

Draft recommendations on youth participation in the decision making process from MY EUROPE participants

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Democracy should be encouraged as a system in all (including educational - formal and non formal, civic and social) structured set-up's including set-up's involving primary school age children. The democratic process must encourage dialogue, discussion and the notion of "idea ownership". Above all it should seek to be inclusive and include everyone and should strengthen the consensual culture.

In order to let youngsters participate in local and regional democratic life it is important to start with their educational process (primary school, secondary school, high school) to develop skills like responsibility, involvement and social consciousness. This could be done by creating student councils, supporting participation in student's association and sensibelize them on social issues.

Once we support active participation of children, we should work towards creating participative youth attitude.

This must be further empowered by local and regional authorities in formal and informal way.

- informal way: supporting non-governmental organisations and associations which could provide with different training for youth (or example writing skills and expression skills), cultural events and involving them in the social debate.
- formal way : on local and regional level, youth policy should be included in the priorities. It means that there should be a separate department for youth and budget allocated. The final objective is creating youth formal structure like Youth Council or Parliament at local and regional level. These structures should be involved in the dialogue with authorities and be able to influence local policy.

There are various ways that were discussed and analyzed on how local and regional authorities and youth associations enable youth participation in the decision making process. Most youth don't know what awaits them in life, so they don't have fixed goals and targets to work towards.

Also politics is not part of their world. They don't involve themselves in any meetings or information sessions so they are not interested in what happens around them.

Politics is not talked about in schools and politics should not be only related to party politics, therefore more effort should be made here.

Young people should be more involved because sometimes they come up with very relevant ideas and arguments, if they are challenged in the right ways. When youth come up with ideas, these ideas should be taken seriously and feedback should be given.

Youth need to have access to politics and politicians and help out when needed. Therefore youth should be put in a position to assist a mature and seasoned politician in order for them to learn and gain valuable experience in politics. This way they are given the opportunity to participate in their choice of politics. This should come after information and adequate incentives are given to them. As a good practice, we should encourage the vote at sixteen year's old at local level but accompagny this measure by means, which help political and social education and increasing youth activism in general.



Young politicians should be given more work so that they are more exposed to the real politics and not just politics relevant to their world.