

YOUTH IMPACT FORUM AGENDA

Empowered Youth. Vibrant Democracies.



18 September 2025

9:00 am - 18:30 pm

**Maison des Associations
Internationales**

Rue Washington, 40
1050 Brussels, Belgium

Morning session

09:00 - 09:30 Welcome and Opening Keynote Talks

- **Antonella Valmorbida**, Secretary-General, ALDA
- **Marta Sys**, Co-chair of the Youth Empowerment & Education Hub, ALDA
- **Tine Radinja**, Tine Radinja (Mayor, Škofja Loka; Member, CoR) and Rapporteur on youth and intergenerational fairness

09:30 - 10:30 Panel dialogue: Consultation to Co-Decision

This panel will explore how various actors from all over Europe explore youth participation, and how to transform local and international experiments into time-tested systems.

- **Peter Mc Nelis**, AER Youth Regional Network
- **David Mekkaoui**, CEO, All Digital
- **Dorothea Letsai**, Ghent Youth Council Member
- **Sebastian Lindt**, PO for Youth Participation and Democracy at the EYF

10:30 - 10:45 Showcasing Co-Creation Methodologies

Presentation highlighting the methodology behind structured participatory processes and their potential for replication across Europe.

10:45 - 11:05 Youth Voices: Stories That Move

Testimonials from young changemakers sharing first-hand experiences with collaborative civic processes.

11:05 - 11:20 **Coffee break**



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11:20 - 12:05 Strategic Policy Roundtables

Participants will have the opportunity to exchange, reflect, and debate on participative tools for young people during three parallel roundtables, moderated by our experts, followed by a short restitution of the debates.

- **Engage with the European Institutions** (Ana Valiente, European Parliament's Youth Outreach Unit)
- **Participation for All** (Peter Mc Nelis, Chair "Youth Participation & Governance", AER Youth Regional Network)
- **Digital Tools for Youth Participation** (David Mekkaoui, CEO, All Digital)

12:05 - 12:30 Forum Takeaways & Next Steps

Roundtable feedback and shared recommendations for advancing youth participation at local and European levels.

12:30 - 14:00 **Lunch break & Marketplace**



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Afternoon session

14:00 - 14:20 Welcome & Framing

Welcome & Framing

Opening remarks by organisers and institutional representatives. With
Ariane Giraneza Birekeraho (YEP, City Councillor Antwerp)

14:20 - 15:00 Panel – Youth Climate Leadership: From Local Action to EU Impact

Moderated panel discussion with:

- **Sara Arslanagic**, YEP, Deputy Chair of the Municipality Council of Centar Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Emilia Dams**, Co-President, Ghent Youth Council
- **Michaela Karamperi**, Co-President, Generation Climate Europe

15:00 - 15:20 Youth Climate Toolbox Highlights

Presentation of tools and resources to enable youth engagement in climate policy dialogue.

15:20 - 15:35 **Coffee break**

15:40– 16:55 Interactive Fishbowl Dialogue

Open exchange between youth climate advocates and policymakers exploring systemic opportunities for youth engagement in climate governance.



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17:00 - 17:40 Policy Labs: Co-Designing Climate -Youth Pledges

Presentation and symbolic endorsement of the *Brussels Climate-Youth Pledge Sheet*.

17:40 - 18:00 Presentation of the results and closing

18:00 - 19:00 Networking drinks



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For ALDA members

14:00- 14:45 Welcome and presentations of ALDA's work with Youth

Participants will discover the activities, team members, projects, and objectives of ALDA's Youth Empowerment and Education Hub.

14:45 - 15:30 Discussion: Youth Empowerment and Education in Practice

Local actors will present best practices for youth engagement at the local level.

- **Marta Sys**, Board Member, Merkury Foundation
- **Torcato Ferreira**, Head of Division for Education, Social action, Sports, Valongo municipality
- **Marta Daniela Costa**, Head of the Youth Division, Valongo municipality
- **YEP Damir Solak**, Assembly Member, City District Brno-Centre
- Moderated by **Matilde Ferrari**, Project manager, ALDA

15:30 - 15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45 - 16:45 A look at Europe: The EU's youth policy and priorities

16:45 - 17:30 Workshop: Shaping the Political Strategy and Action Plan of the Hub

Participants will debate the political priorities for the Youth Empowerment and Education Hub

17:30 - 18:30 **Networking drinks**



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Our speakers



Antonella Valmorbida

Antonella has led ALDA, the European Association for Local Democracy, since 1999. With over three decades of promoting the role and power of local democracy to ensure resilience and prosperity, Antonella is uniquely placed to open the day's discussions. Her keynote will connect youth participation issues to current European and world-wide democracy challenges.

Marta Sys

A long-time board member of Poland's Merkury Foundation, one of ALDA's Youth Hub co-chair organisations, Marta has organised four editions of the Lower Silesia Youth Forum and five regional Citizens' Congresses. Her long-standing experience of working with and for young people shows her commitment to youth participation. She will open the day by presenting ALDA's role in advocating for youth participation.



David Mekkaoui

As CEO of All Digital, David leads a 100-member network addressing Europe's digital skills gap. A TEDx speaker on tech optimism, he will share why digital inclusion is essential for youth-led climate action.



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Damir Solak

Elected to the Brno-Centre municipal assembly in 2022 and pursuing a PhD in Financial Law while serving in the European Students' Union expert pool, Damir merges academic rigour with hands-on governance. His participation will show how students and young people can shape local policy.



Peter Mc Nelis

Recently elected Chair of the AER Youth Regional Network's thematic committee on Youth Participation & Governance, Peter has been lobbying Irish parliamentarians to raise youth-work funding ahead of the country's budget for 2026. Peter will map concrete pathways for local authorities to move from consultation to co-decision, ensuring Forum participants leave with solutions applicable to their own territories.



Matilde Ferrari

Matilde is a Project Manager in the Youth Empowerment and Education Hub at ALDA. She has experience managing diverse projects that use art, debate, non-formal education, and other methodologies to promote youth engagement. She also collaborated in providing training opportunities for those who work with young people.

Matilde will moderate the panel discussion with ALDA members on Youth Empowerment and Education in Practice.



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Marta Daniela Silva Costa

Marta Daniela Costa is a psychologist and head of the Youth Division of the Municipality of Valongo. Throughout her career, she has worked with young people in various contexts, both in the private and public sectors, ranging from youth associations and educational and training establishments to the municipality. She has experience in individual and group intervention, with community intervention being her greatest passion.

Torcato Ferreira

Director of Youth, Sport, Education & Social Intervention, of the municipality of Valongo (Portugal), Torcato is an advocate of institutionalising youth charters in municipal governance. Torcato will demonstrate how cities can systematically empower young people as co-creators of local policy.



Alexandre Météreau

Alexandre took over the Youth Empowerment and Education hub of ALDA as the organisation emphasised greater engagement with local and European policymakers. Alexandre will present how the Youth Hub grew to become a center for youth advocacy and its next steps.



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Ariane Giraneza Birekeraho

Ariane is a councillor in Antwerp focusing on climate, animal welfare and equal-opportunities portfolios, and member of the 2024-25 cohort of Young Elected Politicians (YEP) programme of the European Committee of the Regions. She is one of the youngest councillors of migrant background in Belgium.

Michaela Karamperi

Michaela co-leads Generation Climate Europe (GCE), the EU's largest youth-climate coalition, now gathering 381 national organisations across 46 countries and advocating for climate justice. At the Youth Impact Forum, Michaela will anchor the afternoon discussion on translating youth pledges into measurable EU-level legislative hooks.



Tine Radinja

Rapporteur on youth and intergenerational fairness, Mayor of the Municipality of Škofja Loka since 2018, and speaker representative of the Committee of the Regions. Has worked as an Advisor and Consultant to several (non) governmental organizations on how to improve their internal structures, communications or go through difficult situations.



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Dorothea Letsai

Dorothea Letsai is 18 years old and has been part of the Ghent Youth Council for two years. She has strong experience in youth participation through both her high school student council and the Youth Council. She was closely involved in the Big Debate project, becoming one of the Big Debate ambassadors. As a youth representative, she posed questions to national politicians and EU Commissioner Schinas during the plenary debate attended by 800 youngsters.

Emilia Dams

Emilia is 22 years old and has been part of the Ghent Youth Council for more than two years. She was recently elected as co-president of the Youth Council. Emilia has strong leadership qualities and is deeply involved in youth participation and climate action. Climate being a central theme, during her studies in social work she focused on climate-related topics, and she will soon start working at the Green Office of Ghent University.



Sebastian Lindt

Sebastian is Policy Officer for Youth Participation and Democracy at the European Youth Forum, a network of over 100 youth organisations in Europe. His work is mostly focused on the EU Youth Dialogue, the largest European youth participation mechanism. He also works on safeguarding the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ as programmes that deliver for all young people.



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Street Art Museum Amsterdam



**European Committee
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