

OUTCOMES OF THE EU YOUTH CONFERENCE 9-10 OF SEPTEMBER, BUDAPEST

PARTICIPANTS' INPUT ON PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL YOUTH

Young people during the Hungarian EU Youth Conference in September 2024, proposed to make rural and remote areas more vibrant and attractive for young people by:

- **Promoting meaningful rural youth participation**, especially on issues related to environmental sustainability as well as mental and physical health.
- **Fostering supportive rural communities**, challenging prejudice, building accessible intergenerational dialogue, and common spaces as well as strengthening visions for the future.
- **Increasing access to infrastructure**, tailored to the needs of young people, such as internet connectivity, information, transportation, clean energy, as well as physical and mental health services.
- **Raising awareness of alternative employment pathways** such as remote working and innovative farming.

EU, national and local instruments should fit the needs, realities, capacities and resources of young people from rural and remote areas and:

- **Provide support for youth participation within rural development and decision making** for example through youth ambassadors, advisory boards, local youth councils and participatory budgeting.
- **Support rural entrepreneurship including farming** through awareness-raising on existing EU and national programmes, mentorship, promotion of digital transformation and fostering the use of financial incentives such as tax relief or co-funding opportunities.
- **Promote youth-friendly platforms** for accessing information on youth programmes, quality employment opportunities and funding as well as launching an EU-wide campaign to foster equal access to work.
- **Encourage quality learning opportunities and youth initiatives** that widen the experiences of rural youth, such as urban-rural youth exchanges, climate projects, mobile and outreach youth workers, as well as engagement in rural youth organisations.
- **Improving access to services and information** related to mental health through inspiring local action and fostering dialogue on existing funding opportunities and facilities.

PARTICIPANTS' INPUT FOR DEVELOPPING THE EU YOUTH DIALOGUE

WHAT TO KEEP?

The participants of the EU Youth Conference highlighted that over the last 10 cycles, the EUYD has effectively gathered young people's input to inform policy and foster inclusion and diversity by **enabling networking, intersectoral and international collaboration, and exchange of good practices between stakeholders across the EU, as well as within candidate and neighbouring countries**. Its well-established structure with stable funding has enhanced the involvement of young people and youth organisations in policymaking. The evaluation of the EUYD indicates it has been highly effective at reaching young people with fewer opportunities but **should aim to reach more young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)** situations and from rural areas and remote areas to ensure better representation.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT!

The participants of the EU Youth Conference further stressed that the EUYD's impact on Council conclusions is identifiable, but there is a potential to further strengthen it also possibly beyond youth policy. This requires better visibility monitoring, follow-up mechanisms and youth mainstreaming. There is a **need to align dialogue themes with European policy agendas and allow young people to set topics**. Increased dissemination of the EUYD outcomes, clearer feedback, and increased visibility can foster accountability and transparency as well as enhance trust in political decision-making. Better preparation of youth delegates, **continuity across cycles, and stronger engagement between youth delegates and national representatives** could also further improve the EU Youth conferences.

