
REPORT FORM

Trio Presidency: Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg Consultation on youth empowerment for political participation

DEADLINE: Sunday March 1st 2015

Please find below the form allowing your National Working Group or International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation, to carry out and communication the results of the consultation to the European Steering Committee. The input you will provide through this form will serve as a common base for the discussions at EU level.

We want to remind you that NWGs are encouraged to use the Online Participation Platform (OPP) to carry out the consultation, with wider access to young people. The questions are being inserted in the platform. If you wish to use the OPP, please contact Graeme Robertson (Graeme.ROBERTSON@ec.europa.eu)

In order to allow the European Steering Committee to integrate the results of the consultations in preparation for the EU Youth Conference in Latvia, we kindly ask you to please send this report form filled in to the European Steering Committee (**mail to:** lucille.rieux@youthforum.org) **and to your national government by Sunday 1st of March 2015**

The European Steering Committee kindly asks you to **fill out this form in English and return it in typed format (not as a PDF file, please).**

Technical details of the consultation:

Please provide the requested information on your National Working Group or INGYO:

Details of the contact persons:	
Name	
E-mail address	
Institution	
Position	
EU Member State (if appropriate)	
Members of the National Working Group (number and names)	

Youth Organisations		
National Authorities (please specify if Ministry for Youth and/or representatives from other Ministries)		
National Agencies		
Others (please specify)		
Level of the consultation (international, national, regional, local). Please, describe briefly for each level, how the consultations were carried out and which methodologies were used.		
Local		
Regional		
National		
International (for international youth NGOs)		
Target group consulted	Specify the methodology of the consultation	Number of people
Young people (non associated)		
Young people represented by youth organisations		
Experts (e.g. NWG, youth researches, youth workers, employment agencies, social services, etc.). Please specify.		
Public authorities in the field of youth or in social affairs and welfare or others. Please specify.		
Good practices from the consultation		

Do you have any suggestions / comments on the current process?	
How would you improve the working methods and decision-making process in the EU Youth Conference ¹	

¹ The ESC is gathering input on this issue, as mentioned in the [Council Resolution on the overview of the structured dialogue process including social inclusion of young people](#), of April 30th 2014

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Structured Dialogue on Youth Youth Empowerment for political participation

The Trio Presidency – Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg – together with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum have agreed on “youth empowerment for political participation” as the overarching theme for the 18 months from July 2014 to December 2015.

Building on the Council Resolution of 20 May 2014, on the overview of the structured dialogue process including the social inclusion of young people, that endorsed a simplified architecture for the conduct of the structured dialogue, youth representatives and representatives of national authorities have worked together in Rome, for the elaboration of a guiding framework. The latter sets the basis for common understanding on the overall theme. The questions below are based on the challenges outlined in the Guiding Framework and aim to find solutions, good practices, preventative measures, and innovative ideas on empowering young people for political participation.

Genuine youth political participation exists when young people form an integral part of political decision-making processes at all levels as equal stakeholders. As few participatory structures are available at the local level, that is closest to young people, this does not facilitate their involvement in bottom-up approaches.

There are formal barriers to youth political participation at all levels, such as the lack of transparency, age-related limitations and eligibility criteria to stand for election. Other barriers derive from a lack of citizenship education, low levels of confidence in the democratic process, and a lack of young people's priorities being reflected in mainstream politics. In addition, politicians and political institutions often lack the capability and willingness to engage with young people in political processes.

In the absence of legal frameworks, youth engagement often occurs through consultations, where young people are rarely an equal partner in the process and often do not see the impact of their inputs reflected in the outcomes of the political process. This is reflected in a growing lack of trust and interest in politics, including traditional means of participation, as illustrated by the low turn-out of young people in the electoral process and the lack of young candidates for political office.

When formulating policies affecting the lives of young people, many political actors, including institutions, decision and policy makers, do not consider young people nor youth organisations as relevant contributors, thus denying their ability to have an impact. Traditional means of political participation often lack transparency and the accountability of decision makers to young people. Such means also lack the flexibility and modern tools and techniques to meet the needs of young people.

The opportunity to experience political participation and be decision makers in their own environment from an early age is crucial for young people to become active citizens.

Comprehensive formal education towards political participation does not exist in all Member States and barriers to full accessibility and participation of all young people in non-formal education persist. Citizenship education often does not combine formal and non-formal education and thus the methodology is not always adapted to the needs of young people.

A perceived lack of motivation of educators and students/pupils along with a lack of participatory culture within educational establishments results in less political participation. Insufficient involvement and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders is a further challenge.

Informing and engaging with all young people is important to ensure and strengthen democratic processes, and to bridge the gap between young people and decision-makers. Young people are not a homogenous group, which leads to challenges for youth organisations, educators, media, political bodies and other stakeholders to inform and engage individual young people in a meaningful way, and avoid accusations of “tokenism”. Involving and representing young people with fewer opportunities in political processes remains a problem, including for youth organisations.

Financial and other resources are often insufficient to enable the effective empowerment in political participation of young people from all parts of society.

Based on this framework, these are the guiding questions:

1. What should be done to stimulate a culture of political participation in all aspects of education? (max 500 words)
2. What should be done to increase trust and understanding between young people and decision-makers, empowering both to better work with each other? (max 500 words)
3. How should young people and youth organisations be fully involved in shaping policies together with decision-makers? (max 500 words)
4. How can youth work empower young people for political participation? (max 500 words)
5. How should young people from all backgrounds be informed, empowered, and engaged to take part in political and democratic processes, and how should new and alternative technologies and tools be used for this? (max 500 words)