racism, are also growing and pose a major threat to peaceful democratic societies. It is important to use clear, non-discriminatory language when talking about extremism, or violent radicalisation.

[1] UNCHR data http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php (accessed on 20 June 2016)

Being radical can lead to positive change, challenging mainstream thinking. There must be space for positively radical ideas to emerge, while condemning violent extremism[2]. In particular it is essential to:

• **Tackle the root causes of violent radicalisation such as marginalisation of young people.** In order to tackle violent extremism, all sectors should work together to tackle the root causes of violent radicalisation, such as marginalisation of young people.

• **Support youth work/ youth organisations.** Furthermore youth work, which creates a safe environment for young people who are excluded from society, should be supported.

• **Invest in quality education (formal and non-formal).** Finally, further investment in quality education is required, both formal and non-formal, which promotes intercultural dialogue and equips young people with citizenship and human rights education.

Non-discrimination

Discrimination is an increasing reality for young people today, despite legislation and obligations for States at national, EU, Council of Europe and UN levels. This is particularly the case in education, employment and occupation, freedom of movement and in the access to and supply of goods and services. The impact is grave, hindering young people's transition to adulthood and autonomy. Discrimination at an early age can affect young people's health, well-being, self-esteem and sense of belonging which are likely to adversely impact their future.

• **Strengthen non-discrimination policies and legislation.** EU law prohibits age-based discrimination only in employment, Member States are not obliged to provide protection from discrimination on the grounds of age in other areas of life including education, health-care, social protection and access to goods and services. Member States must re-prioritise the adoption of the proposed Equal Treatment Directive and effective implementation of existing legislation must be ensured. Moreover, young people are not a homogeneous subset of society defined exclusively by age. Young people's identity depends on various factors that can result in multiple forms of discrimination and/or intersecting forms of oppression. Existing anti-discrimination law is often inadequate to address such forms of discrimination. This must be addressed by broadening the list of anti-discrimination grounds, as well as by applying anti-discrimination law in such a way so as to enable discriminatory practices to be identified as practices based on more than one ground.

• **Education to ensure young people are aware of their rights and remedies in case of discrimination.** Furthermore, non-discrimination policies and legislation, while constituting an important starting point, must be accompanied by awareness-raising amongst young people on their rights as well as remedies in case of discrimination. Individuals must be equipped to identify and empowered to respond to discrimination when it occurs.

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[2] *European Youth Forum 2016. The Role of the Youth Sector in Preventing Violent Extremism. http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/05/ The-Role-of-the-Youth-Sector-in-Preventing-Violent-Extremism.pdf*

Apathy or participation:
Agenda for
a *vibrant* democracy

The way young people participate in their national democracies and with international bodies like the EU is changing. Whilst digital technologies are encouraging wider debate, disenfranchisement with formal democratic systems is challenging the way policy makers engage with the next generation. One problem is the rising inequality in education which mirrors wider gaps developing within Europe. Yet education and technology, when combined and explored creatively, may hold the golden answer to Europe's apathy challenge.

Amongst the many EYE activities on this theme, participants were asked for their ideas on how to enhance democratic participation in politics, then discussed the increasing role of digital media in politics, analysing both the opportunities and dangers. They also explored various new online media initiatives for more participation through tweets, digital storytelling, blogs, and apps, and got the chance to learn more about student participation options, such as: lobbying for beginners, citizenship education in practice and many more related aspects.

Digital engagement – connecting people to power

It is often said that the young people are not interested in politics. Why is this so? One big problem is that people don't trust politicians, and young people in particular are not engaged because they feel that the government is not really thinking of them. People also don't understand the institutions, or what is going on because the level of complexity has become too high.

Some social scientists believe that only those who are already engaged use the internet to follow politics. However, there are positive signs that internet can reach out and engage more people. The internet has the potential to allow young people to take part in different debates and to reach a broader audience with their ideas; connecting more and discovering new information. Could digital tools and the internet empower young people and make them more politically engaged? Can the politicians and EU institutions reach out to young people through the internet and social media? The first approach is from the bottom to the top, while the second is from the top to the bottom. To reach the goal of a stronger political engagement through the internet, efforts should go both ways.

Undoubtedly, young people are more inclined to take advantage of modern methods of participation - from e-voting to apps and internet use to security. Young people can benefit from the changes greater digitalisation brings if we adapt it to the electoral process. Furthermore, young people are more tech-savvy than their parents' generation. The European Parliament could go some way to embrace this by using apps and other inventions to improve involvement of young people and speak to them directly on the issues that matter to them. Despite the benefits that digitalisation presents, it can also bring threats. Young people need to be aware of the potential dangers of greater public involvement online, as well as of the important role they can play in pointing out threats and facing challenges.

Digitalisation plays a greater role in our democracy, and young people are at the forefront of this change.

11. Invest in e-voting at the EU level to offer a 21st century method of voting and encourage greater participation

Democratic participation among young people across Europe is low, which was confirmed during the last elections to the European Parliament in 2014. Despite the fact that young people (aged 18-24) are more positive than older generations about the European Union, it is a worrying trend that only 28% of 18-24 year olds eligible to vote turned out, while those who are over 55 and more Eurosceptic showed a turnout of 51%[1].

So how can voter participation be improved - both for the national and for the European elections? E-voting is an attractive option, with young people feeling largely positive

[1] European Parliament, 2014. Post-election survey 2014. [online] Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2014/post/post_ee2014_sociodemographic_annex_en.pdf>

about the concept. Following the introduction of e-voting in Estonia an increasing number of young people began engaging with their democratic system. For EP elections to use e-voting, first of all member states should be attracted to the idea and make it possible to happen.

Another issue that could be alleviated by e-voting relates to those who are currently studying on the Erasmus Mundus programme, or on other exchange programmes around Europe. The option of postal or proxy voting exists; however, the deadlines are in advance of polling day meaning many miss the deadline to sign up.

By introducing e-voting those studying or working abroad could vote in their national elections as well as the European elections without the need for lengthy paperwork. The irony is there for all to see - Erasmus is an EU programme to mobilise students, but these same students may miss out on their right to vote and support European issues. E-voting could solve these practical problems.

Of course, issues still remain with e-voting and it won't solve all issues of apathy among young people. However, adapting the voting process to modern trends may go some way to making the system more engaging.

Numbers of people using i-voting (e-voting) during Estonian elections, 2005-2015[2]
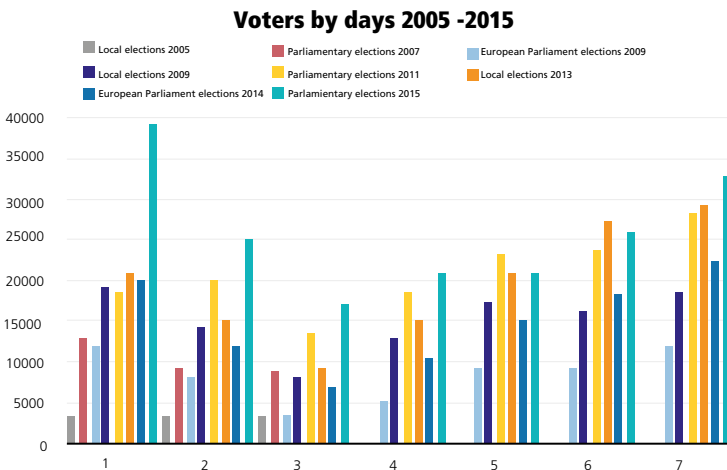
Voters by days 2005 -2015

12. Develop a community app that proposes and debates policy in real-time

The internet provides a voice to millions across Europe and offers opportunities to criticise as well as to listen. However, this criticism can sometimes take on a cacophonic quality with innovative opinions and beliefs sometimes becoming mixed in with insidious statements or outright bullying.

According to studies on social media during elections, it is expected that if turnout among young people increases, this is partly down to social media - showing that social media is more widespread among young voters. So how can this be harnessed in a way that ensures young people can engage on the issues that affect them while allowing the politicians to cut through the noise and understand the core issues and ideas?

One idea could be to develop dedicated apps, like 'Action Bound', that allow them to become activists. Using only a smartphone or a tablet, they can take pictures and videos to send out messages on political issues in a very creative way. Creativity can be used as a very powerful tool to sensitise.

Another idea is to create a website and an app that allows young people to engage in EU public life wherever and whenever. Such apps should be simple to use and through them, youngsters could submit their projects; these can be targeted at the EU level but also at local levels to attract fellow participants. Furthermore, these apps offer the option to like or dislike projects of MEPs, thereby increasing young European voices in the decision-making process. This could be supplemented by an 'MEP Twitter hour' where representatives would answer questions posted over social media about various issues and increase engagement with voters.

Fundamentally, the internet revolution offers voters a chance to directly engage in debates and speak, albeit through devices, directly to those that represent them. These technological innovations could go some way to improving engagement with young people.

13. Improve internet education to make the internet a more democratic and accessible place

To make the internet more democratic, it should be available for everybody in similar conditions as part of a democratic internet sphere. This does not only mean the extension of free wi-fi, but also to ensure that local libraries and schools have access to the latest technology. In addition, there should be a greater drive to ensuring all regions of Europe have access to good quality broadband and mobile internet.

Digital education should go along with this, explaining concepts of democracy and freedom of speech on the internet as well as providing the methods to encrypt or clean personal data in order to protect personal privacy.

In fact, young people often accept general conditions in order to use websites, social media or to get free apps. Frequently, they don't even read general conditions because they appear too vague or too lengthy. The result is that they transfer their personal data for free to profit-making organisations that will use or sell them. To protect users, the EU should push to make general conditions more understandable, and people should have to 'opt-in' to having their details shared with third parties.

Political education - building a path to open democracy

Apathetic. Disillusioned. Frustrated. These phrases are often used to describe young people all over the world. Young people are the future of the EU and the ones that will inherit the EU project. While EU topics often make the news headlines, and despite the fact that many young people experience Europe thanks to Erasmus, there seems to be little knowledge about the functioning of the European Union. According to a study by the European Parliament, 44% of Europeans say they don't understand how the EU works[3].

Young people can make a difference, through direct participation. By transforming their community the whole EU can develop as a vibrant and open democracy. Indeed, a report by the European Commission showed that young people are willing to engage[4] in societal issues, and that these positive intentions need to be harnessed to ensure that they translate into greater democratic participation.

Therefore the appetite of engagement among young people on issues of society is there, but more could undoubtedly be done to educate young people on how the EU works, which would lead to an even greater involvement and democratic participation. The future of Europe lies with its youth - more should be done to ensure that this group is ready and willing to accept the challenges they face.

14. Teach advocacy and lobbying in schools to improve democratic participation amongst young people

Young people have wishes and hopes for their future. They see a problematic situation and wish that it could be different. Most of the time, they don't think that they can make the change, because they don't know how.

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[3] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160408STO22170/Teaching-about-the-EU-44-of-Europeans-don't-understand-how-the-EU-works>
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/engaging-young-people-politics-more-peaceful-europe>

Political education in schools should help young people to learn that they can make a difference and give them the proper tools to do it. One way of ensuring that young people are increasingly engaged is to promote advocacy and lobbying as an activity.

Such advocacy lessons could contain three components: firstly, participants meet experts so that they can gain solid preparation (for example, the difference between 'advocacy' and 'lobbying'), secondly participants share their experiences on advocacy/lobbying, so that they can learn from each other and thirdly, participants reflect together on problems and solutions in a very interactive and engaging manner.

15. Create a prize in memory of Giulio Regeni to allow more young people to explore the world through study and understand civil society better

Giulio Regeni was a young student who was brutally killed while studying in Egypt. His death has been covered widely in the media and has led to uproar in his native Italy and other countries across Europe.

Prior to his death Giulio was a student at Cambridge and was undertaking a PhD degree studying Egyptian trade unions on an exchange with the American University in Cairo. The importance of remembering his work and honouring his memory is not lost on young people across Europe.

The idea put forward is to create an award in honour of Giulio Regeni to encourage more young people to study civil society and travel. It is felt this would be a small but significant statement in ensuring that young people should not be afraid to learn more about civil society around the world.

16. Teach EU politics in schools to help improve democratic participation among young people

In schools young people learn important lessons on citizenship, but not how to be European citizens. Strong education around civic issues such as voting, free speech and the role of the media can make people better citizens and prepare them to understand the EU.

The EU seems very complicated and, as everyone knows, it is difficult to ask people to support and trust something that they don't necessarily understand. Another problem is that people are unaware of the difference in roles between the EU and member states. A report from 2013[5] claimed that education about the EU is patchy and too general.

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[5] ICF GHK, 2013. Learning Europe at School. [online] Available at: < http://www.eupika.mfdps.si/Files/Learning%20Europe%20at%20 School%20final%20report.pdf>

An idea to help solve this is to encourage member states to increase education about Europe in their national curriculums. This solution is two-fold. Firstly, a thorough understanding of the European Union, its structures and functions could be included in national curricula. Furthermore, this should be underpinned with a more social education about values across Europe. This isn't to say that a 'European culture' could, or even should, be fostered in this way. But it could help create understanding around the shared values of democracy, free speech and a free media - particularly at a time when Europe faces growing division over cultural issues. Fundamentally, without a solid knowledge of how the EU works and increased awareness of the need for debate to create an inclusive and engaged European society the project will struggle. One important step it can take here is simply to improve education.

17. Be Glocal (global and local): help found a three year campaign to raise the leaders of tomorrow

Democracy is a process: young people are not only critical, they also bring something to the debate. Democracy often relates to the issues you have locally, it deals with the problem you have next door.

Other international organisations have also taken initiatives in this regard. In 2013, the UN appointed a Special Envoy on Youth. The same year, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a report, 'Enhancing youth political participation throughout the electoral cycle[6], before drafting the UNDP Youth Strategy for 2014–2017, the core goal of which is to strengthen youth participation in politics and public institutions. The proposals claim that we need to stop discussing the problems faced by young people, and instead enable them to act on issues themselves.

In order to increase youth participation, one proposal would be to establish a three-year programme aimed at starting campaigns and training young people to become political leaders. This initiative could be supported by giving local governments funding to deliver workshops in schools and those selected representatives could present their qualities for being alternative creators and innovators. Specific targets for campaigns and projects need to be included. Schools and local associations should be involved.

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[6] UNDP, 2013. Enhancing youth political participation throughout the electoral cycle. [online] Available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/electoral_systemsandprocesses/enhancing-youth-political-participation-throughout-the-electoral.html >

Interview: Mairead McGuinness
Vice President, European Parliament

A lot of people say that they perceive the EU institutions as something distant, how do you address this problem?
I think a lot of people say a lot of things including that they feel disconnected. But I sometimes ask people the following questions: Do you know how your local authorities work? Do you know how the local administration works? Do you know how legislations are drafted in your national member state? And many of us don't know. But I suppose it is a prospect that Brussels is bigger and more removed and I think we have to accept that people have that sense. Except, and that's interesting, that when something goes wrong in their member state they very often contact the European Union for help and support.

So, it's a mixed bag and I think we can perhaps either feed the idea that some people think that Europe is completely wrong and disconnected or we can accept the reality that Europe needs to improve. And that we can only act if member states agree and if the Members of the European Parliament agree, and I think we have to. We need to demystify the process but it's a complicated process. On the other hand, when there has been a crisis in Europe for example on food safety or contamination, we have rapid alert systems that actually work. There are areas where Europe has brought in legislation and systems that are actually really effective in terms of protecting our health and wellbeing. And I think maybe we need to talk more about those things, talk about our values as well but also where we are failing.

Is the European Union taking the right steps to engage young people in politics?
I think we could do better with young people throughout the year. Rather than 'you know we have this great event and it's fantastic', lobby in your youth organisations and get involved in other organisations. Not just because you are young but because you are interested in various issues.

And I think that the lobbying space is quite busy. There was a time when I tried to meet everyone who was looking for a meeting but I physically could not do that. So you, as a young lobbyist, need to find another way to make sure that I get the information I need. Then I can follow up with questions or make a decision to help. You need to learn how it works. Politics is all about human contact, discussion, exchange of information and so on. Even though a lot of meetings in the Parliament are behind closed doors, I think we're still a quite open Parliament. That is how it should be.

EU integration – entrenching the conversation for the next generation

The EU is currently facing a range of political and economic pressures, including slow growth and persistently high unemployment in many EU countries, as well as the rise of far-right populist parties. Quite a number of European citizens have lost faith in the capability of the EU to solve the most pressing problems and the notion of a democratic deficit is something that has become inherent in many debates.

Supporters of the European project, including many young people, worry that the multiple crises currently facing the EU could stop or even reverse some aspects of EU integration. What can be done to ensure that this doesn't happen and instead increases and develops EU integration?

Given that the lack of democratic legitimacy is one of the most quoted objections to further European integration, how can the EU transform in a more democratic and inclusive direction? There are a number of steps that can be taken, including the transferring of power to the Parliament as an elected body which would help 'deepen' the EU integration process. A quota to ensure that young people are consulted on matters and have adequate representation is another step, while to expand the reach and influence of the EU an extension of the Erasmus programme to those who aren't in higher education could be another way of consolidating greater support for the EU.

Young Europeans are largely in favour of a more integrated, larger Europe, unlike older generations. In order to help develop these steps need to be taken to ensure that young people are part of that conversation and that the benefits of the EU are there for all to see.

The EU is not doing enough to encourage alternative employment options (by age)
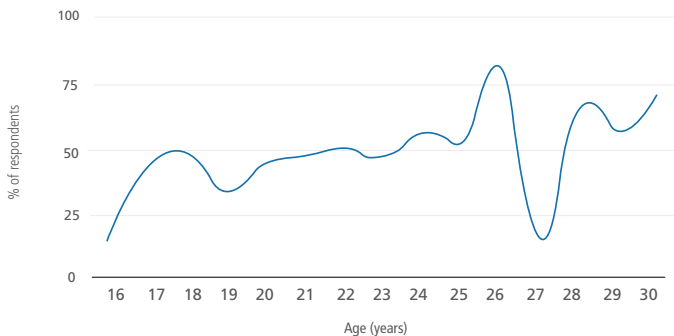
The EU is not doing enough to encourage alternative employment options (by country)

% of country respondents
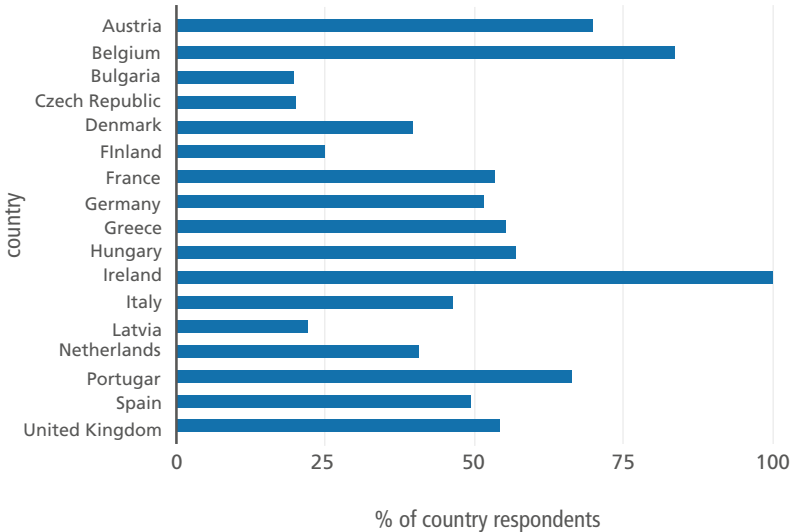
18. Improve spoken English in schools to harmonise the many voices of Europe

In the EU many people speak a good level of English and French. However, all too often these languages are not taught to a high enough level in the member states meaning that access to the EU is undermined at the first hurdle – namely communication. According to the Eurobarometer survey in 2012, English was only spoken fluently by 38% of Europeans[7].

In order to improve the level of English and with it access to the European institutions, there could be more rigorous teaching and testing to ensure everyone across Europe speaks one, common language along with any local languages which are their mother tongue. This could be done at a school level and for those who are older; classes in English could be made available to anyone who wants to improve their English.

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[7] *European Commission, 2012. Europeans and their languages. [online] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf>*

19. Improve transparency and accessibility of EU documents and legislation so young people can understand and engage with them

The lack of democratic legitimacy is one of the most quoted objections to further European integration and the EU in general. Inherent in this debate is the notion of a lack of legitimacy, in that EU decisions are not sufficiently responsive to public preferences and scrutiny.

Furthermore, there is a strong mistrust around the notion of being governed by a body with extensive powers, which is not directly accountable to an elected parliament. The most important decisions, and a fundamental part of the legislative process, is developed by the 28 ministers that represent national interests rather than by the representatives of the Parliament voted for by people across Europe.

The EU that many young people want is an EU where legislation and directions is based on humanitarian values and on what a majority of the people want. Although nowadays this is rarely the case and what happened to the 2014 EU Regulation (333/2014) on CO_2 emissions from passenger cars can be seen as an example.

So what can be done to guarantee transparency and efficiency and give the EU the democratic legitimacy that it needs? One solution is the transferring of all rights to craft legislation from the Council to the Parliament. Furthermore, all legislation should be produced according to the ordinary legislative procedure and by qualified majority voting. This would not only make the EU more democratic but also prevent national interests of a few manipulating the will of many.

If a government of the people, for the people and by the people is what we want, the EU needs to reform.

Yet one issue that lingers and that was stressed by Johanna Nyman, President of the European Youth Forum, is that the EU still largely depends on its member states, particularly through much of its finances, and this sometimes leads to a lack of willingness to co-operate.

This sometimes leaves the EU hamstrung, with deference given more to domestic political concerns than a European response. Young people feel that greater integration would give the EU the capability to address problems on a continental scale - most notably in the current refugee crisis.

20. Implement a quota system for young people in local government and national representation committees to improve representation

Among young people, politics is viewed as something being done to them rather than a process. To reverse this negative trend, a greater emphasis on co-decision making between young people under 30 and political representatives needs to be encouraged. Young people

can play a major role in movements and mobilisation for democracy[8]. Furthermore, it is important to remember that various age cohorts may have contrasting views on political issues concerning welfare spending and budget priorities. To increase political participation, justice and democratic legitimacy, young people should merit more than just a token presence in parliaments.

One solution to guarantee issues facing young people are put front and centre would be to implement a European quota system for young people in the Parliament as well as in their nation states. Guaranteeing women, a set percentage of the seats in Parliament or on electoral lists is an efficient means to boost the presence of female representatives and the same rationale should apply for the representation of the young. Instead of discussing problems of young people, they should have representatives to decide for themselves.

The importance of intergenerational diversity within the political arena has been highlighted for some time. Professor Anne Philips, from the London School of Economics, for example in the book The "Politics of Presence" (1995) stresses that intergenerational practices and collaboration is important because it can play a positive role in the transmission of knowledge and the development of original and innovating problem-solving mechanisms.

In addition, "Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth Participation in Ageing Societies" (2015) is a recent publication where different social scientists examine ways to ensure that the rights, interests and concerns of young people are properly represented in Western democracies. In the book they present youth quotas as a way to counter the possible marginalisation of young people caused by demographic ageing and, thereby, an overrepresentation of the interests of the elderly. Professor Michael Kenny (2012), Queen Mary University of London, further stresses the problems of an electorate which includes a growing number of older people which in turn generates new imbalances in terms of voter turnout, voter registration, party support and the social and generational composition of the legislature.

The demographics are shifting, however an undermining of democracy exists when young people remain apathetic. A sure way to fix this is to address the issues they face and as such, quotas could be one solution to this problem.

EYE European Youth Event ✓
@EP_YouthEvent

.@diversitypower "young people need to be given a place at decision making tables"
#EYE2016 #EYETV

[8] Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2014. Youth participation in national parliaments. [online]. Available at: <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youth_en.pdf>

21. Broaden the Erasmus scheme to offer it to young people who chose different routes than higher education

The European Union may be concerned about the future - however the Erasmus exchange programme remains a great example of how we can deepen European integration in a positive way. The programme has been highly recommended by young people who partook, saying it is a great cultural and character building programme. While meeting other Europeans, many get the feeling of shared values.

However, Erasmus is usually extended as a study programme through higher education institutions. Emerging from a feeling of mutual appreciation, many participants of the EYE would like to see a development of an exchange programme like Erasmus but for people who don't have the possibility to go to a higher education. The exchange programmes could touch on various areas such as for people who work in a variety of businesses including small boutiques, hotel staff and people who work in car industries.

Not only would this be a step towards a further integration, it would also be a step towards an integration that is less driven by the so called 'elites'. "Mov'in Europe" is an initiative by The Erasmus Student Network that is already exploring these options. Although it is still an initiative that is preserved for the youth and holds very few alternatives for different professions.

Interview: Sylvie Guillaume
Vice President, European Parliament

Why do you think some people are of the opinion that their vote does not matter and that they don't want to engage in politics?
I think it's because they feel that they don't get any answers or that there is a certain distance between them and their representatives, the Members of the European Parliament, who have to be more attentive to the young generation so that a new form of trust can be built between them.

We certainly need more diversity in the representation of the elected but without doubt also in the representation of the candidates on the European lists who are

[17]*de Vreese, Boomgaarden 2005, p.60*

willing to take responsibility. This way, I believe that we would show diversity among our representatives who stand for the population and society.

What is the Parliament doing, besides this event, to make more young people engage in politics?
The European Parliament pays a lot of attention to the young generation in its policies. I, for example, am a member of the Committee on Culture and Education and I see to what extent we, the members who sit in this Committee, are dedicated to listening to and supporting ideas that are developed for the education of the young generation. The course and linking together of school and university education, for example, is a commitment of the elected members in this Committee. It goes even further supporting programmes like Erasmus, which allows more young people to study in other European countries.

I believe it is both, a shared interest and the wish to open doors to the youth in Europe. That's the DNA of the European Parliament.

What would you like to say to the young people who don't think their vote really matters?
I would tell them first of all that by not going to vote, others will decide in their place. It's the basic principle of democracy. We fought hard to get this right. Women in France have only fairly recently got it and we ask ourselves how they got by beforehand.

This right, this formidable personal engagement in decision-making, must be exercised. We saw in 2014 when the elections took place how many of those hostile to the EU, the Europhobes and Eurosceptics, took an important number of seats among the elected representatives. We therefore have to get mobilised, avoid that others decide in our place and then, in order to change the course of the EU, we have to say what we want. It's the moment where you tell the elected, or those who want to be, what we expect them to do for us. This is what changes the course of the future. Therefore I think that you simply have to vote, to get engaged. We need to strengthen this continental, unique, original and unequalled project and value a real solidarity among us, among 500 million Europeans. Or we lose and give up to national sovereignty.

Young people demand inclusive politics!
A commentary by the European Youth Forum

In the context of the European Youth Forum's #YouthUp campaign, calling for a more youth-inclusive politics, our research shows that there is a growing disconnect between young people and the traditional, formal institutions of representative democracy. Declining turnout at elections is clear at all levels across Europe, and this is most stark for younger voters: an abstention rate of 72% among 18-24 year olds at the 2014 European Parliament elections is cause for serious concern.

This is a result of the growing belief amongst young people that the formal structures presented as the only way to 'do' politics simply aren't working. As young people opt out electorally, this creates a vicious cycle: politicians feel that young people can be ignored, policy reflects this, and less young people are represented in parliaments (just 2% of MEPs are under 30 years old). Disenchantment and mistrust increase, and the result is a system that does not reflect young people's interest and keeps them distanced from decision-making processes.

Myth-busting: far from apathetic

However, far from being apathetic or disinterested, we find that **young people have never been so politically active.** While they are rejecting political structures they see as outdated, they continue to engage in more direct political action, such as campaigning for specific causes, volunteering, or participating in youth organisations. When we look beyond parties and elections, we see that young people are just as likely to protest, petition, join social movements and engage in debates – both online and offline – as older generations. We see young people leading the charge and turning out in droves for direct, issue-specific referenda, such as those on marriage equality in Ireland, or independence in Scotland. This activity is clearly political, and **undermines the lazy assumption that young people are simply apathetic.** It's not that young people are not political or interested – they're just rejecting structures that haven't delivered. We must look beyond simple electoral turnout when assessing youth participation, our research emphasises what social scientists have stated for over a decade: a problem of youth political participation exists, but it's strictly related to institutional politics.

New approaches and magic bullets

When examining the newer, different approaches that young people are taking to politics, the internet and social media often take a central role. This is natural, given the enormous potential of digital tools to reach out to young people, connect them with others, and provide a platform for discovering, sharing and developing ideas. However, while the internet and social media can be important tools, they should not simply been seen as a 'magic bullet' for improved youth participation. As our research shows, they often replicate existing inequalities and fail to include or empower excluded social groups. Similarly, though electronic-voting can make it easier for young people to turn out, it **does not substantively address the underlying cause for youth abstention.** As such, its potential for boosting youth electoral participation is limited. All potential avenues for a newer (more

digital) politics should be explored, but we must be willing to also address the deeper causes, such as the social and economic barriers to participation, our response to economic crises, and the broader disenchantment and mistrust in institutional politics.

Democracy needs to #YouthUp

These efforts to boost youth political participation are vital for both the legitimacy and the health of our democracies. If we do not address the underrepresentation of young people and their interests in politics, if we fail to recognize and adapt to their changing methods and beliefs, political institutions risk becoming increasingly distant and anachronistic. If a huge proportion of society opts out of electoral politics, **democracy is failing to represent the will of the people.** In response, we must work to bridge the gap between young people and political institutions, to ensure that their creativity and potential can contribute to decision-making processes.

• **Citizenship education** can help address the lack of political literacy and competences that act as a barrier to political participation for young people. Though school curricula plays an important role, in practice this often focuses on the more factual ins-and-outs of politics (how does Parliament work?) as opposed to emphasising critical thinking, democratic culture and a willingness to dissect 'live', complex topics like the environment, human rights and intergenerational solidarity. Citizenship education can be improved and expanded by using more practical, hands-on, non-formal methods of 'learning democracy', especially through partnerships with youth organisations.

• **Participatory policy-making** processes and co-decision tools directly targeting young people boost engagement. This can include participatory budgeting schemes, whereby funds are ring-fenced, voted on and allocated by young people through publicly pitched projects, or an increase role for well-funded, empowered youth councils at all levels of governance.

• **Quota systems** for younger candidates or representatives can play an important role in **increasing representation in democratic structures** as they have in the push for gender equality in politics. Similarly, political parties must dedicate time and resources to integrating young people (such as through their youth wings) and their policy preferences.

• **Reform of current formal electoral processes is needed.** Voter information and targeted education campaigns are critical for turnout, and research shows that a lower voting age (such as 16 years, like in Austria) can also help: when coupled with comprehensive citizenship education, a lower voting age makes it much easier to instill a habit of voting while young people are still in school and often living at home, boosting lifelong participation rates.

This suggestions are not exhaustive, but the EYE debates and the broader #YouthUp campaign are proposing concrete, impactful changes that can help bring young people back towards electoral politics. The onus is on decision-makers and political leaders to listen, engage, and to welcome bigger, broader changes – to reverse the trend of political institutions moving away from younger citizens.

Exclusion or access:
Crackdown on *youth* unemployment

The economic exclusion of young people from society is one of the greatest challenges the EU faces. Efforts to solve the dire unemployment figures are hampered by rising inequality and economic stagnation. To resolve these issues, policy makers must look at both supply and demand. Demand in terms of improving the European economic landscape, particularly as regards entry level, well-paid jobs for young people and supply in terms of improving skills and access in the work-place.

During the event, young EYE participants brought forward their ideas on how to reduce youth unemployment and debated with policy makers about how to close the skills gap between educational standards and job requirements. They also engaged in numerous workshops about Erasmus+, vocational education and training, recognition of volunteering and non-formal education as well as in a wide range of panels and workshops on entrepreneurship.

Tackling youth unemployment head on

Unemployment among under 25 year olds in the EU is one of the largest macro challenges facing the union. Worldwide, youth unemployment figures have not changed significantly over the last decade, nor are they expected to improve in the next few years. But whilst rates are stagnant globally, they are increasing in the European Union. Latest figures show that 19.4% of young people in EU member states are unemployed and looking for work[1].

This crisis largely has its roots in the 2008/9 economic crisis. Since the financial crash, unemployment has become a real concern – especially among young people. Many employers release those most recently hired first, so in a recession youth joblessness rises disproportionately. In Greece and Spain nearly 50% of young people are unemployed.

The scale of the problem has led commentators to label our generation "Generation Jobless". This kind of statement accurately assesses the magnitude of the issue. Youth unemployment is not just detrimental to young people but taxpayers as a whole, as they

[1] *http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics*

end up footing the bill. Truly resolving youth unemployment will only occur through a turnaround in the European economy and the unclogging of labour markets. Nonetheless, young people have some interesting solutions, particularly in how to reduce the mismatch between education and work.

22. Bridge the gap from education to employment by providing young people opportunities for paid and high quality internships

Europe may be the biggest economy in the world, but there is a popular conception amongst young people that they are being left behind. One of the main signs of this inequality is the proliferation of unpaid internships which ask young people to work for experience, instead of a wage[2]. This in turn entrenches inequality as those who can afford to work for an extended period of time without pay are often those from a stronger socio-economic background.

In order to address these problems, the EU should do more to bridge this gap by helping companies and institutions provide paid opportunities with real experience. This would benefit both the companies and those undertaking work experience while reducing the level of inequality within work experience.

This could be achieved with an allocation of funds, similar to the traineeships already offered by the European Parliament.

[2]http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_378_en.pdf p.5.

23. Improve online career advice and unemployment resources to provide unemployment outreach to young people

Tackling youth unemployment begins with adequate careers resources and support. This is not available to young people in Europe. The Youth Guarantee, a new approach from the EU to tackling youth unemployment, which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed, is encouraging but falls short in most member states. The EU expects the total estimated cost of establishing Youth Guarantee schemes in the Eurozone to be 21bn a year, or 0.22% of GDP and, although it quite rightly points out that the cost of inaction is much higher, many member states are unwilling to make the necessary investment.

Where the Youth Guarantee falls short, careers help and guidance needs to be bought in. Many young people are dissatisfied with the level of careers guidance they can receive in the public sector, whether in the education system or more generally. Further investment needs to be placed in careers centres and more nuanced and holistic career advice should be provided.

24. Improve mobility and skills transferral so that young Europeans can explore the EU-wide job market

One central problem with the European Union's labour laws is that they are ultimately surpassed by domestic laws. This is a missed opportunity and prevents unemployed young people from matching their skills with employers in other parts of Europe. One area of interest in this regard is the mobility of vocational qualifications which should be made transferable across borders. This will allow specific skills to transfer across borders and specialist young people to find jobs in the European pooled labour market. Additionally, more can be done to advertise specific roles on the European level allowing employers and employees to match supply and demand throughout the European Union.

European Youth Forum ✔
@Youth_Forum

Young people deciding in what should we invest in the future at 'Put Your Money where Youth Is'
#EYE2016 #YOFEST

Interview: Allan Päll
Secretary General, European Youth Forum
Moderator of workshop 'EU youth guarantee: a success story really?'

In your opinion, how would you describe the youth employability in Europe nowadays?
Well, we are hearing a lot about us being in the post crisis economy and although you can see that there is GDP recovery in some countries that does not really translate to employment figures. Where it has improved, there have been very small changes in terms of unemployment figures. But this is only part of the story. We are so fixated on looking on unemployment figures, you know 25-50% etc., but the bigger story is actually among the inactive population that does not feature in those figures or those that are kind of in employment, but not in full-time employment or quality employment. It does not actually allow young people to become independent.

How would you evaluate the communication that should be between policy makers and young people?
All the solutions are geared towards the supply - looking at skills, education, the labour legislation, but not to create jobs. If you are a young entrepreneur, forget about it. We are perpetuating the myths of innovation economy and start-ups, but for a vast majority of young people this is not a realistic possibility. Even for those who can try that it is very precarious. They need to get funding to do that, they often do not have social security or they must already have the kind of structure in place and wealth around them to be able to try it out. This does not create a lot of new jobs. We have to be really critical about the current situation in the labour market because it is probably going to get worse because of the way the world is changing.

What is a good example of what Europe is doing for employability?
One of the best known examples of course is the Youth Employment Initiative and the Guarantee. However, this is not to create jobs but to make sure that young people are becoming active and that they would get a new opportunity. A major issue is that young people are often put off by the process of applying for a job. They don't know how to apply for a job and need training on building confidence. When at first try they don't get the job, they don't know what to do. We need to compensate this somehow through a counselling service, for example. The Youth Guarantee is introducing certain measures also on the employer's side to include apprenticeships. This is good and it is starting to happen, although we don't know if it will be continued in the European policy, because now there are critical voices about it.

The second thing is, we really need to create new opportunities and new jobs for young people as well or for people that are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Skills - Building vital tools for the 21st century

Europe is suffering from a 'skills gap' between educational achievement and workplace skills. Employers are awash with applications - but complain that they cannot find candidates with the right abilities. McKinsey, a consultancy, reports that only 43% of the employers in the nine countries that it has studied in depth (Brazil, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the USA) think that they can find enough skilled entry-level workers. Put simply, too many young people lack employable skills in a world that has too few skilled workers.

Digital and vocational education is an exciting and important area to look at, and countries which have invested heavily in this region are reaping rewards. Germany has a long tradition of high-quality vocational education and apprenticeships, which in recent years have helped to reduce youth unemployment despite only modest growth.

It is important not to view the skills gap as an issue for young people alone. In many ways the graduate market is out-of-step with the education market, and young people are leaving university and higher education without the skills they need for work.

The solution does not lie in scrapping current higher education excellences, but rather in syncing higher education with real world solutions more readily. Skills training should also not be simply limited to the promotion of STEM subjects, but also look at business skills and creative/managerial skills necessary for the wider workplace.

25. Facilitate more work experience and first-chances in the labour market by creating closer cooperation between universities and companies

As previously discussed in this report, young people recognise that work experience and internships are becoming increasingly crucial to landing a first job. Yet work experience can often be out of reach for students in full time education. This is because they are restricted to fulfilling work experience during holidays, a period that they have to use to fund their education with paid holiday jobs.

Universities and higher education providers should do more to encourage and facilitate work experience, funding when necessary students to fulfil industry experience. This is already the norm in several engineering and science degrees which allow their students to do a year in industry, an essential opportunity for these students to absorb business critical skills.

26. EU wide coding requirements to boost core digital skills across the region

There is a saying amongst employers: 'Want a job? Learn to code'. There is some truth in this statement. Yet computer science and in particular coding is still rarely taught in European schools. This is usually for the central reason that teachers are from a generation before coding became mainstream and important for careers. This is a challenge, but the EU must think seriously about schemes which encourage and improve computer skills amongst teachers. In particular the EU should look at examples from far afield such as Israel which has about 1,000 trained computer-science teachers.

Despite the obstacle of teacher education it is critically important that we take the issue of programming education seriously if we are to provide a new generation of students with important vocational skills. This is not to say that all countries should approach their computer skills programme similarly. How a country puts together its programme naturally depends on what its economy needs. For example, Estonia is short of programmers for its burgeoning tech industry; hence it places an importance on programming, with some schools teaching this skill to pupils as young as six. Denmark devotes more time to topics such as the design of user interfaces, which interests its big firms, and on the impact of digital technology on society.

Regardless of these differences young people believe it is important that there is some form of basic standard in computer education across the EU. It is the responsibility of the European Union to impose a standard and enforce a testing mechanism for teachers to improve education in this area.

27. Boost volunteering organisations and explain to young people that volunteering is a route to employment

According to some studies, the benefits of volunteering can help to lead to more ermanent employment. According to a report by the US-based Corporation for National and Community Service , applicants who volunteered had a 27% higher chance of getting a job.

Furthermore, volunteer schemes in the EU are well-established. However, the benefits of volunteering, as well as the different methods of funding and support available to young people are not always clear. In a study for this report, most of the young people at the event had never heard about the Youth Guarantee Scheme for the under-25s. Therefore this suggests that the EU could do more to promote the various schemes available to young people.

One idea to encourage more people to volunteer is to encourage young, like-minded people to create their own volunteering organisation. This could be supported by funding opportunities and in turn ensure that young people learn crucial life skills and provide support to social issues that may be local to them, or linked to their background[3].

28. Diploma system for informal education to reduce the EU wide bias for traditional education paths

All too often, many young people take a traditional route through education with the promise of a well-paid job. This in turn can cause society to ignore some of the 'soft-skills' which would benefit people when they are employed. Furthermore, many organisations claim that due to the proliferation of university educated applicants it is hard to distinguish who the best candidates are.

One idea to tackle this could be the creation of diplomas for informal learning so that employers can see a broader range of skills among the applicants they wish to hire. This would help create workplaces where emphasis is put on teamwork as much as it is on individual responsibility and help diversify a traditional route to employment.

Interview: Nayim Tami
Student from Spain

Should unpaid internships be illegal?
Definitely. Why do we have unpaid internships? To offer young people the chance to gain experience – that's the official answer to the question. The answer you would get from young people might sound more like this: If I take an internship at a company, not during school or university but afterwards, it's because I want to put a foot in the door and do some networking. I would also hope to get a full time or part time paid contract.

Do you think volunteering can be a bridge between academia and a job?
For me, volunteering is a free choice but it should not be related to the labour market. As it happens, jobs are occupied by volunteers, by people who are not paid. And that is a very big problem. While you should get the chance to develop and volunteer, this has no place in the labour market where you should be paid for the work you do.

[3]http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment_research_report.pdf

Inclusive work – a challenge of access and a positive shift in culture

Workplaces and work patterns are changing in a developing economy. Europe needs to ensure it is ahead of the curve to create a stable environment for jobs. Furthermore, those who face barriers to employment could face further issues as jobs become increasingly temporary. Europe needs to ensure that all Europeans have access to work in the changing economy, no matter their circumstances.

29. Centralise collaboration of Europe-wide NGOs to encourage employment and cohesion in tackling pan-European issues

Currently, there is a large amount of young people who have been left behind in the fast moving and developing economy. These reasons range from poverty, internet access, disability and exclusion, to outright discrimination. Furthermore, many of these people have borne the brunt of austerity.

Improving and investing in the local, regional and national communication within Europe should be a priority. How we approach the task of social inclusion is key to young people's progress. One approach to achieve this is better communication and connection between the local, regional, national and European NGOs. Furthermore, EU programmes (such as the Youth Guarantee and the Erasmus+) could work together with career centres to focus on those young people who face particular challenges and barriers to employment. The European Union needs to do more to ensure that new and current initiatives involve all stakeholders: building from the grassroots with young people and about young people.

30. Create a young person's rights site/App to educate young people as to their employment rights and expectations

Many young people entering the job market feel that they are treated unfairly. Many European states apply a lower minimum wage for people who are younger, which many see as unfair. As a result young people feel discouraged to work and claim their rights. Not only do young people need to be more educated about their rights, they also should be encouraged to exercise them.

One solution could be the creation of a simplified European portal to advise young people on their rights and on what to do when these rights are not enforced. This could be created alongside other portals which are targeted at young people, for example the CV portal 'Europass'.

This would be a positive step to encourage more young people to be proactive in looking for quality opportunities, and not to let employers exploit them. A further solution is that youth rights are enshrined in European law to create an equal playing field for all across the European Union and to improve youth rights across and beyond Europe.

31. Formalise and create incentives for more remote working across the EU to reduce the number of young people with disabilities locked out of the job market

Youth unemployment in some parts of Europe is as high as 50%. This makes the job market particularly volatile and in turn makes it harder getting a job. Many young Europeans have left their home-countries to study or work abroad due to increased job opportunities elsewhere in the European Union – according to a study last year, 200,000 Greeks had left the country due to the financial crisis.

However, many young people with disabilities, who are able to work or study, lack the option of relocating to find work or study. This puts them at an unfair disadvantage in what is already a challenging labour market. According to a UN report people with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be unemployed – and the reasons for this range from unfair stereotypes to businesses fearing extra costs.

One idea to solve this is to create a pool of remote working so that work can transcend borders across the European Union. The nature of jobs becoming more digital means that much of this work can be done from home. By incentivising companies to include remote working and to create a formal database where this information is available may help to reduce youth unemployment across Europe. Furthermore, this could help stop some of the disadvantages faced by those with disabilities compared to those who are able-bodied as it would help create a level playing field.

Interview: Athanasia Konstantinou
Recent graduate, working at the European Parliament office in Nicosia, Cyprus
Young idea giver at panel 'Youth unemployment: Down to zero?'

How would you summarise the situation of youth employability in Europe?
Youth unemployment in Europe is a serious problem but I would like to stay positive. We are making some steps in the right

direction with projects such as the Youth Guarantee Scheme but we need to go further and find a real solution for the various problems. We need to find long term rather than short term solutions. We need something that has real impact on our lives.

Do you think that the youth unemployment policy is communicated well to young people?
I think there is no communication whatsoever. Most young people don´t know about existing programmes such as the European Voluntary Service, the Youth Guarantee Scheme and so on. The European Parliament and the European Commission should do more to reach out to people and inform them about these opportunities and their rights - their right to employment, their right to have a decent income.

Would you say that young people do not know enough about their rights?
They don't know their rights and so they don't claim them. Personally, I am against unpaid internships. If young people were better informed about their rights, they would be more proactive and look for quality opportunities instead of letting employers exploit them. Companies often exploit the youth because we want to work well and gain skills and experience. Sometimes, young people are recruited as low-cost replacement of existing jobs.

How would you encourage young people to claim their rights?
The youth policies are online, young people can participate in different forums and lobby to claim their rights. Generally, we should not be afraid to talk about it, through discussions we can learn about it from each other. People should also know about their rights in order to be more confident and feel safe.

What is the rate of youth unemployment in your own country, Cyprus?
Very disappointing, I am 22 years old and I am an intern. I am doing a traineeship in the European Parliament office in Cyprus. It is paid and the work is at a high standard. However, young people have a real problem finding a job in their sector. They are disappointed and some decide to leave the country, some become oblivious to work.

What do you think will be the situation in Europe in the upcoming years?
We need to believe in change and we need to believe that we can eliminate youth unemployment and be positive. We live in an after-crisis period, so we can move on. In the future, young people should definitely acquire more digital skills to improve their technological literacy.

A social pact for youth inclusion
A commentary by the European Youth Forum

Social inclusion of young people means ensuring that all people have the opportunity to enjoy an adequate standard of living and well-being. Alleviating poverty and social exclusion is necessary in order to ensure European citizens are granted full access to their social and economic rights. However, young people today are the group at highest risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe. The European Youth Event brought together thousands of young people's ideas on how to change this – how to make sure each young person has an equal chance to build their life, reach their independence and participate in society.

Education

Quality inclusive education is an essential part of this journey. Educational policies have to provide equal opportunities for all from the earliest years of their lives. Barriers in accessing education have sprung up over the past years in Europe standing in the way of education for all. It is essential that the following are secured:

• **Free, quality education accessible to all.** Education policies must support all young people's access to education, eliminating costs, including hidden ones.

• **Individualised support for more vulnerable groups to access education.** Access to inclusive education is even more challenging for vulnerable groups of young people: young people with disabilities are still hugely under-represented in higher education, whilst the majority of Roma youth leave school early.

• **Recognition of non-formal education (NFE) and NFE providers such as youth organisations.** NFE providers are crucial actors in providing innovative and flexible education among people at risk of social exclusion and must be better recognised.

Employment

The youth unemployment crisis was also a focal point of the discussions at the EYE. With the unemployment rate still drastically high for young people across Europe, and a lot of young people engaged in poor quality jobs or unpaid internships, this is still a problem. The EYE brought out several key ideas on this:

• **Job creation.** Focusing on supply alone will not get all young people employed. Investment in sectors with high job creation potential has to occur in order to begin to address the youth unemployment crisis in a holistic way.

• **Active labour market policies, such as the Youth Guarantee, must have a social inclusion focus.** Policies need to have real outreach to those that are further from the labour market. Involving youth organisations in their delivery, and investing in Public employment services so that tailored counselling is a reality for everyone, are essential in this.

• **Fair legislation on internships.** With almost 50% of internships in Europe unpaid, developing regulation on internships is needed to ensure young people are not exploited as a cheap or free labour force. Internships must be paid, educational and lead to a sustainable link to the labour market.

• **Apprenticeships and more broadly Vocational Education and Training.** Increasing apprenticeships supply alone will not solve the youth unemployment crisis but can have an

impact on employment levels. Apprenticeships must be of high quality with the learner put at the centre of the experience and reach out to all youth.

• **Jobs with fair contractual arrangements.** The any job will do approach is not working as more and more young people are employed in precarious work with little or no job security and low wages. Quality jobs that guarantee access to social security and ensure job security are crucial to allowing young people to reach autonomy and live a life out of poverty.

Services

The youth unemployment crisis has also shed light on the effectiveness of our welfare systems for young people. With most systems in Europe working on a contributory principle, it is increasingly difficult for young people to access unemployment benefits, or income-support of last resort such as minimum income schemes. This has repercussions not only on a young persons ability to sustain themselves, but also on the sustainability of our welfare systems as a whole – with more young people engaged in short term jobs or precarious work that does not allow for social security contributions, public budgets will increasingly come under strain – a situation exacerbated by our ageing population. European policy makers need to reform our current welfare systems so that they better include youth:

• **Internships or apprenticeships should count as working time giving rise to social security entitlements.** This would help in enabling young people to gain access to social security entitlements

• **Minimum income schemes must be accessible to all regardless of age.** Minimum income is often not accessible to people under 24 or 25 – which means that if you are unable to find a job, you have no means of supporting yourself. Age based discrimination in minimum income schemes should be abolished.

• **Independence supporting approaches to housing should be established.** With rising house prices and increasing income inequality due to low wages, young people today are 'generation rent'. Policies that encourage young people to stay living at home with their family discriminate against those that do not have that option.

• **Measures to combat youth homelessness, developed with people who are directly concerned.** Youth homelessness is increasing in many EU Member States with high risks of young people getting caught in long-term exclusion. Accessible housing and early intervention to fight homelessness should be key policy priorities

Access and exclusion of young people is ultimately about equality. Young people today are discriminated against, based on age, in different stages and phases of their transition to autonomy. This is leading to intergenerational inequality, income inequality and is risking the future not just of youth, but of the European social model as a whole. The message of the EYE was that this cannot continue – that our anti-youth systems have to adapt to the reality of young people in Europe today.

Stagnation or innovation: Tomorrow's world of *work*

The workplace is changing fast. Ways of working are being challenged by new lifestyle values of flexibility. The labour market itself is evolving, led largely by the rise of artificially intelligent robots which threaten not just blue collar jobs but also the professional and service industries. The skill sets required to thrive in this new market are also changing. Digital and entrepreneurship are two key areas policy makers have been slow to recognise and act upon.

In this future oriented theme, EYE participants were faced with a number of questions: How can Europe create attractive jobs in a connected economy and society? How has the digital era changed the job market and employment in the 21st century, and what role should entrepreneurship have herein? Are policy makers still up to date when it comes to regulating new sharing economy models? And what we can learn from or do better than Silicon Valley?

These are all challenges facing young people, and throughout the event young people proposed ideas to solve them.

Changing Working dynamics – building guidelines for a changing world

Accelerating technology is having a big impact on our socio-economic models, changing the labour market and the structure of the traditional work environment. Soon we will witness the automation of nearly 47% of jobs.

While this will provide unparalleled opportunities for business and make way for the creation of new jobs and profiles, the possibility of humans being replaced by machines in the workplace exists. Professor Moshe Vardi of Rice University in the US claims that many middle-class jobs currently done by professionals will be outsourced to machines within the next few decades.

How can the youth of Europe approach all these changes that will shape their professional future whilst striving for a work-life balance? The youth of Europe needs to be able to live

with an ever changing technological environment and one crucial way of doing this is to ensure that, from a young age, they have the skills to survive in a fluid labour market. This will include a shift towards greater project-based learning, as well as teaching digital and web-based skills.

In addition to this, as more jobs become automated, there will be a greater social need to ensure that those who lose their jobs are supported and offered the chance to learn new skills which will benefit society as a whole. Already some cities are testing the introduction of a universal wage to help foster creativity among populations and ensure that populations share in the progress offered by greater automation and technology in industry.

However, one perpetual threat from greater automation is the undermining of labour rights. Young people in Europe are already facing colossal levels of unemployment and will need to be part of a conversation to adapt labour laws and, in turn, prevent a 'race to the bottom'. Fundamentally, young people face a great deal of uncertainty in the future of the labour market. But there is a desire to take advantage of greater technological advances in industries, while creating a system that offers opportunities to all and prevents an undermining of social and labour rights.

32. Boost project-based learning in schools to develop soft skills along with science and technology

Much like the internet revolution, no one really knows where the development of technology will lead us. One thing that we do know is that we need to be prepared for

change, especially when it comes to what kind of skills will be needed in the labour market of the future. Therefore, schools must invest much more in letting students develop and explore their uniquely human means. Science and skills such as programming will be key, but they have to be combined with soft skills such as citizenship, communication and creativity. Indeed, a report from the UK's Higher Education Academy states that of 24,000 undergraduates questioned only around a quarter believed that they had developed more soft skills as a result of their university studies.

Developing skills such as these could give people the different tools that they need to be able to solve and analyse problems in a very changing and ambiguous environment. While robots might be the ones who create wealth, humans are still the ones who create value. For students to develop their creative and problem-solving side they must also be allowed to more actively engage in their own education. One way to do this could be to incorporate more of a project-based learning (PBL). A way of learning where students explore real-world problems and challenges and where a lot of emphasis is put on students' own imagination, responsibility and collaboration ability. Examples of project-based learning can include designing experiments or developing products as part of a mock-business environment. Advances in learning-based technology make project-based learning a real option for education. In the US, educational trials were reported to result in "ample evidence that PBL is an effective method for teaching students complex processes and procedures such as planning, communicating, problem solving, and decision making."

This issue is clearly pressing, as a number of young people feel that their formal education fails to prepare them enough for the digital revolution. Project-based learning could prove to be a wise move in preparing the next generation for a challenging, yet exciting future.

33. Create a universal citizen's income to harness the full potential of the digital revolution

As Florian Kondert, Digital Director at Zukunftinstitut, said: "everything that can be automated will be automated". The technologies we're talking about today are touching on areas that a lot of people thought were always going to be the preserve of humans. Even professions such as medicine and non-routine tasks such as driving a car, have the potential to become fully automated. Even though some people look at the development in a positive way, as the potential to solve deep social problems and create more leisure time whilst paving the way for more creative and social jobs, it still leaves one pressing question:

How will those without specific skills be able to make a living in an automated world? One solution is the enforcement of a basic income for all. This would cover all of the basic costs of life and ensure dignity and protect against rampant poverty.

Furthermore, the sense of stability could mean that people could choose a career path to ensure something more than simply making a living. A further benefit often cited is the move towards a reduced working week, allowing people to spend more valuable time with fellow citizens and family.

One pressing question remains: where will the money for this basic income system come from if people don't have to work? So far, many models of basic income rely on some form of conventional taxation. However, as the idea has started to resonate across the wider public more ideas have started to develop. In addition to this, many pilot projects are on the way. Finland and the Netherlands have begun trials. On 5 June Switzerland voted against the introduction of a basic income model that would give people between 1,000 and 1,500 a month, however it is clear that this topic is emerging on national agendas.

I find co-working with robots appealing (by age)
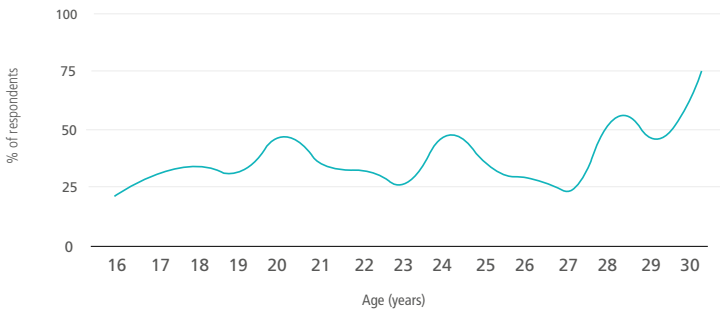
Ian Fahey
@ian_fahey94

It's not a secret that technology is taken jobs away from people. But we need more humanity in the workplace #EYE2016 #IrishEYE

NUIG Students' Union
@NUIGSU

Making robots, tea & a song for Europe - all go in the Health & Wellbeing tent! #EYE2016 #YOFest #IBackGalway

34. Enforce European labour rights as the existing laws are becoming outdated by digital technologies

The digital revolution is making us more mobile than we were only ten years ago, but at the same time it has also created a far less secure working environment. Longer hours and less secure contracts are creating divisions in the workplace and putting a strain on balancing work and life. While some are of the opinion that this is just the way it is and that we need to be competitive to get somewhere, there is a genuine desire among young people to improve solidarity and create a fair labour system across a united Europe. The development on the labour market itself is out of the control of nation states and the EU; however, they can ensure that legislation keeps up with the development, and that the changes that are happening are fair towards workers.

One way of doing this could be to harmonise the maximum number of working hours throughout the EU. The emphasis of common European labour laws is very important, to prevent a 'race towards the bottom' within the EU. Furthermore, tax cuts should be granted to those companies that focus more on corporate social responsibility and invest in re-educating their workers.

Just as workers in the past have been dependent on rising living standards throughout their lifetime, a healthy work-family balance and safe and fair workplaces these requirements are just as important for the workers of the future. Despite the uncertainties, many young people are positive about the possibilities of the future of labour - with increased automation and the potential for a universal citizen's income, more focus can be turned towards green industries and establishing a pattern of flexible working.

It's important to remember that every great period of innovation has produced its share of labour-market doomsayers, but in the past, technological progress has never failed to generate employment opportunities.

Digital entrepreneurship – maximising the benefits of an online world

The lack of job opportunities for young people, together with the Internet and digital revolution, has created the ideal situation for many to become young entrepreneurs. According to our survey, 65% of those questioned would like become their own boss in the future. In this sense, the context has never been more favourable for entrepreneurs, since public and private institutions have reacted to back up and propel their initiatives. Lots of resources have been made available to entrepreneurs, but it seems that there is still a lack of coordination

and long-term vision in the way they are distributed, which creates insecurity and frustration with many would be entrepreneurs.

There are numerous ways Europe can take further steps to foster a new generation of entrepreneurs. Creating a centralised hub for information and support for creating a start-up would be a significant step towards supporting young entrepreneurs in finding the information they need. In addition to this, the legal framework regarding bankruptcy means that many young start-ups suffer inherently from failure. Rather than treating start-ups as an end in themselves, Europe should do more to help young entrepreneurs to learn from failure and draw from this experience the tools for future success.

The Silicon Valley model does this in a smart and innovative way, in that you can fail quick and cheap before moving onto new, more profitable ventures. However, Europe should go one step further and develop this model by creating an environment that further rewards innovation and creativity with a less hierarchical structure and a focus on cooperative and open organisations. Fundamentally, young people have the ambition and ideas to succeed. The EU needs to do more to legislate and support the next generation of business leaders who promise growth and success.
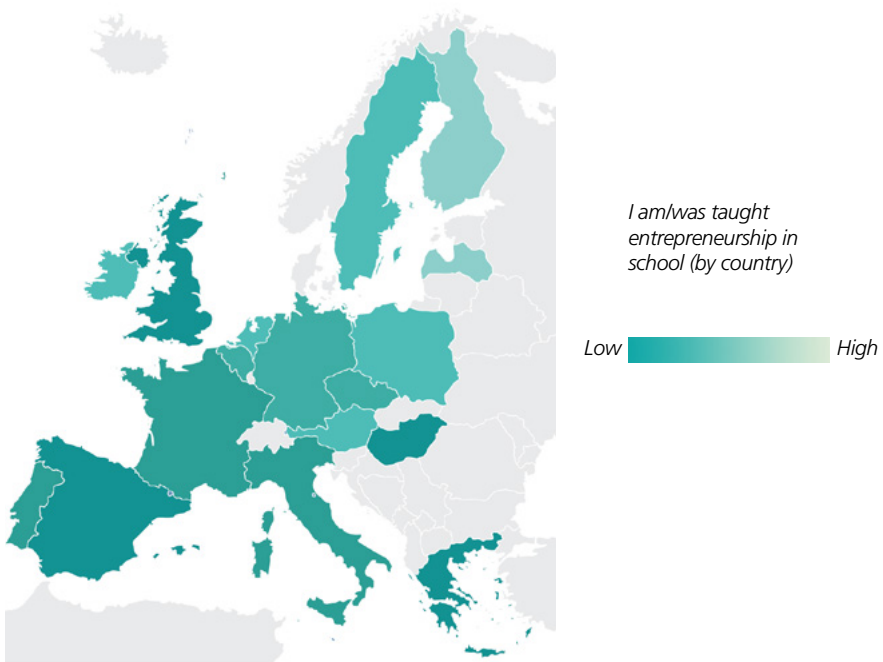
I am/was taught entrepreneurship in school (by country)

Low   *High*

35. Unify entrepreneurship resources and requirements to help young businesses get started

If there is something an entrepreneur can't afford to lose, it's time, but looking for EU funding to start a business can be both confusing and time-consuming. The information available can differ depending on the country, which leads to disadvantages and unbalanced opportunities. One way of avoiding these obstacles could be to create an online database listing all the European funds available as well as the requirements to access these funds, and an option to apply online. This would offer a streamlined answer to the growing demands of young entrepreneurs. Facilitating the business-starting process shouldn't of course detract from the serious analysis needed when deciding whether to award funding.

According to MEP Andreas Schwab this may be one cause for the high rate of start-up failure after just one year.

Young business founders think it would make sense to include experienced entrepreneurs in the drafting process when applying for start-up funds. There should be a continued dialogue between the board responsible for attributing funds and the entrepreneurs' representative organisations, where they could discuss insights and get direct feedback.

Indeed, the development of start-up hubs and the centralisation of start-up knowledge and support is crucial to inspire young entrepreneurs and to ensure that the companies they found can develop sustainably from the very beginning.

36. Reform bankruptcy legislation to support second-chances' for entrepreneurs

In Silicon Valley they say "fail quick, fail cheap". It's not about celebrating failure itself, but about getting what's positive from the learning process and the experience. If start-up entrepreneurs get together to talk about what worked and what didn't work for them, invaluable lessons can be learnt. Accepting and living with the risk of failure is a characteristic of the spirit of American start-ups, and one of the main cultural differences to be found between Silicon Valley and Europe.

Bankruptcy regulations vary from country to country depending on technical factors as well as cultural beliefs, and a country that has a risk-averse culture is more likely to have bankruptcy laws that increase the cost of entrepreneurial failure. In Europe, many of the funds entrepreneurs get are loans that they have to pay back even if they fail. The process of repaying these debts is lengthy and can lead to difficulty securing different loans. In the end, bankruptcy can mean that would-be entrepreneurs don't start a company because of fear of failure[1].

[1]http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7962&lang=en

First time failures are common all the same. Statistics say that the second time around, start-ups are more successful. Up to 18% of all entrepreneurs who go on to being successful have failed in their first venture. It seems that policies in Europe focus on the necessity of producing entrepreneurs instead of supporting those we already have. All in all, the current framework may hamper digital innovation.

One way of doing this could be similar to India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code which means that start-up companies can be quickly shut down when they wish to create new enterprises. In conclusion, there is a need to change bankruptcy and 'second chances' legislation.

An EU-wide harmonisation of bankruptcy legislation and liquidation is needed and should aim at completing all legal procedures in cases of non-fraudulent behaviour within a year. Furthermore, the EU could present national and regional programmes and best practices to help entrepreneurs break out of the cycle of legal, economic and social stigmatisation. Young founders expect the EU to adopt supportive measures for them when defining and guiding what should be a private creditor's role.

37. Create more equal and deliberative workplaces to help boost young employees' entrepreneurial skills

It is certainly wise to pay attention to models and structures that work in other successful markets such as Silicon Valley. But 'can Europe do better than Silicon Valley?' When answering this, there are two things should be considered: first, Europe's potential shouldn't be ignored, and second, that any idea should be adapted to the European characteristics and changing environment in order to create a solid and inspiring niche.

There are important changes in Europe right now that may present opportunities. One is the increase in migration and diversity. Around 50% of the entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley are non-American citizens. When people venture out of their comfort zone, ideas and inspiration grow. Nowadays a job is not only about working and understanding people from different cultures, but also from different professional backgrounds. The digital revolution requires more specialised profiles. The future of work is about interdisciplinary and intercultural teams cooperating and supplementing each other's skills and perspectives to achieve a more creative and productive outcome. Therefore, Europe needs more open and horizontal working structures, where communication is reinforced and people relate with each other as equals. We need to transform the working dynamics within the companies to rediscover the power of face to face feedback between workers of all levels, as well as between individuals and institutions. One way of achieving this could be to train managers to adopt working models that push workers to fully exploit their talents and potential.

A movement seeking these changes has already emerged in management methodology. "Agile" is a way of managing teams so they can be self-organised, collaborative and accountable. There are many start-ups that follow these principles, developing structures that are open, participative, self-organised without hierarchies.

38. Twin universities so that students can study undergraduate degrees in two different locations

Studying abroad is often advertised as an enriching and fun experience for students. Many employers have also claimed that those who study abroad often possess skills that are relevant in numerous areas, both in terms of independence and leadership and in terms of understanding different cultures and languages, which are vital qualities in an increasingly globalised economy.

This opportunity could be extended to more students by encouraging universities to 'twin' with other institutions abroad. Currently, the Erasmus programme allows students to spend a semester to a year abroad to study; however, by 'twinning' universities, students can undertake half of their undergraduate in one location, before moving to study in another country. This system already exists in some courses and ensures that students have a greater opportunity to experience studying in a different country.
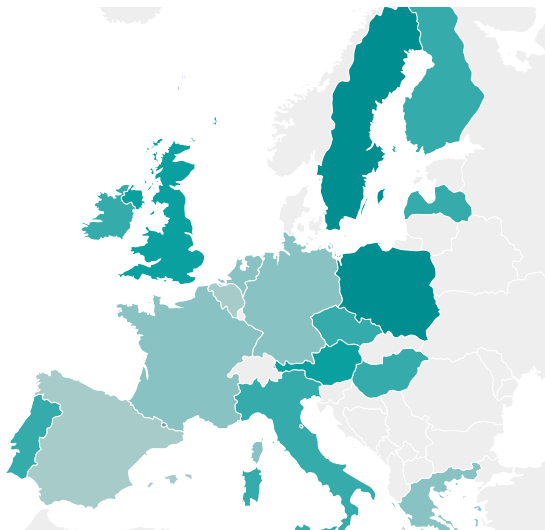
Would you like to be your own boss in the future? (by country)

Low ▬▬▬▬▬ *High*

Interview: Jindric Fialka
Founder and CEO, Contiqua
Start-up founder at workshop 'Entrepreneurial campfire'

In your talk at the interactive session "Entrepreneurial campfire: Let the creativity sparks fly!" you explained that two years ago an idea hatched in your mind and made you decide to drop your studies and pursue it. Could you explain what exactly sparked this decision?

Usually, I tell it this way: I had an idea so I dropped university, started up a company, and designed something. But in reality it was kind of the other way around. I have always had the feeling that I would do something on my own. But I didn't know what this something could be. I felt the urge to break out, so I left university to change environment and get ideas from new, different people, and to change my life. The idea of 'what to do' finally came six months after this change.

During your experience trying to move your project forward, what kind of skills or knowledge did you feel you lacked? And what strengths did you count on to keep going?

What I did is reflect on some of my areas of expertise, like experience doing handicrafts, but I had no experience in business at all. I created a list naming all the tasks needed to create a new brand. I came up with 20 steps and realised I am not good at or didn't like doing 90% of them. So basically, I chose to do what I am good at or wanted to learn about, and left the rest to be someone else's responsibility.

How is your average working day? Do you think it is possible for an entrepreneur to achieve a work-life balance?

Yes I do. But at the same time I think that one of the characteristics of an entrepreneur is that you work all the time because you enjoy what you are doing. For me working is thinking about things or meeting new people and if I go to a conference and I meet new people, I'm working. I would strongly suggest not working from home if you really want to get a work-life balance. I think it is important to have a personal space for just about everything but work. I do not work from home; I go to a café nearby.

Do you think entrepreneurs in Europe receive enough support from their home countries to start a business (in terms of bureaucratic procedures, funds, etc.)?

In the Czech Republic, yes, I do think there is support, but my honest opinion is that if your idea needs support then it is not a good idea.

Looking ahead - where do you see yourself working in ten years?

So far, I need a change in my company. I always wanted to do something meaningful for people or the environment, no matter what. So I started creating design from waste,

The new economy – spreading the impact of new technological innovations

The rise of citizens' awareness about ethical issues such as sustainability, fair commerce and technological innovations has made possible the emergence of new economy models, offering a broader range of alternatives for workers and consumers. While these models promote more balanced structures, reinforce citizens' decision capacity and other values, such as sharing and co-creating, they don't shelter from unfair regulation or potential abuse of rights.

Young people need to know about the different economic models available and a greater focus is needed on including these in education. The legal status of the collaborative economy is in a state of flux, and as such some of the potential societal benefits are being missed. There is a greater urgency than ever to incorporate them into the tax system.

Young people lack the arenas to influence global decisions. A grass-roots, university-based initiative of junior enterprises could be a way of bringing young people into the decision-making process.

39. Strengthen education and awareness of alternative economic models to boost innovation in this key sector

When it comes to alternative economic models, such as cooperative businesses, there is a shared belief that young people don't understand how they work. Many are interested by the attractive statistics that suggest that these models remained strong during crisis periods, and they are a continuous fount of jobs, with almost a 50% of them held by women[2].

Young people identify themselves with cooperative businesses because of the values they promote, the balanced and participatory dynamics that characterise them, and the impact they have in their sectors. In our survey, 62% of young people said they would prefer to work for a social enterprise than for a profit-making company.

[32]http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_349679/lang--en/index.htm

One way to respond to the lack of knowledge about the new economic models is to make them part of the curriculum, so that educational institutions can fill this gap. This would promote education and resources for young people to be able to explore and create more sustainable economic structures. Currently schools or universities offer little or no education on these alternative economics. Furthermore, there seems to be a misperception of what a cooperative does; many perceive cooperatives as agrarian-based and irrelevant to industry. In general, young people want to have more control and influence at their work, and there is a desire that their jobs have a positive social impact.

40. Adopt the collaborative economy into the tax system to unlock the social benefits of the collaborative economy

Fair trade and collaborative economy can bring many advantages to global society. Young people assume responsibility and want to proactively support those behaviours that can build up a fairer and more sustainable system.

According to Edouard Martin, Member of the European Parliament, the fair trade industry has grown about 17% last year. Meanwhile, when young people are asked if they are regular users of collaborative digital platforms to rent or sell products and services, 76% of them said that they are.

Based on these figures it is undeniable that this movement is here to stay, so it is time to create a legal framework for companies engaged in such a business form. This can be challenging, but optimistic proposals from young people have already been put forward. Karim Mustaghni, curator of Global Shapers Hub in Frankfurt explained how using taxes from the sharing economy can support two goals: an opportunity to improve regulation while investing in entrepreneurship.

Mustaghni asked some users of Airbnb whether they would be willing to pay higher taxes for this service if they knew that this extra percentage was aimed to increase funds for entrepreneurs, for example. All answers were positive. "When people know where their money goes they are more likely to collaborate". Clearly there is a drive towards greater sharing in society, and generally people see the benefits of collaboration. The social benefits of this are huge both in terms of experience as well as creating revenue. Therefore, legislation to enrol the collaborative economy into the tax system would be an important step to avoid unfair games, to protect user's and worker's rights, and to procure a cordial atmosphere where other existing industries don't need to fight with the new movements.

*I use online platforms/
apps to buy and sell
things*

Low *High*

41. **Encourage junior enterprises** to seek and represent young people's opinions on global matters

In the words of Karl Moore, "millennials work for purpose, not pay check". Young people are increasingly willing to participate in creating the paths for a better system in sync with global development. They want to act for the common good.

This awareness seems to be one of the characteristics of the millennial generation, as young people are constantly seeking purpose in what they do. Money is of course important but "there is a greater desire to be part of something bigger than them. Millennials need direction and meaning, an interesting mixture of altruism and self-interest", according to Moore. It's difficult to think of a better disposition to get young people involved in today's global challenges. Even complicated debates, such as the TTIP, received great participation during the event, showing a genuine commitment to understanding all the pros and cons.

One way to ensure that young people get the chance to express themselves could be through junior enterprises, as we have seen them spreading on university campuses. Junior enterprises are self-managed by young people who offer consultancy for companies, institutions and society.

The EU could acknowledge these enterprises as the organisations in charge of consulting and researching on young people's opinion on different issues. The EU already does some work in this area, but encouraging junior enterprises, and ensuring young people know how to get involved would be an important step in improving direct youth participation on a wide variety of issues. This would work as a reminder for decision-makers to include young people in decisive processes, from the simplest issue, to our biggest challenges.

Interview: Chelsea Rustrum
Consultant and author of 'It's a Shareable Life'
Speaker at panel 'Sharing economy'

In your experience as a consultant, what kind of companies contact you, willing to adopt more sustainable models?
Sustainability is quickly becoming an issue for all of us - companies of every size need to consider not only how their business models must adapt and change over time, but how their impact on the environment, the planet, other people, and their greater purpose is going to affect their customers' interest in their products and services. Millennials definitely care about the "why" and the "what" behind companies and are starting to see the power of their buying decisions.

What is the main resistance when adapting businesses into more innovative, inclusive and sustainable models?
Money. Money is the resistance. In other words: misaligned incentives. If a corporation has a charter to make a profit at any cost, they are not going to make decisions based on what's best for people or the environment, but rather for how they can extract as much value out of a transaction in the shortest period of time.
We have seen an increase in collaborative apps on the market. Some of these apps still lack legal regulation.

Who is really suffering the consequences of this lack of regulation? Is it secure for users?
The users of the sharing economy are fine because they have the digital footprint of reputation to rely on for trust. I'd say the providers are the ones who have the most to lose, especially on a long term basis. There is nothing, based on the way that the employment structures are setup, to stop the platforms from lowering wages, demanding unfair labour practices, and otherwise taking advantage of the un- or underemployed. As far as existing industries, I do think the internet and technology can and should help us redefine policy, the very nature of work, certification, qualification, etc. I'm not so worried about existing incumbents, but they, of course will also have to adapt.

How can these "legal gaps" affect workers?
Pay, amount of hours, employment status, insurance and liability questions, taxes and long term employment/stability, especially with automation.

What kind of improvements can be done in this regard? Who should act and how should they be made?
We need to create a new form of worker, which relates to the gig economy, whereby people who are drivers, hosts, or delivery agents are protected by labour laws and taxation requirements that work for the future of work.

The sharing economy is believed to have the power to change the economic paradigm. Do you think these platforms really have that potential?

YES! We need value sharing platforms - to remove the middleman from everything, and return to peer-to-peer value exchanges. A few promising things I see are crowdfunding as equity, the blockchain, and platform cooperativism, whereby companies are forming where value is built in, distributed and offered to the users and providers who actually create that value. For example, the drivers of Uber and hosts of Airbnb are the ones that create the value, so they should also have ownership in the form of equity as well as a say in some of the governance of said companies. That's difficult for existing platforms to pull off, but new ones are emerging, which will give rise to the idea of shared ownership and value.

How can we measure the social, economic and environmental impact attributed to them?

"B Corp" is a good start, but we need to do more here.

Why is it that sharing is powerful?

Sharing is powerful because we're able to see and feel our connection to one another through the bridge of time, space, resources, skills, and stuff. When there is an abundance of resources that are distributed, we all win.

Every little individual gesture counts, but to really achieve a global change we need to rethink socio-political structures. What should be our mission at "an individual level" to start this shift?

Get to know yourself. Really dig into what you care about and how you can express that care in the world. Find ways to move beyond the idea that compensation defines you and look for where you can most contribute. We're not here that long - let's not get mixed up in games of material possession and proof of worthiness - every individual I've ever met is happier when they put their experiences, relationships, and creativity at the forefront, carefully considering positive impact in all areas.

How can we get educative and political institutions involved in the task of reinforcing more sustainable models?

Get people talking. The EYE conference is a great start, but salons, dinners, and smaller meetings can also be used. Build bridges - many of them. So many industries, people, and experts are working in silos. Invite, exchange, and get people talking, from all walks of life. When you get people talking, it becomes more obvious how they might help one another - so be that glue.

Fostering creativity -
developing young people's potential
A commentary by the European Youth Forum

The potential in young people for creativity and innovation is boundless. Young people have ideas, energy and commitment but are prevented from unlocking their creative sides through lack of stability, investment and support. Policy-makers promote entrepreneurship as the route out of the unemployment crisis but without adequate support and investment, we are setting young people up to fail. Young people, just like previous generations, need support and security. They need the tools and environment to start out but also protection if they fail.

In order to address the challenges of a continually changing workplace and to nurture the innovative potential of Europe's young people, the following are needed:

Investment in the innovative potential of young people

Investing in the potential of young people has been identified as one of the key responses needed for Europeans to tackle the challenges created by rapidly changing social, economic, technological and demographic environments. Young people account for approximately 20% of the total European population. Despite these numbers however, it seems that young people are not regarded as a priority. The EU invests much more in sectorial policies such as agriculture than in its future and in the human and social capital of young people. In order to address the dire social situation of Europe, which is particularly negatively impacting the younger generation, there is a strong need to promote innovation in Europe and to enhance the human capital and social capital of young people. Prioritising investment in the innovative potential of young people is essential to redress this balance.

Timely and effective investment in youth is the key to making Europe prosperous, both economically and socially. Youth unemployment rates in Europe continue to be at staggeringly high levels, leading to growing rates of poverty and social exclusion, and an increase in inequalities. With almost 5 million young people unemployed in Europe, a particular focus should be placed on investments that can create quality jobs for young people in particular.

Recognition of youth organisations as laboratories for social innovation

Youth organisations have been identified as one of the spaces where young people can unlock their full potential and thus create value for the entire society. Youth organisations represent a key component of civil society in Europe and as such they address a full range of societal challenges, including social and environmental problems, participation,

education and social inclusion. By contributing to the acquisition of skills and changes in young people's attitudes, youth organisations contribute to personal, social, political and economic development and can help tackle the key challenges facing Europe, such as youth unemployment, the erosion of social cohesion and political disengagement. **The strength of youth organisations contributes directly to the social and economic strengths of Europe and must be seen as an important stakeholder in promoting quality jobs for young people and fighting unemployment** in a period defined by the economic and consequent funding crisis.

Promotion and support for sustainable business models: youth cooperatives

Youth cooperatives have been identified as a tool to face common European challenges. They represent a space for social innovation and democratic business development where young people could develop innovative ideas.

Sustainability and long-term development perspectives motivate cooperatives. Setting up a cooperative business represents a great opportunity for young people to pursue their professional development and, at the same time, to contribute to tackle challenges in society. Cooperative businesses are an important source of employment and could therefore represent a way for many young people who want to enter the labour market to gain skills. So far, the number of young people engaged in cooperatives remains relatively low: it is estimated that cooperatives provide a total of 100 million jobs worldwide.

In the context of new increasing challenges, including migration, diverse societies and the radicalisation of marginalised groups in society, Europe needs more innovation. Therefore, there is a strong need to invest in young people and youth organisations. Europe needs to recognise the values and contribution of youth organisations to the wellbeing of our society and as catalysts for innovation. Youth organisations wish to promote a long-term vision of the change they wish to see in society, where young people and their organisations continue to play a central role and are recognised for their achievements.

Collapse or success:
New ways for
a *sustainable* Europe

Climate change is the largest existential problem humanity faces. It is only through genuine motivated action and collaboration that we can meet this challenge. Although the obstacles to change are substantial, young people are determined to face the issue head on. Through localised consumption and community focused action young people can make a lasting impact on Europe's greenhouse gas emissions.

The EYE 2016 agenda contained topics ranging from low-carbon economy, fair trade, animal welfare, the circular economy, measures to alleviate poverty and hunger to questioning the sustainability of life on earth viewed from space. All these are important issues and young people were encouraged to debate what more could be done to ensure a more sustainable society for themselves and future generations.

Energy and climate change

As far as issues facing young people go, it's hard to find any that are as pressing and potentially catastrophic as climate change. Flooding, unpredictable weather patterns and increasingly devastating storms are wreaking havoc on some of the most desperate, not only in Europe, but around the world. The climate change issue can't be discussed without reference to a move towards greater sustainability and, within that, a change in the way we heat our homes, travel to work and help to spread the word about the threats that climate change and a lack of sustainability pose to our entire society.

The UN has proposed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but what can be done to ensure these goals are reached by 2030, and how can young people be part of this? There is a pressing need to address Europe's energy policy and move towards ensuring better sustainability in the way we carry out our every-day lives. Furthermore, Europe needs to educate populations better about the issue of sustainability and what the SDGs are as a framework towards achieving this. Finally, this section will look at the enduring focus on young people and the need to ensure that these goals are relevant to older generations as well. There is a genuine desire to create a drive towards sustainability that includes people of all ages, not simply relying on the young.

Our leaders are not doing enough to tackle climate change (by country)
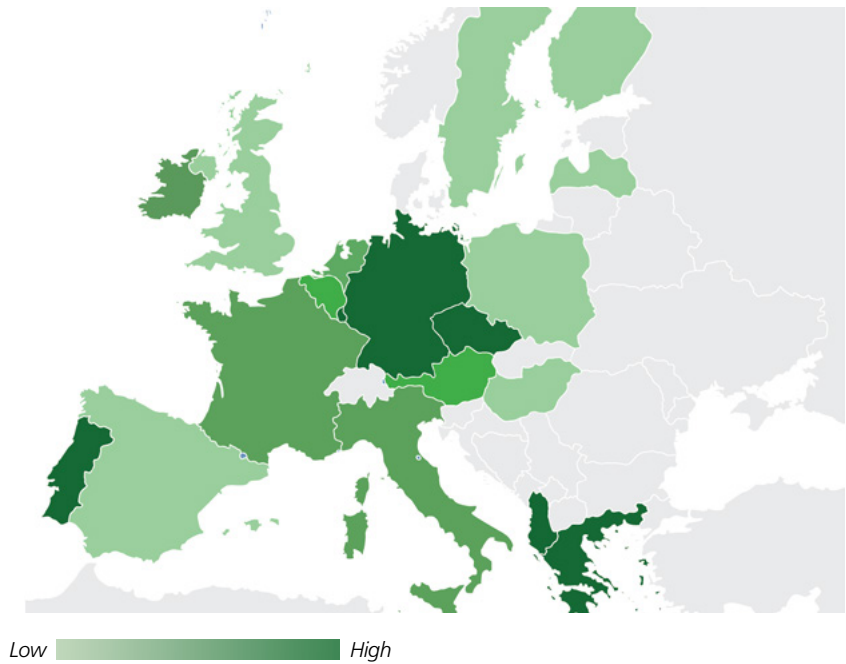
Low ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ *High*

42. Pool energy resources and invest in smart-grids to face up to Europe's growing energy demands

Energy is a crucial factor in ensuring that countries across Europe are able to function. Some countries have diverse sources of energy, including renewable energy such as wind, tidal and solar power and few problems ensuring that they can meet their own energy needs, whereas others may struggle, having to rely on fossil fuels.

One solution to this problem is the centralisation of energy sources across Europe. For instance, wind energy from Denmark and solar energy from Spain could be used in a central grid that would be accessible to all member states. This way, renewable energy could be available to all. Currently, the EU is working on proposals to create this sharing[1]; however more can be done by incentivising a move towards cleaner energy sources so that Europe's energy needs are met by renewable energy.

In addition, Europe's aim is to move towards so called 'smart grids', based on greater digitalisation of the electricity infrastructure. This could ensure better protection from potential cyber attacks and help achieve more accurate data on output.

43. Increase Europe's commitment to tackling climate change and set more ambitious targets – 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030

Climate change is a global threat. Many European countries have been taking the issue seriously; however, concerns still exist. From our questionnaire, just under 60% of the youth present at the EYE were of the opinion that global leaders are not delivering their promises on climate change.

One way to tackle this would be to pledge an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This would include moving towards renewable energy as well as investing in public transport to help reduce carbon emissions. This may sound ambitious, but there is a willingness among European neighbours to seriously tackle their emissions - recently Norway pledged to become climate neutral by 2030.

44. Put zero-carbon homes back into planning to develop a European-wide project for a commitment to energy-efficient homes

A number of years ago the British government made a commitment to creating carbon-neutral homes. However, this policy was subsequently scrapped. Despite the setback, a great deal of research had gone into zero-carbon planning policy.

The EU could help revive this attempt by making a further commitment to ensure that house building across the EU is carbon-neutral. This would ensure greater energy efficiency in homes and develop it as a fundamental part of planning.

[1]http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union-and-climate/fully-integrated-internal-energy-market_en

EYE European Youth Event ✓
@EP_YouthEvent

.@MaireadMcGMEP Renewables and circular economy offer many new job opportunities for young people #EYE2016 #EYEtv

Interview: Swaroop Rao
GameChangers, KIC InnoEnergy
'EYE attendee'

With your background, what policies do you think the EU should be promoting to battle climate change and improve sustainability?
I think that the EU should be working towards promoting the so-called European Energy Union, and also facilitate the integration of the different energy markets. This way, we can enable wind energy generated in Portugal to be used in Bulgaria or Greek solar energy to be used in Finland. Both the economic integration and the efficient integration of the infrastructure need to be priorities.

Do you think the solution to climate change and improved sustainability is social or regulatory?
At the end of the day it's social, but policy of course has control in shaping social attitudes and that is important. I think that the regulation, if any, should be socially fair and there has to be a trade-off between being economically fair and socially fair - they don't always go hand in hand, there's often a conflict.

Not everything needs to be regulated at the European level, maybe a broad framework could suffice. You could have varying forms of separation of power, how much power each government has in things like access to information on energy for consumers. You could leave some things to local government.

Which clean energy do you think should be invested in and why?
It depends on each country of course. Each country has its strengths and each country has its weaknesses. For example, it would be foolish to install solar panels in Finland. In addition to energy generation, we should be concentrating more on energy storage and smart grids - I think these are more important now because of increasing influx of renewable energy into the system. They are a fundamental challenge to the integrity of the power system itself, both economic and technical - so I think energy and smart grids are two of the things that need to be concentrated upon.

How important are young people in this movement?

I think young people are born and brought up with a sense of sustainability already built in them so to some degree it's already internalised. And I think the challenge is to carry it forward. If you ask a person who was born in the era of oil, when oil was booming, about the green movement, they may find it hard to understand the significance of what we're talking about, and for good reason. I think that our generation is growing up with a greener outlook on development so I think it is good to carry this forward.

Which technological trends improving sustainability and tackling climate change are you most excited about?

I'm most excited about smart grids. Because that's something which combines the technical part of the energy generation with information technology and makes the flow of energy information more transparent and accessible to consumers and businesses. Smart grids would positively impact not only consumers but also the power system at large. The biggest positive is that intermittent renewable energy can be integrated better into the power system through smart grids.

# Fair trade – a culture shift with youth at its heart

Fair trade is an issue that has recently surfaced and caused a great deal of discussion among young people. Food, and fashion are both focusing more on fair trade. The difference in price as well as lack of variety is one of the issues the industry faces when it comes to younger consumers.

The fair trade industry needs to improve to gain more young consumers. Europe needs to better educate its population about the issue of fair trade and inform the citizens on what can be done and how the industry should improve. We cannot ignore workers' rights outside the EU. The challenge is to tackle poverty and improve sustainability. Fair trade is one way of doing this, but the EU needs to do more to discourage exploitative supply chains.

45. Build legislation that binds fair trade within the industry so that some industries are forced to improve their offer

There has been an increasing focus on the fair trade industry in recent years. However, one of the main problems facing fair trade producers, most notably in coffee production, are low prices meaning small farmers earn less.

In order to address these concerns, the European Union should work towards ensuring that fair trade becomes the norm within the industry, and also work with countries to ensure that coffee production is stable and doesn't drive down prices for small farmers.

Young people making a conscious effort to buy fair trade/organic

Low ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ *High*
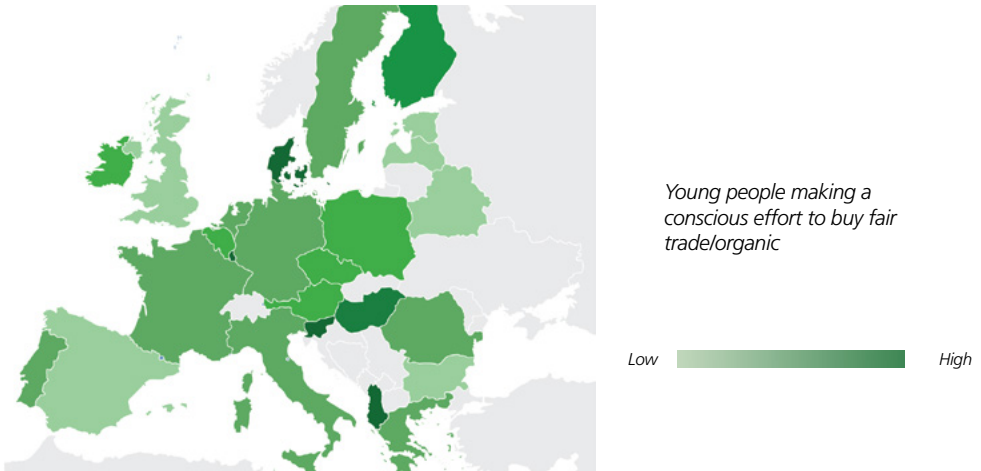
This could be done by encouraging European importers to commit to only buying fair trade coffee through their supply chains. This in turn could help the competitiveness of fair trade.

46. Market fair trade clothing as quality over quantity to improve the marketing of clothes based on price

Fair trade products are generally more expensive than other products on the market. Not everyone is willing or able to spend extra money, and when confronted with the choice many choose the cheaper option.

In order to tackle this, more could be done to encourage brands to market their clothing on value for money and focus on the longer lasting aspect of the fair trade clothing; quality over quantity. Producing high-quality products will make a change. There should be more investments in the quality of products and the variety. Fair trade clothing is sometimes criticised for not being to date when it comes to the latest fashions. Fair trade producers should match consumer demand when it comes to style. However, they should also make the consumers aware of the cost and encourage them to spend a bit more in order to obtain quality products.

The EU could help in this by encouraging high-end fashion retailers to embrace fair trade. This could be done by taxing companies who are not using fair trade supply chains, and rewarding those who are with tax reductions or subsidies. Similarly, the EU could increase trade tariffs for non-EU companies who sell non-fair trade clothing on the EU market.

47. Implement more codes of conduct to serve as an example to other brands a and set a standard code of practice

For large portions of labour across the world, safety standards and codes of practice remain virtually non-existent. This problem has been exacerbated by a lack of leadership. Factories in developing countries are unable to demand that customers support fair-trade practices, and in turn brands don't take enough responsibility for the conditions in factories where their products are made. Compounding this problem is a lack of knowledge among consumers about the supply chains that provide their clothes.

The EU should therefore do more to encourage codes of conduct and highlight good examples of leadership by brands who actively seek to improve the conditions of workers making their products in the developing world. More can also be done to ensure that the supply chains encourage fair employers and provide incentives for companies that ensure workers are being trained while they work, as well as having good pay and conditions.

Some brands have begun taking a leadership role and started implementing codes of conduct and providing training for women to build their capacity in factories; this should serve as a role model in the industry and continue towards greater codes of conduct.

Food - changing lifestyles and an opportunity for better consumption

In recent years the way we consume and value food has drastically changed. With a rise in vegetarian and vegan lifestyles and more demand for organic products, producers have to alter the way products are marketed and sold in order to increase sales.

Buying local, improving education around the importance of sustainability in schools, and developing a financial transaction tax to fund sustainable farming in the developing world are all proposals that young people think could lead to greater sustainability.

48. Buy local: Encourage more people to buy food locally to reduce the carbon footprint and promote local produce

One of the great successes of the European Union has been its promotion of strong agriculture across the EU. This has led to trade across the EU but also to mass production at the cost of the environmental and animal health.

Therefore, many young people expressed the need to produce and buy local to avoid transporting food across Europe.

One idea to promote local production would be the introduction of an EU-wide labelling scheme classifying local produce. This idea has already partly emerged in the EU Ecolabel which helps consumers identify organic products and services with reduced environmental impact.

Creating a label dedicated to local produce would not only promote reduced carbon emissions but also strengthen businesses across communities.

49. Promote sustainability and healthy living courses in schools so that young people are able to make informed choices on what they buy and eat

Awareness is key in order to decrease the consumption of mass produced food. If people lack knowledge on alternatives and the health benefits of different lifestyles it will be less likely that they opt for them. In order to increase awareness, the EU could encourage classes or seminars that explain the benefits and downsides of the different lifestyles, including information on organic foods, processed foods and mass production.

The more information people receive, the easier it will be for them to make an informed choice on the products they are purchasing. Some countries offer sustainability courses for children as young as eight years old. These programmes educate children from an early age in how to live more sustainably. The EU should make teaching sustainability mandatory in schools for the next generations to be aware from a young age.

50. Fight world hunger by introducing a financial transaction tax to finance campaigns, such as improving the self-sufficiency of farmers

Poverty and starvation are still issues that continue to blight many parts of the developing world. The EU should do more to support regions suffering from droughts and famine.

To achieve this aim, a financial transaction tax of 0.1% could be created in order to collect revenue and fund global campaigns against hunger. This money could then be invested in educating local populations about sustainable farming and help ensure they are self-sufficient. In turn, this would reduce a reliance on external support which may dry up in times of economic hardship.

This would be an innovative and collective campaign which would allocate resources to those who need them most.

http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/media-centre/news/september-2014/fairtrade-delivering-change

Collapse or Success:
New ways for a sustainable Europe
A commentary by the European Youth Forum

What could be more important for young people in Europe than the question of sustainable development? And yet it is something that is frequently ignored in favour of short-term political gains, or misunderstood by policy makers and young people alike. Sustainable development, meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, requires long-term thinking and concerted, cross-cutting action. It requires our economic system to work for people and planet, not the other way around. It requires our economy to work in harmony with our society and our environment, respecting planetary boundaries and natural resource limits, as well as human rights and social needs. Sustainable development affects all areas of life, and the efforts to achieve it should affect the entire spectrum of EU policies, including all of those that found a home at the European Youth Event: policies for peace, inclusion, participation and innovation.

In the context of an increasingly urgent humanitarian crisis on Europe's frontiers and within its borders, the threat of climate change, increasing inequalities, increasing mistrust in politics and politicians and a rise in extremism, it is clear that today's economic and political system does not work for our planet or for people, particularly young people. Working towards transformational change and towards the achievement of sustainable development has never been more necessary, for Europe and for the whole world, for young people and for future generations.

Through the European Youth Event 2016, young Europeans had the opportunity to reflect on the need for sustainable development and the building blocks required to achieve it, connecting the big European policy issues of our time with this question of sustainable development. The EYE also provided participants the space to discuss the global community's response to the challenge of sustainable development and the European Union's commitment to that through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable. This global agenda aims to create transformational change and put the world on a more sustainable path by the year 2030. It is a fifteen-year framework agreed and supported by the European Union. The EU now needs to be ambitious about implementing the agenda here in Europe and supporting countries outside Europe to implement it, if sustainable development is to be achieved. The following things are required for this:

Concerted, coherent and ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The European Union played a leading role in the negotiations for the 2030 Agenda. It must now play a leading role in implementing it in a comprehensive way that recognises the interlinkages between different policy areas and puts social and environmental issues on equal footing with the economy. The agenda provides the opportunity to address the challenges Europe is facing in an integrated manner, and to address the root causes of these challenges, but it is up to the European Union to put in place a strategy that will allow it to make use of this opportunity. The primary responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda rests with governments and institutions and young people at the EYE recognised that more needs to be done.

Shift away from unsustainable practices

Current and previous generations have put young people's future at risk through unsustainable economic practices that have little regard for future consequences. Unsustainable consumption, production, trade and investment patterns are jeopardising the future of people and planet. These need to be tackled urgently to move towards equality in access to and consumption of resources. The European Union has a particular duty to take action in this regard and young people have a strong role to play in pushing for the necessary policy changes.

Comprehensive investment in young people as key stakeholders in sustainable development

Although young people are a minority population in Europe, globally this generation of young people is the largest the world has ever seen. Young people have been called "torch-bearers" of the 2030 Agenda and will need to take forward the agenda and its principles in the years to come. Real investment in young people is essential if they are to be able to play that role. Investment in quality education, creation of quality jobs, social security and social protection are required. Young people in Europe are faced with discriminatory policies, are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion and have borne the brunt of economic crisis and austerity measures. This must change if young people are to play a decisive role in sustainable development now and in the years to come.

Education for sustainable development and greater awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the policy issues it involves

Young people cannot be expected to contribute to the 2030 Agenda and to the achievement of sustainable development if they are not made aware of the agenda or of the issues at stake. The European Union and European governments should be communicating about the 2030 Agenda and the commitments they have made, and education for sustainable development needs to be prioritised. Through education for sustainable development, in formal and non-formal education settings, young people in particular can reflect on their role and responsibilities in a global society and on the contribution they can make to social, environmental and economic justice.

Participation of young people and youth organisations

The contribution of young people is vital for achieving sustainable development, which makes the active participation of young people in decision-making processes all the more important. Young people should be enabled to participate in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but more particularly in policy-making for this implementation, as well as in monitoring and reviewing progress towards the agenda and holding governments to account. More and improved partnership between governments and youth organisations, greater youth participation in social, environmental, political and economic decision-making as a whole and more investment in and recognition of youth organisations are urgently required.

Meet
the authors

The European Youth Press (EYP), a 60.000 member strong umbrella organisation that gathers journalists and media makers across Europe, organises numerous events for young journalists, promotes the role of youth media and freedom of press in Europe and takes part in discussions about journalistic education standards and media policies throughout the European Union. The EYP put together a team of ten EYE reporters to draft a comprehensive report of the EYE.

Under the leadership of two chief editors, a team of eight generalists and specialist reporters from across Europe were brought together to collect, elaborate and describe the major thoughts and ideas from the EYE. This report contains the 50 most constructive of these ideas. The European Youth Forum contributed a commentary of two pages on each of the five themes.

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