

 Youth
Goals

EUYPD9

SUMMARY OF THE FINAL
REPORT ON THE NATIONAL
CONSULTATIONS UNDER THE 9TH
CYCLE OF THE EU YOUTH
DIALOGUE

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

**Under the Trio Presidency France -
Czech Republic - Sweden**

Summary of the final report on the national consultations under The 9th Cycle Of The EU Youth Dialogue

The consultation phase of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD9) ran from January 2022 to August 2022. This summary of the EUYD9 results covers consultation activities conducted by National Working Groups, the input from International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations participating in EUYD9, and the outcomes of the EUYD9 Youth Conference in Prague, Czech Republic¹. The results of the mid-term collection of good practices² are also incorporated.

Results of sub-theme 1: 'Information and education'

According to the young people who participated in the consultations, sources of information and opportunities to learn about climate change should:

- be youth-friendly, accessible, and available in a range of formats and languages.
- show the relevance of climate change to the lives of a diverse range of young people.
- be comprehensive, trustworthy and informed by science, covering a range of environmental topics and show political processes and developments related to sustainability.
- highlight links between climate change and inequality, of which many young people were unaware of in the consultations.
- go beyond information sharing and aim to motivate and empower young people to act in favour of sustainability, including through political action and by making sustainable lifestyle choices.
- avoid 'apocalyptic messages' which create feelings of hopelessness, and impact on young people's mental health.

To increase learning opportunities about sustainability, it was suggested that schools should be better used, and the topic included in their curricula. Though schools were the most widely suggested forum for these opportunities, civil society, youth clubs, youth organisations, digital tools and peer-to-peer programmes were also among the beneficial learning environments identified. The need for funding for youth work and youth organisations in order to expand learning opportunities relating to sustainability was raised.

Results of sub-theme 2: 'Action and empowerment'

A common opinion amongst consultation participants was that policy makers and politicians have shown a lack of action on sustainability and environment issues, and young people have very limited ways to hold decision-makers to account on these topics. There were feelings of mistrust and discontent towards politicians. Many, but not all, young people were

¹ EUYD9 EU Youth Conference in Prague, Czech Republic. Final Conference Report: Deliberations on Sustainability and Inclusion, 25 July 2022

² EUYD9 Mid-Term Report. Good Practices and Consultation Processes, 30 June 2022.

able to identify a variety of available participatory mechanisms, (e.g., protests, petitions, civil society organisations). In general, however, these mechanisms were all said to be failing to bring about change on sustainability, due to inaction from the relevant policy makers. No specific types of mechanism were widely identified as more effective. Young people involved in formal structures, (e.g., youth councils, advisory boards) said that these structures did have some impact when embedded in policy-making. However, many young people were not aware of these structures. Opportunities to hold decision makers to account for were said to be improved by:

- policy-makers committing to more extensive action based on outcomes of participation mechanisms.
- improving the accessibility of participation mechanisms, ensuring that they focus on the concerns of marginalised groups as well as majority issues and enable marginalised young people to take leadership roles.
- increasing the number of opportunities for participation on sustainability, especially with informal and regular dialogue with elected representatives.
- Promoting and protecting youth councils with increased resources, establishing more local youth councils and ensuring legislative backing.

Results of sub-theme 3: 'Governance'

The EUYD9 Youth Conferences in France and in the Czech Republic and the informal ministerial meeting of 22 January 2022 in Strasbourg identified concerns from young people about youth washing. The young people that participated in the consultation phase were less familiar with the concept but often able to recognise it. Youth washing was said to be an engagement between politicians or policy-makers and young people, which has no genuine possibility of creating political change, despite expectations to do so. The consultations identified that participatory mechanisms can reduce youth washing by:

- increasing transparency and visibility by giving young people clear information on the feasibility of implementing their demands and ensuring policy-makers' commitments are publicly recorded and promoted.
- providing follow up and feedback to young people on the actions taken by policy-makers after participation activities with policy makers publicly reporting on changes achieved or justifying the lack of changes by given deadlines, as well as engaging in ongoing dialogue with young people.
- developing more consistent and stronger links between participation mechanisms and policy sectors linked to sustainability.

Results of sub-theme 4: 'Mobility and solidarity'

In the consultation, young people from a diverse range of marginalised backgrounds were asked what could enable them to take advantage of EU-wide mobility opportunities related to the environment. Financial barriers or perceived financial barriers were a major issue. These included direct costs, being unable to take a break from employment, or risking losing social welfare assistance. Language barriers and a lack of accessible information about opportunities also played a role. Some young people perceived EU mobility opportunities as not intended for young people from their backgrounds. The tendency to focus on immediate life needs or local issues rather than environmental topics was also a factor. The young people consulted identified a need to:

- lower the threshold for accessing opportunities by removing costs, offering short term (2-3 day) opportunities, simplifying administrative procedures, and connecting directly via school or local projects.
- increase funding and support to the organisations which promote mobility and solidarity projects
- focus on local environmental initiatives that are connected to and affect marginalised young people's own communities.
- Increase publicity and outreach, including delivering mobility opportunities connected to schools as well as by working with organisations, professionals, and previous participants, who have "bonds of trust" with young people in marginalised circumstances.
- emphasise the personal benefits of taking part, especially with regard to impact on employability and employment skills, and make opportunities more attractive.
- provide flexible, high quality and professional support that is able to meet a variety of different accessibility needs including resourcing organisations working with young people in marginalised circumstances to support environmental mobility opportunities.

Results of sub theme 5: 'Access to infrastructure'

Financial limitations were identified as one of the key factors preventing young people from making more sustainable living choices. The participants consulted called for the development of sustainable infrastructure that is affordable for young people. The general lack of infrastructure in rural areas was also highlighted. The types of infrastructure requested included:

- affordable and improved public transport along with safer and more widespread facilities for cycling, becoming viable options compared to cars.
- financially accessible housing options, as young people said that financial barriers were a major factor for them in making it difficult to consider sustainability when choosing housing.

- more green, open public spaces and promotion of renewable energy.
- affordable sustainable food and consumption options, including recycling and reuse. This was important to many young people but not as high a priority as other suggestions.

The EU Youth Conference in Prague identified a role for youth policy, and the youth sector in supporting young people's participation within the policy areas more directly related to infrastructure, such as transport, housing, urban planning, energy and agriculture

Results of cross-cutting theme: 'Intergenerational dialogue'

The EU Youth Conference in Prague identified that sustainability and inclusion are not 'youth issues', but rather issues that affect all of society. Therefore, it was said that good practice in policy-making required intergenerational dialogue between all generations. There were no strong demands for intergenerational dialogue in the EUYD9 consultations, but there was a degree of support when the topic was introduced to the young people participating. Intergenerational dialogue was said to have potential to:

- legitimise and build recognition for young peoples' concerns and efforts on sustainability issues.
- build mutual solidarity and support between generations.
- promote intergenerational learning and enable young people to influence older generations' views on sustainability.

It was said that intergenerational dialogue should not replace existing youth participation mechanisms or direct dialogue between young people and policy-makers but should take place alongside these activities.

*The text of this summary was submitted to the EU Youth Working Party
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