



# CULT FACT SHEET

**MEP BSR – Copenhagen 2024**

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## **Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)**

The question of how to motivate young people to participate in political life and set their own agendas. The world is facing a multitude of crises and challenges. Therefore, the generation that has the most time left on planet Earth, the youth of today, should decide now, with innovative and fresh ideas, on the course that will shape their future and that of future generations. But why is the older generation deciding most of the political actions? How can young people be motivated to take part in political life? How to foster youth participation? How can the youth elaborate serious political solutions and find a hearing?

We encourage you to research the provided links and sources, enabling you to construct a personal factsheet, fitted to your style of working. We want to note that you should read this fact sheet with a critical eye as our facts have many sources which could have led to bias occurring.

**Do not hesitate to search broader information and facts on this subject.**

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## Why is it important that young people get engaged in European politics?

Young people are the future leaders and decision-makers of society. The active participation of young people in civic and political life is one of the keys to strengthening democracy in Europe. Young people bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and diverse experiences to the political discourse. Their participation ensures that the concerns and interests of younger generations are represented in policymaking.

Political participation is fundamental to the functioning of a democratic society. By engaging in European politics, young people contribute to the legitimacy of the democratic process and help ensure that governments are responsive to the needs of all citizens.

In addition, many political decisions made on a European level have long-term consequences that directly affect young people, such as education policies, environmental regulations, and employment opportunities. By engaging in European politics, they can advocate for social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability, driving positive change at both the national and international levels.

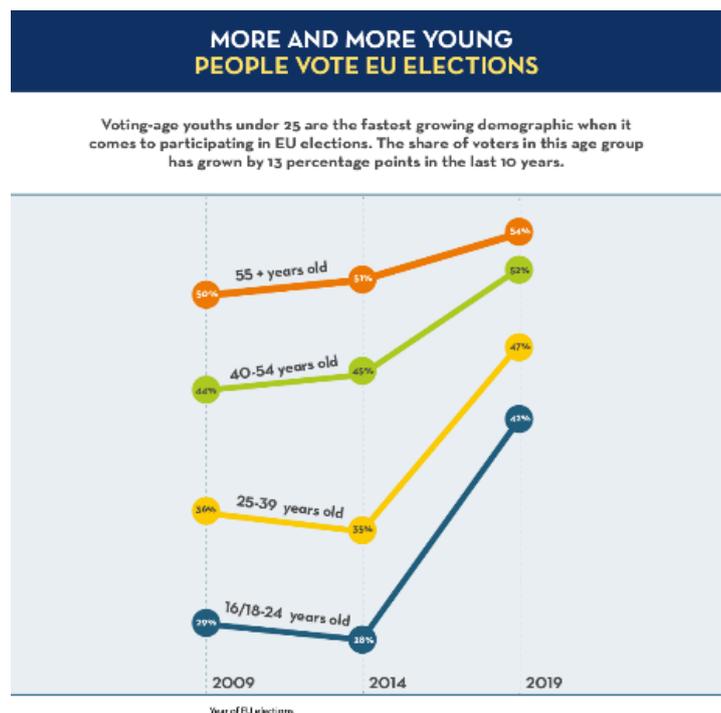
Analysing and understanding the voice of young people provides insight into their attitudes and opinions, something that might help to foresee future trends in society with sufficient room for manoeuvre to address their needs and concerns towards a more prosperous and comfortable future for all.

## How do the young people currently participate in European politics?

In the last European Parliament elections in 2019, the highest turnout in the last 20 years was achieved, with **more than 50% of the European population voting**, as corroborated by the EU's Eurobarometer post-election survey. Eurobarometer is a collection of cross-country public opinion surveys conducted regularly on behalf of the EU institutions. The main factor behind this increase in turnout was the increase of youth participation.

In 2021, the Eurobarometer made a research that examined youth's behaviour in politics in recent times. The graph from 2021 Eurobarometer Youth Survey shows that the younger generation (under 25) increased their electoral participation by 14% to 42%, while the participation of 25–39-year-olds increased by 12% to 47%, compared between the 2014 and 2019 European elections. According to the 2021 Eurobarometer Youth Survey, a sense of duty as a citizen (32%) and a willingness to take responsibility for the future (32%) were the main factors motivating young people to vote in the European elections.

Another graph from the 2021 Eurobarometer Youth Survey shows young



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 91 | data.europa.eu

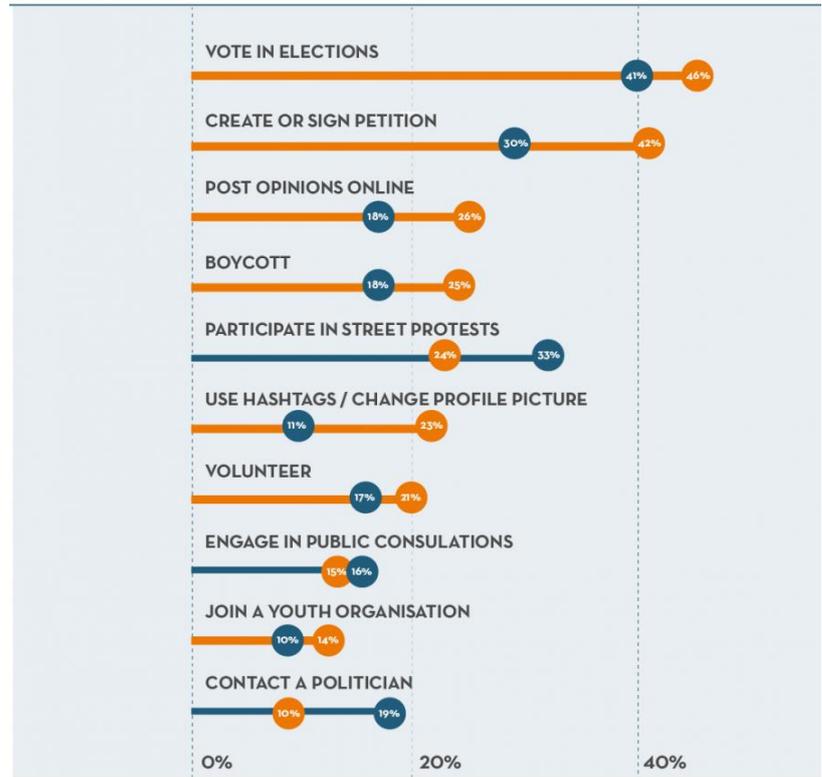


people's opinions on what is effective in participating in politics. The number on blue indicates the percentage of young people who believe the action in question to be effective, while the number on orange indicates the percentage of young people who have done the action in question. Notable is that the percentage results from both questions are low regarding every action.

Below, there is a graph from European Values Study (EVS), Wave 7 from 2020. EVS is a large-scale, cross-national, repeated cross-sectional survey research program on basic human values. In the graph, different age groups' activity in different political areas are compared. The graph shows that the age group of 15-29-year-olds is the least active age group in almost all areas. Especially in voting, young people seem to be much less active than older people.

### THE GAP BETWEEN 'PERCEPTIONS' Y 'ACTIONS'.

There is a gap between what young people perceive is effective and their actions. For example, 33% believe in street protest, but only 24% have done it. On the other hand, 42% have created or signed petitions, but just 30% perceive it as effective.



Share of youths who perceive an action as effective versus who have done it.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Parliament Youth Survey 2021



## EU youth strategy

The EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027, based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018. “EU youth cooperation shall make the most of youth policy's potential. It fosters youth participation in democratic life; it also supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.”

### 11 European youth goals:

During a 2017-2018 dialogue process which involved young people from all over Europe, 11 European youth goals were developed. These goals “identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people’s lives and point out challenges”. The EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027 period should contribute to realising this vision of young people.

#### 1. Connecting EU with Youth

- “Foster the sense of youth belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation.”

#### 2. Equality of All Genders

- “Foster the sense of youth belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation.”

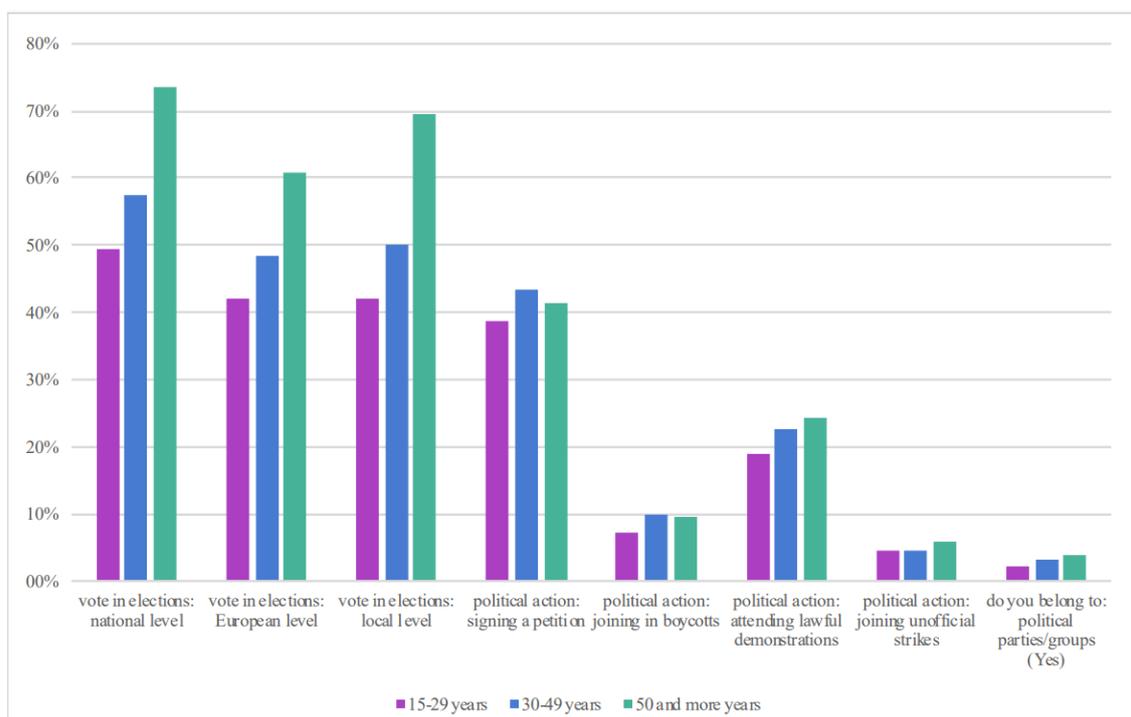
#### 3. Inclusive Societies

- “Enable and ensure the inclusion of all young people in society.”

#### 4. Information & Constructive Dialogue

- “Ensure young people have better access to reliable information, support their ability to evaluate information critically and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue.”

#### 5. Mental Health & Wellbeing





- “Achieve better mental wellbeing and end stigmatisation of mental health issues, thus promoting social inclusion of all young people.”

## **6. Moving Rural Youth Forward**

- “Create conditions which enable young people to fulfill their potential in rural areas.”

## **7. Quality Employment for All**

- “Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.”

## **8. Quality Learning**

- “Integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century.”

## **9. Space and Participation for All**

- “Strengthen young people’s democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.”

## **10. Sustainable Green Europe**

- “Achieve a society in which all young people are environmentally active, educated and able to make a difference in their everyday lives.”

## **11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes**

- “Ensure equal access for all young people to youth organisations and European youth programmes, building a society based on European values and identity.”

In October 2022, the European Commission launched its first ever [Youth Action Plan](#) (YAP) for EU external action, covering the years 2022-2027. The YAP acts as the EU’s guiding framework to “promote meaningful youth participation and empowerment globally for sustainable development, equality and peace”.

In November 2022, EU Member States “approved [Council Conclusions on the YAP](#), expressing strong political support for its proposed actions and implementation. They committed to the objective of increasing meaningful and active youth participation, as well as youth empowerment in EU external action.”

## **Youth parties and student unions**

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Most European countries’ parties have youth organisations/parties. Additionally, young people may join student unions. The umbrella organization of student organizations from 40 European Countries is the European Students’ Organisation (ESU).

Its role as the only European- wide student platform is growing. Bringing together, training and informing national student representatives on policy developments in higher education at the European level; organizing seminars, training, campaigns and conferences relevant to students, conducting European-wide research, partnership projects and campaigns, producing a variety of publications for students, policy-makers and higher education professionals.



*Baltic Sea Region MEP - Copenhagen*

The ESU has the vision of equal educational and social opportunities in an open and democratic Europe where students shape a sustainable future.

As your committee presidents, we wish you good and plenteous research moments. We look forward to meeting you in Copenhagen.

Best regards,

Nuutti Levo (FIN) and Miro Broswitz (GER)