



## Youth Impact Forum - Agenda

 18 September 2025

 Brussels, Belgium

### Concept

Across Europe, young people are calling for stronger roles in shaping the decisions that affect their daily lives. Many cities, regions, and organisations have experimented with innovative forms of youth participation, ranging from youth councils and civic education programmes to participatory budgeting and co-creation workshops. While these experiences have shown promising results, they often remain limited in scope, duration, or are isolated to specific projects. The key challenge ahead is to transform these pilot initiatives into stable, long-term structures that fully integrate young people into policymaking processes at all levels.

The **Youth Impact Forum** offers a platform to advance this discussion. By bringing together youth leaders, local and regional authorities, policymakers, EU institutions, and civil society actors, the Forum will explore how youth participation can evolve from short-term experiments into permanent and institutionalized democratic models, both in the field of local governance and in the context of climate action.

Throughout the Forum, concrete methods and participatory tools that make youth involvement possible in practice will be showcased and discussed. In particular, co-creation sprint formats such as IDEATHONS will be highlighted as effective models for engaging young people directly in identifying solutions alongside decision-makers and local authorities. These participatory approaches offer scalable, replicable methods that can be adapted to different policy areas and levels of governance.

Through interactive sessions, policy dialogues, and working groups, participants will share experiences, debate common challenges, and formulate policy recommendations that can contribute directly to the ongoing European debates on youth participation, democratic governance, and climate action.

### Background

This conversation is gaining strong political momentum across Europe. The recently adopted **EU Youth Strategy 2025–2027 Work Plan** places renewed emphasis on strengthening youth participation across all policy domains and encourages new governance models that embed young

people into decision-making processes. In parallel, the **Council Conclusions on Youth Participation (2024)** calls for municipalities and regions to institutionalize youth councils and permanent participatory bodies, ensuring that young people have a continuous role in shaping public policy. The ongoing **EU Youth Dialogue**, currently led by the Polish-Danish-Cypriot Trio Presidency, is exploring how EU youth policy frameworks can become more connected to young people’s lived realities in their local communities. In addition, discussions are advancing around the possible establishment of an **EU Youth Test**, which would require all new policies to assess their impact on younger generations as part of the policy design process.

At the same time, climate action continues to emerge as a key arena where youth participation is both highly visible and increasingly necessary. The **upcoming EU 2040 Climate Target** will trigger renewed debates on Europe’s level of climate ambition, while the ongoing expansion of the **European Climate Pact** provides additional formal spaces for youth to contribute as climate ambassadors and stakeholders. The Council of Europe’s Recommendation on **Young People and Climate Action (2024)** further underlines that youth participation must be recognized as a democratic right within climate policymaking processes, and the launch of the **EU Youth Climate & Sustainability Platform** later this year will establish a permanent mechanism to bring youth perspectives into European climate governance.

## Draft Agenda

### Morning Plenary (09:00 – 13:00)

#### Youth Participation: From Local Experiments to Systemic Impact

| Time          | Session   |
|---------------|---|
| 09:00 – 09:30 | <b>Opening keynotes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Welcome by the organisers<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Antonella Valmorbida</b>, Secretary-General, ALDA</li><li>• <b>Marta Sys</b>, Co-chair of ALDA's Youth Empowerment &amp; Education Hub, Board member of ALDA, Board member of the Merkury Foundation, Poland</li></ul></li><li>- Key institutional remarks<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>EYP Joey Koops</b>, City Councillor of Emmen (Netherlands) (TBC)</li></ul></li></ul> |
| 09:30 – 10:30 | <b>Panel Dialogue: From Experiments to Systems: The Ideathon Methodology as a Tool for Youth Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interactive discussion with representatives from local authorities, regional networks, youth organisations, and civic participation platforms exploring how youth co-creation tools — including participatory “IDEATHON” — can inform long-term policy design.</li></ul>   |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | <b>Showcasing Co-Creation Methodologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Presentation highlighting the methodology behind structured participatory processes and their potential for replication across Europe.</li></ul>  |

| Time          | Session   |
|---------------|---|
| 10:45 – 11:05 | <b>Youth Voices: Stories That Move</b><br>- Testimonials from young changemakers sharing first-hand experiences with collaborative civic processes.   |
| 11:05 – 11:20 | <b>Coffee Break</b>   |
| 11:20 – 12:05 | <b>Strategic Policy Roundtables</b><br>- Interactive small-group discussions exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth forums &amp; councils</li> <li>• Inclusive participation</li> <li>• Digital participation</li> </ul> |
| 12:05 – 12:30 | <b>Forum Takeaways &amp; Next Steps</b><br>- Roundtable feedback and shared recommendations for advancing youth participation at local and European levels.   |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | <b>Marketplace &amp; Networking Lunch</b><br>- Informal exhibition of youth participation tools and initiatives from across Europe.   |

## Afternoon Policy Dialogue (14:00 – 18:30)

### Youth Participation in Climate Action: Co-Creating the Climate-Youth Agenda

| Time          | Session   |
|---------------|---|
| 14:00 – 14:15 | <b>Welcome &amp; Framing</b><br>- Opening remarks by organisers and institutional representatives.  |
| 14:15 – 14:30 | <b>Youth Climate Toolbox Highlights</b><br>- Presentation of tools and resources designed to enable youth engagement in climate policy dialogue.  |
| 14:30 – 15:30 | <b>Interactive Fishbowl Dialogue</b><br>- Open discussion between youth climate advocates and policymakers exploring systemic opportunities for youth engagement in climate governance.   |
| 15:30 – 15:45 | <b>Coffee Break</b>   |
| 15:45 – 16:45 | <b>Policy Labs: Co-Designing Climate-Youth Pledges</b><br>- Thematic working groups drafting joint policy asks and youth commitments to feed into the broader EU climate policy debate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EYP <b>Ariane Giraneza Birekeraho</b>, City Councillor of Antwerp (Belgium)</li> </ul> |

| Time          | Session   |
|---------------|---|
| 16:45 – 17:15 | <b>Pledge Sheet Adoption &amp; Closing Remarks</b><br>- Presentation and symbolic endorsement of the <i>Brussels Climate-Youth Pledge Sheet</i> . |
| 17:15 – 19:00 | <b>Networking drink</b>   |