

  
**Youth  
Goals**

**EU YD9**

**EU YOUTH CONFERENCE  
IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Final Conference Report:  
Deliberations on  
Sustainability and Inclusion**

Compiled by Ondřej Bárta & Dan  
Moxon, People Dialogue and Change  
July 2022, based on conclusions of  
conference participants

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

Implemented under the  
Czech Republic Presidency  
of the Council of the EU

## **Authors**

Ondřej BÁRTA

&

Dr Dan MOXON

on behalf of People, Dialogue and Change

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# Executive Summary

The intention of the European Youth Conference (EUYC), held 11-13th June 2022 in Prague, Czech Republic, was to involve young people in deliberations concerning spreading good practices in the areas of inclusion and sustainability. The conference discussions were based around good practice examples submitted by EU Youth Dialogue National Working Groups and presented to conference delegates through the EUYD9 Mid-Term Report.

The deliberations among the young people and policymakers concretely aimed at identifying conditions for creation of additional good practices in different contexts in the areas of inclusion and sustainability. To that end, success factors contributing to creation of good practices, and support mechanisms striving to establish such policy and practice environments which benefit good practice design and implementation, were the main focal points of the debates at the EUYC in Prague. The main outcomes of the deliberations are summarised below, and detailed in this conference report, together with the main points from other parts of the conference programme.

## **EUYC Dialogue Conclusions**

Firstly, the following success factors contributing to creation of good practices in the field of sustainability and inclusions were identified by the conference participants:

- *Low thresholds for participation within projects and initiatives* - In order to be accessible and inclusive to a diverse range of young people, good practices need to have minimum barriers to entry. It should be simple and easy for any young person to begin taking part. This applies to youth projects, educational programmes as well as civic and political participation mechanisms.
- *Access to trustworthy information* - Good practices should enable this in order to ensure young people have a full understanding of how political decisions are made, and to be able to engage in scientifically based facts around sustainability and climate agendas
- *Accessible and attractive communication and outreach approaches* - Good practices require such communication in order to widen the diversity of young people engaged in good practices and to promote the transparency and accountability of participation mechanisms. High quality communication of opportunities to take part, and the results of projects and participation mechanisms are needed.
- *Political participation mechanisms which hold decision makers to account* - These forms of good practice are needed to promote accountability and transparency of political decision making, and to ensure that decision makers act on the messages from young people. Participation mechanisms that operate on an ongoing basis with legal backing are necessary to enable young people to fully influence the sustainability and inclusion agendas.
- *Cross-sectoral advocacy for investment in sustainable infrastructure* - This recognises that youth policy makers have limited influence over economic and

environment policy. Therefore, good practices need to be based on youth engagement mechanisms which work cross-sectorally and give young people access to decision makers in these policy fields.

- *Cross-sectoral and intergenerational policy dialogue* - Recognising that sustainability and inclusion agendas are not 'youth issues', but rather issues that affect all of society. Therefore good practice requires intergenerational dialogue which engages with the views of all generations in relation to sustainability and inclusion.
- *Youth infrastructure that is sufficiently resourced* - Recognising the contribution that the youth sector can make to the sustainability and inclusion agenda, sufficient resources are required to enable the spread of good practices in these areas.

Secondly, the following support mechanisms to enable the development of good practices were stated by the participants of the EUYC in Prague:

- *Boost evidence-based approaches and research* - Consistent, transparent, and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and assessment are key processes that help introduce good practices. This requires collaboration between youth workers, policymakers, and researchers and experts.
- *Strengthen youth work* - Increasing the number of youth workers, access to funding, training levels, and general ability and capacity of the youth workers to support young people to engage in sustainability and inclusion agendas.
- *Support meaningful youth political participation* - Building cultures of participation amongst young people and bridges between young people and policy makers in all fields. Promoting transparency and accountability of youth participation through the creation of feedback loops. Access to spaces and venues for participation and direct representation of young people within decision making bodies.
- *Utilise the potential of formal education* - Civic and political education in formal schooling need to be strengthened as both constitute support mechanisms which enable good practices to occur.
- *Create interconnected sustainable infrastructure* - To enable young people to make meaningful sustainable lifestyle choices, access to sustainable infrastructure is required.

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# Conference Background

The EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD) is the European participatory process which, through cycles of 18 months over a priority topic, supports the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and ensures the involvement of young people in the decision-making process in the field of youth in Europe through a dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

The 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD9) runs from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023 under the Trio Presidency of France - Czech Republic - Sweden. The cycle is coordinated by the European Steering Group (ESG) consisting of representatives from the European Commission, European Youth Forum and of the Trio presidencies (Ministry representatives, National Youth Council representatives). The cycle is divided in two phases: the consultation phase (January 2022 - August 2022) and the implementation phase (September 2022 - June 2023). EUYD9 focuses on the European Youth Goals #10 Sustainable Green Europe and #3 Inclusive Societies under the theme of 'Engaging Together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe'

Within this framework, the intention of the European Youth Conference (EUYC), held 11-13th June 2022 in Prague Czech Republic was to implement the 2nd phase of EUYD9. The conference followed the achievements of the French Presidency and aimed to hand over its results to the Swedish Presidency that will complete the whole cycle. Outcomes of the EUYC are also used to inform the drafting of the Council Conclusions of the Czech Presidency.

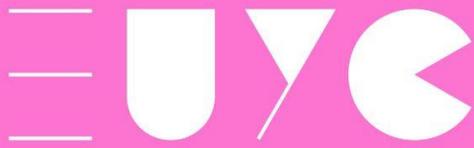
The intention of the conference was to involve young people in deliberations concerning spreading good practices in the areas of inclusion and sustainability. The conference discussions were based around good practice examples submitted by EUYD National Working Groups (NWGS) and presented to conference delegates through the EUYD9 Mid-Term Report<sup>1</sup>.

The good practice examples served as a basis for discussion among the young people and policymakers. The discussion aimed at supporting establishment of the good practices across the EU Member States, as well as creating conditions for creation of additional good practices in different contexts. Delegates proposed solutions on how to implement good practices and identify success factors and supporting mechanisms needed for spreading the good practice examples across the EU Member States.

This report outlines the conclusions of the conclusion of the conference working group discussion, as well as the other conference proceedings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://zenodo.org/record/6860715#.YtaOCnbP2Uk>



# Conference Programme

## Sunday, 10 July 2022



- 17:00 - 18:00 **Youth Talk**, Residence of the Mayor of Prague  
19:00 - 22:30 **Meet Up**, Scout Institute at the Old Town Square

## Monday, 11 July 2022



- 8:15 - 9:00 **Registration & Morning Coffee**, Cubex centre  
9:00 - 10:45 **Opening of the EU Youth Conference**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
**Welcome Speeches**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
**Panel Discussion**, Meeting hall A1 + A2

- 10:45 - 11:15 **Coffee Break**  
11:15 - 12:25 **Morning Dialogue**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
12:30 - 13:30 **Lunch Break**  
13:30 - 15:00 **Presentation of researches**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
**Afternoon market**, Meeting hall A1 + A2



- 15:00 - 15:30 **Coffee Break**  
15:30 - 15:45 **Dividing to groups based on the topics**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
15:45 - 17:15 **Working Groups**, 13 separate nests  
17:20 - 17:45 **Information on social evening**, Meeting hall A1 + A2



- 19:15 **Welcome Drink**  
**Embarquement**, Prague Boats (boat Grand Bohemia)  
19:30 - 22:30 **Gala Dinner (don't miss the boat)**

## Tuesday, 12 July 2022



- 8:15 - 9:00 **Morning Coffee**, Cubex centre  
9:00 - 9:20 **Introduction of the programme of the second day**, Meeting hall A1 + A2  
9:30 - 10:30 **Working Groups**, 13 separate nests  
10:30 - 11:00 **Coffee break**



# Conference Programme



11:00 - 12:30 **Working Groups + mixing within the groups**, 13 separate nests  
**Excursion of Trimaran green building**, meeting point at the registration desk, max. 25 persons

12:30 - 13:30 **Lunch Break**



13:30 - 15:00 **Working Groups with policy makers**, 13 separate nests

15:00 - 15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30 - 16:15 **Working Groups - outputs & highlights**, 13 separate nests

16:20 - 17:30 **Presentations of the highlights**, Meeting hall A1 + A2

**Information on social evening**

19:30 - 24:00 **Music Evening**, concert of the Czech band Lake Malawi & DJ set by Andrea Fiorino

## Wednesday, 13 July 2022



8:45 - 9:30 **Morning Coffee**, Cubex centre

9:30 - 10:30 **Introduction for the day**, Meeting hall A1 + A2

**Conclusions: first summary of rapporteurs + researchers**

**Discussion**

10:30 - 11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00 - 12:30 **Closing ceremony**

**Overview of the conference, next steps**

**Menti Q&A, Summaries and conclusions**

**Closing Speeches**

**Handover and family photo**

12:30 - 13:30 **Lunch Break**

**Next time see you in Sweden & Bon Voyage!**



# Opening Speeches and Debates

(11th July 2022)

## Opening Speeches

Speakers:

- **Mr. Vladimír Balaš**, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic
- **Ms. Themis Christophidou**, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport, Culture in the European Commission
- **Ms. Nadia Malovana**, Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs from the Embassy of Ukraine in Prague
- **Ms. Natalia Schevchuk**, The National Youth Council of Ukraine

The conference was opened by **Mr. Vladimír Balaš**, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. He emphasised the importance of young people working together to build a better Europe that was more sustainable and inclusive. He highlighted that this goal was even more important in light of Russian aggression and welcomed the Ukrainian delegation to EUYD. Mr Balaš expressed to conference delegates that their decisions and recommendations would be key to the success of the 9th cycle of EUYD, and that he was eager to hear about the innovative ideas generated in the conference. Considering the topic of the conference Mr. Balaš highlighted that youth is the largest generation on the planet. The youth population is growing in numbers and interconnecting like never before. Young people contribute to the resilience of communities, developing innovative solutions, driving progress, and pushing for change. They are agents of change and, with the skills and opportunities to reach their potential, they will be the driving force for peace and security. Youth-led organisations also have a role to play. They must hold the EU to account for the implementation of its Youth Strategy. Mr. Balaš expressed his hope that the event was a creative platform for new and innovative approaches based on the five priorities identified through the French conference. In considering how a sustainable inclusive Europe might be reached, He noted the interdependence of all individuals and the links between Europe and other continents.

**Ms. Themis Christophidou**, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport, Culture in the European Commission highlighted that the conference took place within the European Year of Youth, which includes over 3500 activities so far. She noted that the EU Youth Goals were a testament to the foresight of young people in relation to inclusion and sustainability. Ms. Christophidou highlighted the European schemes that were already working towards a sustainable Europe, such as the EU Forest Strategy, the Green Track Campaign, the recent EU Council recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability<sup>2</sup>, or the newly launched ALMA programme. She also commented that the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees to Europe showed that the principles of solidarity, democracy and peace were not just foundational values of Europe, but something we supported every day. Ms. Christophido finished by thanking the Czech Presidency and conference delegates for their continued work.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9242-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

**Ms. Kristýna Jelínková** from the Czech Council of Children and Youth Council highlighted the role of her organisation as co-organisers of the event. She emphasised the series of crises that the event took place in - COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. Within all these, young people have acted as a bond between generations and a source of help. The war in Ukraine has changed the lives of many people, and not just those in Ukraine. Ms. Jelínková noted that millions of children and young people had come to Europe as refugees, and we now had the opportunity to use our social and education systems so that they did not have to feel like refugees for even a moment. But the war is also linked to the energy crisis and the climate crisis. Ms. Jelínková argued we must steer Europe's economy and energy sector towards sustainability. She argued that EUYD has been a place for active participation for over a decade. It now gives us the opportunity to build on previous work and ideas that were discussed throughout Europe and move one step closer to solving these issues.

**Ms. Nadia Malovana**, Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs from the Embassy of Ukraine in Prague expressed her gratitude for the support from the Czech Republic towards Ukrainian refugees. She emphasised the desire of Ukrainian youth to get actively involved in strengthening civil society and to defend European values in Ukraine. Ukrainian youth identify strongly with European values. Youth represent our future and they will be the ones rebuilding Ukraine after the war. Ms. Malovana noted that Ukraine is part of Europe, and the European perspective was a large motivation for Ukrainian youth to strive for their future in the EU. The participation of Ukrainian youth representatives in the conference was therefore important and she hoped the conference will be motivating for all participants.

**Ms. Natalia Schevchuk**, The National Youth Council of Ukraine noted this was the first time Ukraine had participated in EUYD. She called for youth from the Eastern partnership countries to be permanently involved, not just during times of crisis. Ms. Schevchuk discussed the role of youth in fighting for European values and peace. She reminded conference delegates that young people have a role to play as innovators. However, for Ukrainian youth, there are now many great youth activists and human rights defenders who are now fighting in the war. Many young intellectuals' lives are being lost. So, when we consider the idea of loss and recovery, this loss of life and human potential will take years to recover from and this cannot be replaced with international funds. Ms. Schevchuk noted the links between war and sustainability issues, such as food terrorism and nuclear arms. She finished by calling for support for a democratic and free Ukraine.

It is important to also mention that **His Holiness Pope Francis**, the 266th Bishop of Rome, addressed the young people who gathered in Prague through a letter which can be found as Annex IV of this report.



## Plenary Panel Discussion

Speakers:

- **Ms. Claudia Plakolm**, State Secretary for Youth in the Federal Chancellery, Austria
- **Ms. Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot**, Director for Youth Education and Erasmus+, European Commission
- **Ms. Cristiana Xenofontos**, Board Member, European Youth Forum
- **Mr Václav Velčovský**, Deputy Minister, Czech Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
- **Mr Aleš Sedláček**, President of the Czech Council of Children and Youth

Within the debate,

**Ms. Plakolm** identified the importance of intergenerational solidarity and the active involvement of young people in decision making processes. This included through instruments such National Youth Councils, Youth Conferences, and votes at 16. She noted that Austria is one of only two European countries to implement votes at 16. She also outlined the need to reduce dependency on Russian gas and move towards renewable energy sources.

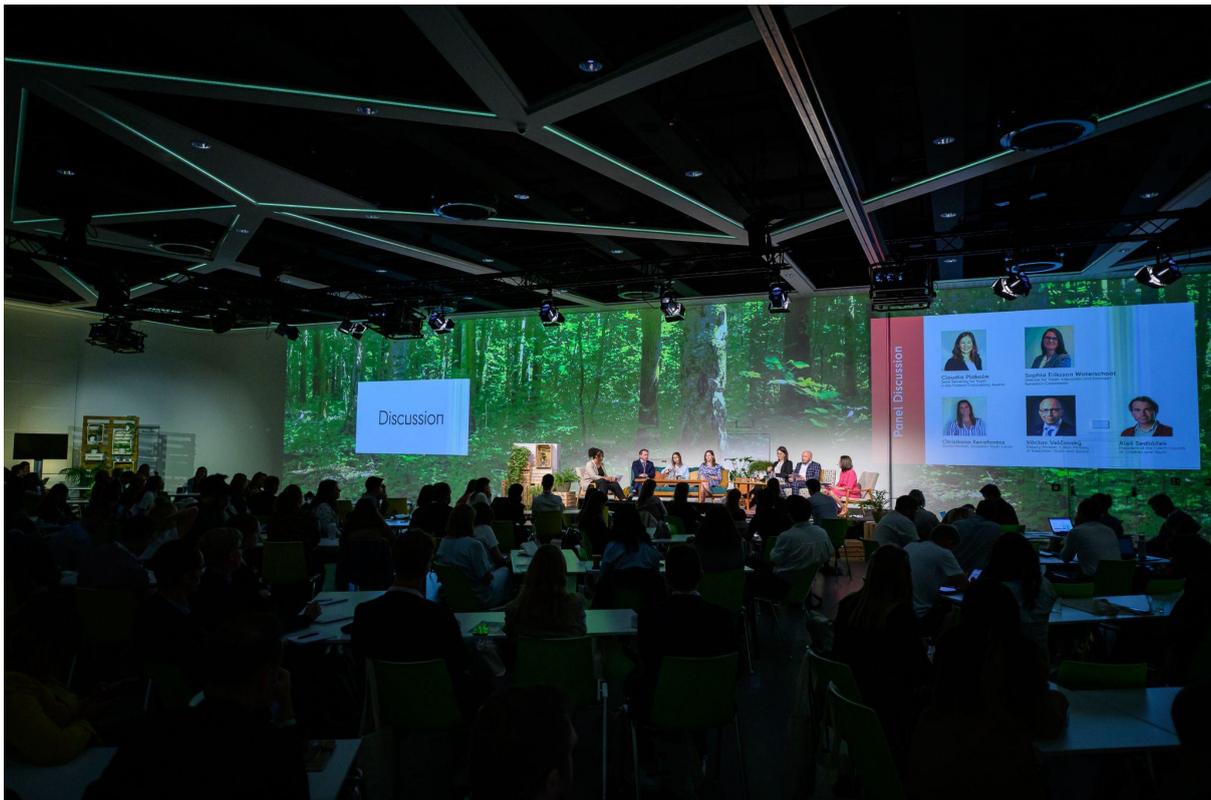
**Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot** outlined how the European Commission places inclusion very high on the agenda in all its work. She raised concerns about the impact of the pandemic on young people in relation to loss of learning and mental health. Inclusion in employment and supporting transitions from education to employment were now crucial, and it is important to support young people's wellbeing within this. Ms. Eriksson Waterschoot highlighted that the Youth Chapter elements Erasmus+ programme are the most inclusive elements of Erasmus+. Over one third of participants in Youth Chapter activities are from marginalised backgrounds. She identified that the transition to a greener society is a key transition for our societies but that it must happen in a fair and inclusive way. To support this the European Commission is developing engagement activities in environmental policy areas and supporting environmental initiatives within the youth and education sectors.

**Ms Cristiana Xenofontos** highlighted that diversity and inclusion are crucial to all aspects of policy making. Inclusive societies can only be achieved with a multidimensional approach, considering civic, social, political and economic inclusion. Ms. Xenofontos argued that youth rights are central to inclusiveness. This includes things such as social protection in labour markets and the banning of unpaid internships. She highlighted the *25% project* as an example of inclusive practice. It was co-created by European Youth Forum member organisations and demonstrated the outreach work which can be undertaken by youth organisations. Ms Xenofontos called for the introduction of an EU Youth test, to assess the impact of all policies on future generations. Such a test is necessary to put in place mitigation measures when negative impacts on young people are identified within new policies.

**Mr Velčovský** highlighted the need for investment in democracy, inclusion and solidarity. He noted that developing effective, inclusive democracy was expensive, but we should be willing to invest in it. He called for young people to advise civil servants on the

implementation of policy, to bring ideas and innovation and become the change drivers. He highlighted the need for social dialogue principles, similar to those used with trade unions, to be used between young people and policymakers.

**Mr Aleš Sedláček** highlighted the importance of non-formal education to inclusiveness. With this, he said there was a need to link formal and non-formal education. He also noted the need for more funding for National Youth Councils in order to improve their communication and cooperation.



## Presentation of the EUYD9 Mid-Term Report

Mr Ondřej Bárta presented the main results of the Mid-Term Report prepared by himself and Dr Dan Moxon. Mr Bárta pointed out that the EUYD9 is already in the phase of national consultations and that the Mid-Term Report is based on the first information which were collected by the National Working Groups (NWGs) up until June 2022. He stressed that the Mid-Term Report itself aims at supporting national consultation processes (by summarising, analysing, and outlining various aims, activities, and inclusion approaches), but also at supporting good practice sharing across all five sub themes of the EUYD9 (Information and Education, Action and Empowerment, Governance, Mobility and Solidarity, and Access to Infrastructure), as well as supporting deliberations at the EU Youth Conference in Prague, and serve as one of the inputs for the Council Conclusions prepared by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

After summarising the underlying concepts (the overall topic and the five sub themes of the EUYD9), he continued to describe good practice types, showcasing what initiatives were typically submitted as good practices by the NWGs. He pointed out the difference between

the civic participation (e.g., projects addressing a certain issue in a local context) and the political participation initiatives (e.g., mechanisms allowing for more systemic, policy changes). He mentioned one-off events and continuous initiatives and highlighted the potential to use one-off events as a blueprint for long-term ones, stressing the role of sharing platforms (e.g., round tables), but also the role of already established sharing formats (e.g., Training of Trainers, Tool Fairs, etc.) in the process of establishing continuous initiatives. Mr Bárta also mentioned that the good practices took place at different levels (local, regional, and national), and pointed out that it is important to probe scaling opportunities in good practices with potential to work at more than one level.

Mr. Bárta subsequently moved to outlining success factors to enable the spread of good practices, i.e., aspects which help the practices to become good practices. He underlined the importance of direct engagement of young people and marginalised groups as leaders and organisers of the good practices (and related need for skills development in young people in order to enable them to take up these roles), he also outlined the direct link between the bodies implementing the good practices and policy stakeholders as one of the success factors (e.g., taking up form of endorsement of the process of policymakers, establishing concrete rules for the process and outcomes, or even transposing the initiative into a concrete political participation mechanism). He also mentioned direct engagement of experts from different fields, such as practice, policy, academia, business, and others, is yet another success factor, helping these practices not only to build on the expertise of various actors, but also to be anchored in different settings (e.g., business sector, academia, policy making, etc.). Importance of continuous funding that builds the basis and opens up space to focus on designing and implementing innovative projects has been stressed by Mr Bárta, as well as importance of general support from public bodies (e.g., in providing premises, or services, to support the good practices), and also the key role of publicity, visibility, and transparency in good practice establishment and maintenance. He also stated that legal and policy backing is crucial to the good practices (e.g., to be able to refer to concrete laws or policies), and that the good practices themselves create a cumulative effect that helps new good practices to be established (e.g., by publishing open-source outputs, or simply by creating blueprints useful in other contexts, etc.).

Mr. Bárta subsequently summarised the main conclusions of the Mid-Term Report, namely the importance of:

- Finding the right mix of aims and methods (e.g., organisations and other partners, policy and practice, etc.),
- Finding synergies (e.g., between national and international levels, work of different bodies, etc.).
- Finding the right composition of authors (e.g., policymakers from different contexts, young people from all walks of life, etc.).
- Capitalising on innovations (i.e., using the cumulative effect of the good practice establishment, etc.).
- Setting inclusion as a default approach.
- Employing intergenerational dialogue.
- Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation.

Mr Bárta also outlined the upcoming proceedings of the EU Youth Conference in Prague, highlighting the need to further debate the good practices with respect to additional success factors, potential hurdles, and support mechanisms enabling the success factors to occur.

# Conclusions of the Working Groups

(11-12th July 2022)

## Overview of the EUYC Dialogue Process

Conference delegates took part in working groups organised by sub-themes of EUYD9:

- Information and education,
- Action and empowerment,
- Governance,
- Mobility and solidarity,
- Access to infrastructure.

The working groups began their discussions by exploring the good practice examples, related to their theme within the EUYD9 Mid-Term Report.<sup>3</sup> Discussing success factors, hurdles and obstacles and support mechanisms needed to enable these practices to spread across EU member states. In parallel to the working groups, a series of creative groups also took place. These groups explored the same themes and topics, using creative methods such as video making, newspaper article writing, and Lego building. Outcomes of both the working groups and creative groups are shown in the following sections.



<sup>3</sup> <https://zenodo.org/record/6860715#.YtaOCnbP2Uk>

# EUYC Outcomes: Success Factors and Hurdles

Two of the aims of the working groups and creative groups were to:

- Identify additional success factors related to the good practice examples presented at the conference. (Success factors are also presented by the researchers prior to the working groups, which is why “additional” success factors are sought.)
- Identify hurdles and obstacles young people see in spreading the good practice examples into their own local/regional/national contexts.

The results they identified by conference participants were:

## 1. Low thresholds for participation within projects and initiatives

Conference participants identified that many disadvantaged groups face additional barriers when it comes to things like engaging in civic or political participation, developing youth projects, accessing educational initiatives or applying for funding. These **hurdles and obstacles** take the form of language barriers, bureaucracy, lack of awareness about opportunities, and competition from better resourced groups and organisations. This was felt to reinforce the so-called ‘EU bubble’. The same groups of young people were able to repeatedly access opportunities. This issue reduced the diversity and inclusiveness of projects and initiatives across Europe.

A **success factor** to ensure that good practices spread in an inclusive way was promoting low thresholds of participation. This meant ensuring projects and initiatives were easy and simple to engage with for any young person. Young people should face minimal barriers when ‘signing up’ to take part. Achieving this meant promoting good practice examples that are:

- Free to access.
- Flexible in format (e.g., both online and offline).
- Adaptable to meet the needs of participants.
- Can operate at local level, whilst linking to National / European levels.

## 2. Access to trustworthy information

A variety of **hurdles and obstacles** were identified relating to a lack of trustworthy information. This was said to:

- Prevent young people from being better informed about climate issues.
- Make policy making difficult to engage with for all young people.

Participants identified a need to make political topics and political decision making more transparent, accessible and understandable to all. It was identified that young people need access to reliable information, so they might be able to form their own informed opinion. If not, they might fall victim to ‘fake news’ and manipulation. Within this, there was concern about young people's unwillingness to pay for media content such as investigative journalism. There was also said to be a need to create a more positive view of the European Union through better access to information about the EU and its institutions.

Therefore, **success factors** to enable the spread of good practices were:

- Providing stable access to platforms where information on our initiatives can be found, and it is also useful to have a presence on communication channels.
- Encouraging a reliable source of verified information to be promoted, in order to provide sufficient facts. (Especially on climate and political issues.)

The role of experts who could provide trustworthy information within sustainability projects was said to be important, as well as the need for young people to work alongside experts.

### 3. Accessible and attractive communication and outreach approaches

Conference participants identified **hurdles** for marginalised groups lacking accessibility to information especially about education and youth programmes. Whilst each country struggles with different problems, these general obstacles cause isolation and barriers. Visibility of youth projects are often lacking; young people do not know about all kinds of opportunities available to them and do not have enough information on how to get involved. Civic engagement sometimes seems inaccessible or complicated to young people, and this hinders their ability to get involved (especially marginalised young people). Discriminations, social inequality, social inequality and class divide often influence how active young people are, these imbalances are often reproduced during education and access to educational programmes. Specific hurdles included:

- Lack of multilingual materials / materials in native languages.
- Misinformation or no information leading to less participation in projects.
- Legal understanding of certain terms can differ. It is necessary to define the terms, also 'buzz words' such as sustainability etc.
- Selection by motivation letter is not open to everyone, because not everyone has perfect written skills, especially those in the most marginalised situations.

In order to help the spread of good practices a **success factor** required was increased the visibility and outreach of youth programmes, in order to make them more inclusive. It was identified that young people need appealing graphics and visuals to get a clear and accessible overview of the topic, instead of long blocks of text. This will enable them to gain interest in difficult but important topics (such as policy making and sustainability) and access opportunities. The need for improved visibility also applied to the dissemination, especially from participatory projects. Considering that youth ideas and conference products often get lost, there is a need for improving awareness, visibility and outreach after the finalisation of the result of conferences and debates.



#### **4. Political participation mechanisms which hold decision makers to account, operate on an ongoing basis and have legal backing**

A significant **hurdle and obstacle** identified across many working groups was lack of political support for sustainability and inclusion issues. There was a view from conference participants that political stagnation was an issue. This included the belief that politicians only focused on short term issues, and this often prevented them developing the long-term solutions needed to address climate change, such as investment in sustainable infrastructure.

**A success factor** to enable the spread of good practices identified was the need for youth participation projects and initiatives to hold decision makers to account by default. This was said to require ongoing processes with inbuilt accountability mechanisms, and good legal backing. This meant:

- Events should be done regularly, rather than 'one-shot'.
- A more effective connection of NGOs and governmental bodies on a national land city, with better legal backing.
- In order to ensure accountability, follow-up mechanisms should be included in the timeframe of the initiative from the beginning. For example, if an initiative is supposed to engage policy makers in making commitments, a follow-up date is to be set up from the very beginning so it can be clear whether that commitment has been implemented.
- Having legal bodies consisting of young people who meet with policymakers on a regular (structural) basis to discuss government policies, with a mandated follow-up of the recommendations.
- Participation mechanisms which have a way to measure if ideas coming from young people are actually implemented.

#### **5. Cross-sectoral advocacy for investment in sustainable infrastructure**

Within the conference there were calls for:

- **Accessible public transport for all young people and citizens.** This was identified as free or affordable transport, with unified ticketing systems that enabled people to be more mobile around their countries, especially in rural areas. The need to involve young people in transport planning and develop better bike infrastructure was also discussed.
- **Better support for solar power** and photovoltaic panels. Including incentives for NGOs to install solar panels. There was concern that improvements were needed in the technology supporting lithium-ion batteries to address their recycling and use of rare materials.
- **Greater investment in sustainable infrastructure generally,** addressing issues such as better land use and pedestrian friendly cities and creation of student friendly public spaces. This investment should also stimulate the local economy.

It was noted that when implementing sustainable solutions, people should also be offered adequate, sustainable alternatives to accommodate their everyday needs. Solutions should also mitigate their possible negative economic aspects on specific communities or individuals.

It was identified that the **hurdles and obstacles** to infrastructure projects were the lack of financial investment and political will to invest in sustainable infrastructure. Connected to this, conference participants struggled to identify specific roles for the youth sector and youth policy in relation to sustainable infrastructure. They noted that good practices on the infrastructure require large amounts of resources which are not always available through standard funding schemes for youth activities. Therefore, a primary **success factor** for youth sector initiatives was enabling engagement with policy makers outside of the youth sector. This would enable young people to lobby or advocate for sustainable infrastructure with policymakers with direct responsibility for this. It was recognised that there was a need for youth participation mechanisms within the field of transport, planning and sustainability and that these should be linked to existing youth mechanisms within the youth field to avoid duplication.

## 6. Cross-sectoral and intergenerational policy dialogue

Building on the point five above, conference participants identified a further **hurdle** for projects aiming to connect young people with the sustainability agenda. This was the oversimplification of environmental topics as 'youth issues'. There was concern that doing this reduced the ability of young people to include the sustainability agenda. As an example, it was highlighted that the EUYC primarily engaged with policymakers who work on youth policy - and thus had much less potential to influence policy makers working in other areas such as transport, planning and the environment. Instead of considering topics such as the environment or structural inequality as a 'youth issue' these issues need to be thought of as general issues with youth aspects.

Building on this a **success factor** that could enable young people to more effectively influence the sustainability agenda was intergenerational dialogue. There was a need to engage citizens of all ages in these debates and mechanisms. Some conference participants saw young people's role as changing the mindsets of older people. Others argued that intergenerational consultation should take place before implementation of the good practices in order to balance the interest of all groups and find possible synergies. In any instance, within intergenerational dialogue, a sufficient exchange of information between the youth and the decision-makers should be in place, as it helps the youth be more involved and encourages them to be more active.



## 7. Youth infrastructure that is sufficiently resourced to enable young people to engage with sustainability and inclusion agendas

Building on the previous **success factors**, a common call within the conference was for long term systematic funding for youth organisations. This was said to be needed to enable them to be a stable part of youth empowerment and engagement across the sustainability and inclusion agendas. Conference participants called for consistent, long-term financial support and accessible funding. It was felt this would help them to plan, organise and become main stakeholders in empowering young people and leading to sustainability and integration of marginalised young people in society. Within this, there were also calls for the recognition of youth work and non-formal education.

A specific **hurdle** was the complicated access to youth sector funding. Applications were said to be sometimes unfitting of what the call aims to do. Application writing was seen as a heavy and specific work for volunteer-based youth NGOs. There was concern that calls are often not constructed with the youth field reality. Project calls and grants are often designed as top-down instead of bottom-up, without sufficient consultation with applicants and with many bureaucratic obstacles. Project-based calls complicate applications as activities to address structural issues do not fit with these. It was identified that shorter, more flexible project formats, particularly in relation to transnational programmes, would also give more access to young people from marginalised backgrounds.

## EUYC Outcomes: Support Mechanisms

A further aim aims of the working groups and creative groups was to:

- Identify support mechanisms which might help introducing good practice examples and creating new ones by boosting success factors and eliminating/minimising the hurdles identified in the previous points.

The results they identified by conference participants were:

### 1. Boost evidence-based approaches and research

It was repeatedly mentioned that consistent, transparent, and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and assessment are key processes that help introduce good practices and create new ones. This establishes a strong link between policy and practice and constitutes a key **support mechanism**.

It can be achieved by supporting close collaboration between youth workers, policymakers, and researchers or research institutions, by creating platforms that enable and support such collaboration, and even by creating pools of reliable independent experts. As for the mechanisms, creating feedback cycles, collecting data on indicators, and creating specific funding mechanisms for youth research, were all mentioned.

This **support mechanism** is also closely related to the topics of transparency and visibility, stressing the importance of the policy-practice links, engaging experts in various processes, and creating youth-friendly information sources which clearly convey the results of youth research, monitoring, and evaluation.

## 2. Strengthen youth work

Deliberations showed that youth work is one of the key areas that should be strengthened. Support for youth workers and changes to the funding of youth work were seen as two crucial **support mechanism** areas. Participants concluded that youth workers should be supported in following ways:

- There should be a sufficient number of youth work professionals (ideally in a certain ratio to the numbers of young people).
- Youth workers should have sufficient access to training opportunities (e.g., through an alumni network, project management training programmes, etc.).
- Youth workers should also have sufficient salaries that enable them to fully focus on youth work and innovations, not only on securing funds for the upcoming projects (e.g., by providing continuous funding to youth work organisations for a certain period of time after which this is reviewed, as it happens in Luxembourg, and potentially also based on fulfilling inclusion and accessibility criteria).
- There should be information and sharing platforms for youth workers which support their further professional development (e.g., a one-stop shop for: partnership building, good practice sharing, know-how sharing, peer learning, information on inclusion of marginalised youth, etc.).

Furthermore, participants identified the need to improve funding of youth work and suggested the following ideas:

- Funding should be accessible to youth workers and young people (e.g., the application processes should be simplified and shortened to such extent they are also available to young people supported by youth workers, and creative application processes should be designed to also allow for multimedia formats such as videos, not only the written text).
- Project management know-how should be boosted (e.g., via a system of mentoring from larger to smaller organisations to spread the project management know-how in the youth field).
- Priorities of grant schemes and other funding sources should be co-created together with youth work organisations (e.g., to allow for long-term grant support of international youth networks, NGOs, and other youth work providers and youth field stakeholders, etc.),
- External consultancy capacities should be available to youth workers (e.g., by having an intergenerational and cross-sectoral pool of professionals from related fields who are available to support youth workers in different situations: legal matters, fundraising strategies, research, translations, personal assistance to handicapped youth, and other fields);
- Grant schemes and other funding sources should support cooperation between the youth workers and consultants from other fields, as mentioned above (e.g., grants supporting visibility, marketing, and information campaigns of the youth organisations, but also grants covering mentoring of the smaller or less experienced organisations by the larger or more experienced ones in the domain of project management, etc.).

### 3. Support meaningful youth political participation

Participants also concluded in their deliberations that strengthening the area of youth political participation constitutes another **support mechanism** that boosts the emergence of good practices. Participants made a series of concrete recommendations for this.

Cultivating a culture of participation among young people, especially by building and maintaining bridges between young people and policymakers, should be continuously pursued. This can take up a form of memorandum in which young people and policymakers at different levels state what they expect from each other, and even co-create common goals. This and other political participation processes should be supported by publishing and regularly updating resources on meaningful youth political participation, including those aiming at policymakers and elaborating on how to meaningfully work with young people and employ innovative political participation strategies.

Establishing quotas for young people in different representative roles to ensure voices young people from different walks of life are taken into account in decision making that involves them (e.g., employment, education, health care, etc.). Such representatives could form a bridge between local and regional realities, and national and European levels, and they can even form a bridge between the European policy making and regional or local needs. Rural youth should be included in such representation as well as other groups of young people.

Transparency and accountability mechanisms should be employed in all policy areas that involve young people. These can include evaluations, active communication towards youth, clear lines of political responsibility and accountability, and other mechanisms. Transparency and accountability should be applied not only in policy making, but also in implementation of policies, and budgetary allocation processes. Mechanisms allowing young people to participate on budgetary allocations, such as participatory budgeting, should be put in place where feasible (e.g., school level, local level, regional level, etc), and good practices in the political participation domain (and beyond) could be used as policy blueprints, by adapting local initiatives to national level needs, deepening the connection between the national and local levels. Similarly, other existent political participation mechanisms should be used as much as possible (e.g., advisory bodies) to boost transparency and accountability of contemporary policy making. Feedback loops and outcome tracking should be also employed, to ensure political commitments are put into practice, as is the case in Denmark, where youth organisations collect political commitments during election campaigns. Public commitments from the policymakers could become good practice in transparency and accountability domains.

Lastly, physical spaces and venues for intergenerational dialogue and meetings across generations, as well as between youth organisations and policymakers, should become available, especially on the local level.



#### 4. Utilise the potential of formal education

It was identified that both civic and political education in formal schooling need to be strengthened as both constitute **support mechanisms** which enable good practices to occur. While in the domain of civic education, the main topics were on boosting volunteering, inspiring proactivity of young people and their interest in public matters, exploring engagement in and functioning of the non-governmental sector, and introducing and supporting international opportunities (e.g., mobilities, volunteering, etc.), in case of political education, the most important themes were exploring the democratic electoral systems, functions of the elections in democracy, and engagement of young people in various roles in democratic processes.

These changes were suggested through a combination of curriculum changes (e.g., introducing aspects which focus on proactivity, entrepreneurship, creativity, and even exploring the value and processes behind quality journalism, but also elements on boosting knowledge basis of young people in the political domain, etc.), training of teachers, and also innovative in-school educational processes (e.g., school elections, cooperation with NGOs which provide specific civic and political education trainings, etc.), further schooling reforms (e.g., recognizing volunteering as part of school curriculum, allowing young people to volunteer and move forward in their educational pathway at the same time), and even boosting cooperation between schools and other stakeholders (e.g., to ensure there are youth workers in schools so that young people can easily approach them in case of interest in a specific process, such as volunteering or youth mobility).

#### 5. Create interconnected sustainable infrastructure

In this domain, participants identified several aspects of sustainable infrastructure that could help it become as interconnected as possible as a **support mechanism** to enable young people to make sustainable lifestyle choices.

Firstly, public transport should be oriented towards transiting, to enable (young) people not only reach a given destination, but also change lines and types of transport as comfortably as possible. Secondly, bike sharing initiatives (e.g., Rekola in the Czech Republic) should be widespread (e.g., in every city, town, or village, etc.) and supporting other means of transport. bike sharing should be supported financially, and via investments in infrastructure (e.g., bike parking). Thirdly, households should be supported in moving away from their dependence on fossil fuels as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to help this crucial sector become sustainable. In order to do so, national policies should support such transition, and should generally be in line with sustainable goals of the European Union, not hindering changes towards a more sustainable future. Lastly, innovative technologies, such as solar boats, should be used to boost sustainability of transportation wherever possible, as is the case in small solar boats in Portugal.



# Closing Speeches

Speakers:

- **Mr Jaroslav Miller**, Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic
- **Ms. Kristýna Jelínková**, Czech Council of Children and Youth Council
- **Mr. Pap Ndiaye**, Minister of National Education and Youth of France
- **Ms. Désirée Ristorto**, Youth Dialogue Coordinator CNJAEP (French National Youth Council)
- **Ms. Jeanette Gustafsdotter**, Minister for Culture and Democracy, Sweden
- **Mr. Elias Fjellander**, Vice president, LSU (Swedish Youth Council)

**Mr. Jaroslav Miller**, Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic offered his respect and thanks to the hard work of conference participants over the three days. He outlined that progress had been made towards an inclusive and sustainable society. It was important to recognise that development in economics, the environment, culture and public service are all part of this. They are a symbol of human civilization and progress. We face many challenges, such as increasing population, uneven development, climate change, energy, food safety and war. The delegate's active participation speaks of their commitment to resolving this. Mr Miller finished by thanking the conference for embracing the Ukrainian delegation.

**Ms. Kristýna Jelínková** thanked delegates for the amazing work they had undertaken. She noted that it was important, but alarming that we were still hearing once again about the lack of action from policy makers and the need to improve youth political participation. This had been a focus of the previous cycle with Youth Goal #9. EUYD is a unique mechanism where the realities and young people and the realities of ministerial delegates interact. It is a space made for breaking barriers, making compromises and for mutual commitment. Ms. Jelínková called upon delegates to bring the outcomes home and use them to shape the realities of those who they represent.

**Mr. Pap Ndiaye**, Minister of National Education and Youth of France thanked the Czech Presidency for hosting the conference. He noted that the focus on intergenerational dialogue within the event built on work of the French presidency focused on environmental protection. He gave feedback to delegates that through the French Presidency EU Youth ministers adopted a recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers<sup>4</sup> across the European Union and approved conclusions on fostering engagement among young people as actors of change in order to protect the environment<sup>5</sup>.

**Ms. Désirée Ristorto**, Youth Dialogue Coordinator CNJAEP thanked the Czech presidency for their work and highlighted the value of being able to return to face-face conferences. She noted that inclusion and environmental issues are considered as two absolute urgencies by young people. The EU is the perfect place to move forward on these issues. It is important to

<sup>4</sup><https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/media/knvde3ac/council-recommendation-on-the-mobility-of-young-volunteers-across-the-european-union.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/media/zbtgfilj/conclusions-of-the-council-and-the-representatives-of-the-governments-of-the-member-states-meeting-within-the-council-fostering-engagement-among-young-people-as-actors-of-change-in-order-to-protect-the-environme.pdf>

point out that these alarming issues are a consequence of political actions, and so young people need to be properly listened to and taken into account by politics. There are 11 Youth Goals and young people need to see concrete responses to all of them.

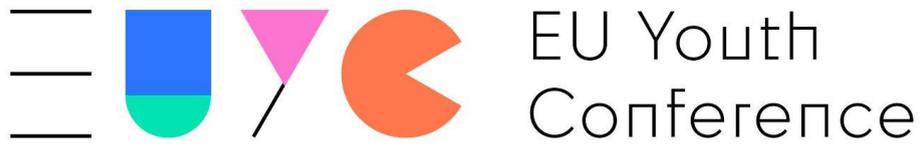
**Ms. Jeanette Gustafsdotter**, Minister for Culture and Democracy, Sweden, highlighted that in these troubling times it is more important than ever to unite and talk about how we can ensure a more peaceful and sustainable future. The EUYD is a unique process we can all be proud of which enables this. Suitable development and social inclusion go hand in hand. We must ensure the inclusion of all young people in society, especially those with fewer opportunities. Thanks to the commitment and efforts of conference delegates, National Governments gain deeper knowledge and broader perspectives about the needs and ideas of young people in Europe. This leads to better policies and decisions for all. She finished by thanking the Czech presidency for their work on the conference.

**Elias Fjellander**, Vice president, LSU, highlighted that the Swedish are looking forward to hosting the EUYD delegates in their coming Presidency. He thanked the French and Czech presidencies for their work on the cycle so far. The upcoming Swedish Presidency will conclude the results from the cycle and develop EUYD further.



# Annexes

## Annex I: Outcomes of the Creative Group – Newspaper



Prague 2050





The year is 2050, Europe has gone through many changes and (hopefully) young people are stronger than ever.

## Editorial

### "How do we solve the problems we are facing here and now?"

asks one of the youth delegates during the opening panel discussion of the EU Youth Conference 2022 in Prague. Over 300 delegates – young people and policymakers – travelled to the Czech Republic, which currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU, to meet and discuss ways to meet the Youth Goals of Sustainable Green Europe and Inclusive Society.

Some delegates stopped by the pop-up EUYC Newsroom to offer their vision of Europe's future. Their goal is to deal with the challenges Europe faces – here and now. The following pages show what they imagine Europe will look like if the ideas presented at this conference are successfully implemented – or not.

Enjoy the creative writing and remember: the year is 2050, Europe has gone through many changes and (hopefully) young people are stronger than ever.

Veronika Vánová



## Rekola Celebrates 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Even though it was a small initiative in the beginning – simply offering reused bicycles – it became a great communal project of the whole Czech society.

The development of the Rekola project was successful thanks to governmental campaigns on sustainable transport and infrastructure, and continual long-term funding by the European Union.

Today, free bike travel is available to every citizen in all the towns of the Czech Republic – thanks to the initial initiative and persistence of Rekola.

Combined with car-free days, Rekola brought us a pleasant and inclusive way of travel and finally helped us build green and clean cities.

Lukáš, photo: rekola.cz

"PRESS<sup>\*)</sup> THE BUTTON"  
- chemical brothers -



\*) PUSH, actually



## Home and Youth Centre in a Single House

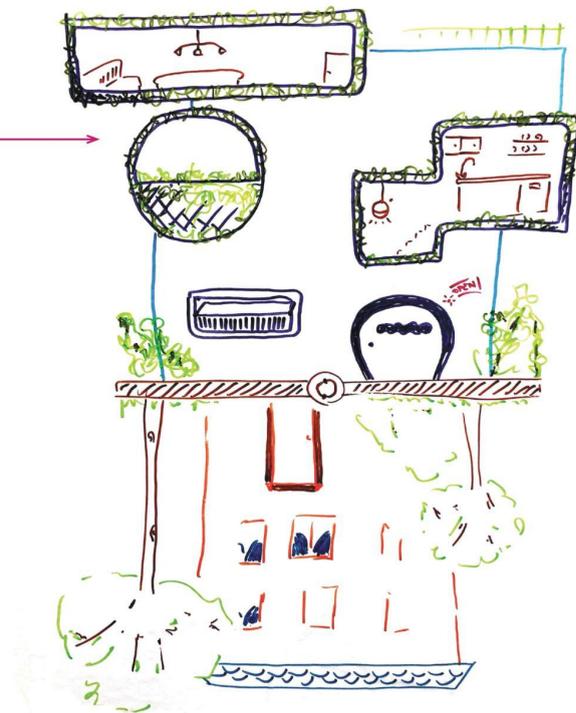
Presenting you with an innovative solution to a long-term problem!

Youth centres, the base of active citizenship and community building, the place where politicians meet with young people and educators to solve problems they face, have no place to exist among unattainable real estate.

**Our solution?** A house that turns upside down with a simple push of a button – and the people inside won't even notice! A family home which is comfortable and livable 24/7, and turns upside down during the opening hours of the youth centre, which makes it easily accessible by all those who seek it! Thanks to our advanced technology gravitation, daylight, fresh air and water are not an issue!

**Purchase now to help out young people in your neighborhood!**

Author of Concept:  
**Steve Hilbert**



Charles Schiltz presents

# CORRUPTION DETECTOR



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**Coming this year, fresh from our innovation hub, the  
detector that detects corruption!**

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## Annex II: Outcomes of the Creative Group – Building a Sustainable City











## **Annex III: Outcomes of the Creative Group – Videos**

To access the videos, please follow the link below:

[https://czdzs-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/roman\\_klepetko\\_dzs\\_cz/EkcB3hgS0\\_RLoeKL3c5TFzUBjzx54dzS6HqvcSCe7pEchQ?e=94zzVb](https://czdzs-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/roman_klepetko_dzs_cz/EkcB3hgS0_RLoeKL3c5TFzUBjzx54dzS6HqvcSCe7pEchQ?e=94zzVb)

## **Annex IV: Message Of His Holiness Pope Francis To The Participants In The EU Youth Conference**

[PRAGUE, 11-13 JULY 2022]

*Dear young people!*

I am very happy to address you who are participating in the European Youth Conference. I would like to tell you something that is very close to my heart. Above all, I invite you to transform the “old continent” into a “new continent”, and this is only possible with you. I know that your generation has some good cards to play: you are attentive young people, less ideologized, accustomed to studying in other European countries, open to volunteering and sensitive to environmental issues. This is why I feel there is hope.

As young Europeans, you have an important mission. If in the past your ancestors went to other continents, not always for noble interests, it is now up to you to present the world with a new face of Europe.

Regarding the origin of the name “Europe”, there are still no certain explanations. Among the various hypotheses, one is particularly suggestive: it goes back to the Greek words *eurús ops*, meaning “wide eye”, evoking the ability to see ahead and beyond. Europa, a mythological figure who made the gods fall in love with her, was called “the wide-eyed maiden”. So I also think of you, young Europeans, as people with a wide, open gaze, capable of looking ahead and beyond.

Perhaps you have heard of the [initiative, launched in September 2019, called the Global Compact on Education](#). It is an alliance between educators around the world to educate the younger generations in fraternity. Seeing, however, how our world is being led by adults and elders, it seems that perhaps you should be the ones to educate adults in fraternity and peaceful coexistence!

Among the first commitments of the Educational Pact is to *listen to children, adolescents and young people*. So dear young people, make your voices heard! If they do not listen to you, shout even louder, make noise; you have every right to have your say on what concerns your future. I encourage you to be enterprising, creative and critical. You know that when a teacher has demanding, critical, attentive students in his class, he or she is stimulated to work harder and prepare better lessons.

In this Compact, there are no “givers” and “takers”, but all of us are called to educate ourselves in communion, as the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire has suggested. So do not be afraid to be demanding. You have a right to receive the best for yourselves just as your educators have the duty to give the best of themselves.

Among the various proposals of the Global Compact on Education, I would like to recall two that I also noted in your Conference.

First, *be open to acceptance*, and hence to the value of *inclusion*. Don't let yourselves be drawn into short-sighted ideologies that want to show others, those who are different from ourselves, as enemies. Others are an asset. The experience of the millions of European students who have taken part in the Erasmus Project testifies to the fact that encounters between people from different peoples help to open eyes, minds and hearts. It is good to have "a broad outlook" in order to be open up to others, and not discriminating against anyone, for any reason. Be in solidarity with everyone, not only with those who look like us, or give off an image of success, but with those who suffer, whatever their nationality or social status. Let us not forget that millions of Europeans in the past have had to emigrate to other continents in search of a future. I myself am the son of Italians who emigrated to Argentina.

The main objective of the Educational Pact is to educate everyone to a more fraternal life, based not on competitiveness but on solidarity. Your greatest aspiration, dear young people, should not be to enter elite educational environments, where only people with lots of money can be accepted. Such institutions often have an interest in maintaining the *status quo*, in training people to ensure that the system works the way it is. Rather, those schools that combine educational quality with service to others should be valued, since the purpose of education is personal growth directed towards the common good. These experiences of solidarity will change the world, not the "exclusive" (and exclusionary) experiences of elite schools. Excellence yes, but for all, not just for some.

I would encourage you to read my Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020) and the *Document on Human Fraternity* (4 February 2019), which I signed together with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. I know that many Muslim universities and schools are reading these texts with interest, and so I hope you too will find them inspiring. Education, then, should have as its goal not only to "know oneself" but also to know others.

The other proposal I would like to mention concerns *care for the common home*.

Here too I was pleased to note that while previous generations talked a lot and concluded little, you on the other hand have been capable of concrete initiatives. That is why I say that this, more than ever, is the right time. If you do not succeed in turning this self-destructive trend around, it will be difficult for others to do so in the future. Don't let yourselves be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved for a small slice of the world. Instead, have that "broad outlook" that can take in all the rest of humanity, which is much bigger than our little continent. May you aspire to a life of dignity and sobriety, without luxury and waste, so that everyone in our world can enjoy a dignified existence. There

is an urgent need to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of so many superfluous things. In certain areas of the world, too, it would be appropriate to consume less meat: this too can help save the environment.

In this regard, it will do you good – if you have not already done so – to read my Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, in which believers and non-believers alike can find solid motivations for committing themselves to an integral ecology. An education, then, aimed not only at knowing oneself and others, but also creation.

Dear young people, while you are holding your Conference, in Ukraine – which is not in the EU, but is Europe – a senseless war is being fought. Added to the numerous conflicts taking place in different regions of the world, it makes the need for an educational pact that educates everyone to fraternity all the more urgent.

The idea of a united Europe arose from a powerful yearning for peace in the wake of the numerous wars fought on this continent, and it led to a seventy-year period of peace. Now we must all commit ourselves to putting an end to this dreadful war, where, as usual, a few powerful people decide and send thousands of young people to fight and die. In cases like this, it is legitimate to rebel!

Someone has said that, if the world were ruled by women, there would not be so many wars, because those who have the mission of giving life cannot make death choices. In a similar vein, I like to think that if the world were ruled by young people, there would not be so many wars. Those who have their whole life ahead of them do not want to ruin it and throw it away, but to live it to the full.

I would like to invite you to get to know the extraordinary figure of a young objector, a young European with “a broad outlook”, who fought against Nazism during the Second World War. His name was Franz Jägerstätter, and he was beatified by [Pope Benedict XVI](#). Franz was a young Austrian who, because of his Catholic faith, made a conscientious objection to the injunction to swear allegiance to Hitler and go to war. As a boy, he was cheerful, likeable and carefree, but as he matured, thanks also to his wife Franziska, with whom he had three children, he changed his life and developed profound convictions. When called to arms, he refused, because he felt it was unjust to kill innocent lives. His decision triggered harsh reactions towards him from his community, the mayor, and even members of his family. A priest tried to dissuade him for the sake of his family. Everyone was against him, except his wife Franziska, who, despite knowing the price to be paid, always stood by her husband and supported him to the end. Despite cajoling and torture, Franz preferred to be killed than to kill. He considered the war totally unjustified. If all the young men called to arms had done as he did, Hitler would not have been able to carry out his diabolical plans. To triumph, evil needs accomplices.

Franz Jägerstätter was executed in the same prison where his contemporary Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a young German Lutheran theologian and anti-Nazi, was also imprisoned and met the same tragic end.

These two young men of “broad outlook” were killed because they remained faithful to the ideals of their faith to the end. Here we can see a fourth dimension of education: alongside knowledge of oneself, of others and of creation, also knowledge of the beginning and end of all things. Dear young Europeans, I invite you to look upwards and beyond, to keep seeking the real meaning of your life, where you come from and where you are going, and the Truth, because we cannot live authentically if we do not seek the Truth. Walk with your feet firmly planted on the earth, but with a broad gaze, open to the horizon, open to the sky. Reading my Apostolic Exhortation *[Christus Vivit](#)*, addressed especially to young people, can help you in this. And I invite all of you to [next year’s World Youth Day in Lisbon](#). There you will be able to share your finest and most beautiful dreams with young people from all over the world.

Let me conclude with a wish. May you be *generative!* Young people capable of generating new ideas, new visions of the world, of the economy, of politics, of social coexistence, but above all of new paths to be travelled together. And may you also be generous in generating new lives, always and only as the fruit of love! The love of husband and wife, the love of family and children, but also love of Europe, so that it can be for everyone a land of peace, freedom and dignity.

Have a good meeting and a good journey! I send you my warm greeting and my blessing. And I ask you, please, to pray for me.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 6 July 2022*

FRANCIS