

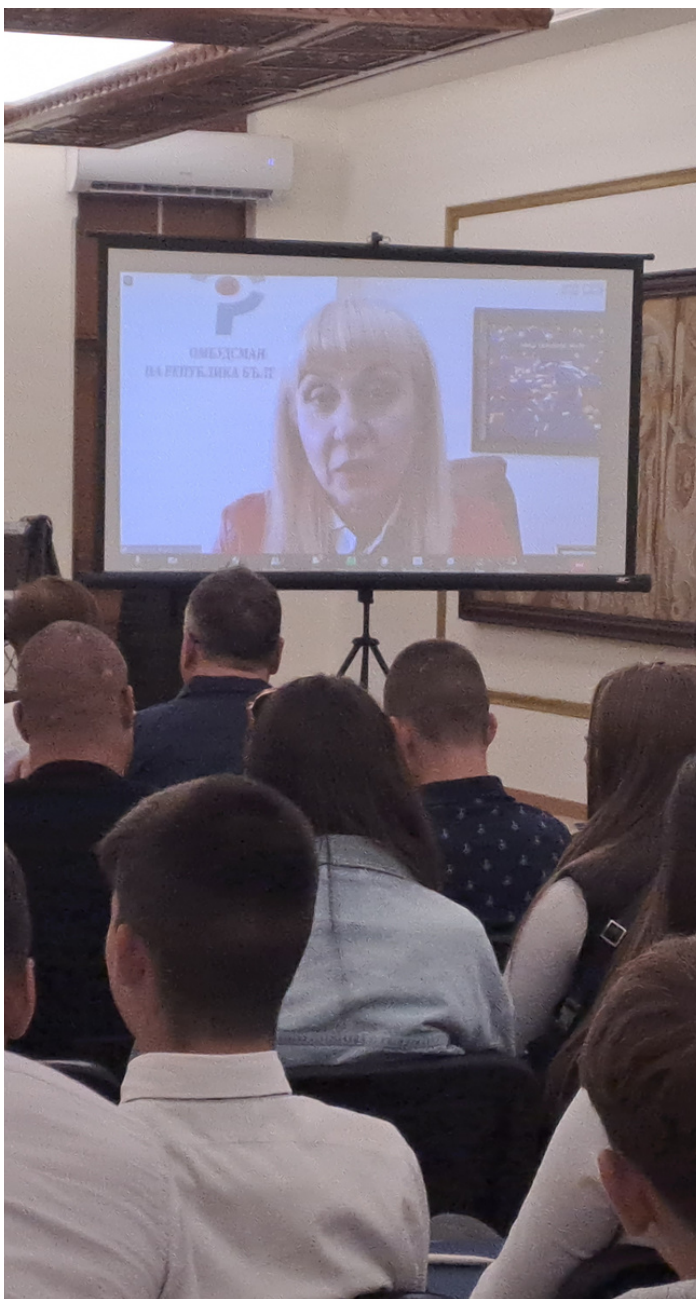


Recommendations ON THE ROLE OF THE CITIZENS FOR STRONGER EUROPE

“Have your say in EU –
challenges of democracy and future of debate in European Union” project



Co-funded by
the European Union



THE INTERNATIONAL EVENT “VALUES CONNECT EUROPEANS”

was the final event within the project “Have your Say”, funded under CERV programme of the EC, and it gathered citizens of 5 EU countries to share and explore their views on the EU recent developments and crucial issues almost 10 months before

the coming EP Elections in June 2024. The participants who met in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria (4 – 7 October, 2023) discussed, drafted and adopted on a E-Paper with recommendations on the role of the citizens for stronger Europe.

THE GENERAL AIM OF THE “HAVE YOUR SAY IN EU – CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY AND FUTURE OF DEBATE IN EUROPEAN UNION” PROJECT

is to create a common space for citizens from different European countries to empower their civic participation, to discuss and work together by confronting views and experience on currently engaging and crucial issues for Europeans.

The project focus on the challenges of democracy, especially tackling upon the future of democratic debate in times of digital revolution and deepening polarization, confronting disinformation, reviewing the real and possible impact of EU policies and bringing closer the values defining European community. Mutual understanding of the fears and expectations of people from different regions of Europe will allow to find a common ground and define values which are still worth to stand for. The project aims at strengthening a cross-border exchange about European challenges by raising understanding for each-others opinions, fostering a culture of debate and constructive criticism, and developing digital media skills.

The project will lead participants from the recognition of common problems and challenges, through critical approach towards the new technologies of communications, effective acting by means of such instruments of democratic society as open debates, info campaigns, public assemblies, e-democracy tools. The Project partners, among them NGOs and public entity, will have a chance to go beyond national narratives and elaborate jointly a constructive discussions. Such transnational, European cooperation on the people-to-people basis can create a positive message of the mutual respect across all political and national boundaries.

The project involved 372 citizens directly from 11 EU member states, allowing them to meaningfully relate European policies to their social life and reality, and aims to stimulate an informed public debate about benefits and challenges in major EU policy fields and its future.

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VISIT THE PROJECT WEBSITE

<https://schuman.pl/have-your-say-in-eu/>

RECOMMENDATIONS



encourage youth participation by better promotion of youth policies and learning opportunities in the implementation of EU Youth Strategy and reaching the 11 youth goals at European, national and local level;



even the awareness about Erasmus+ and exchange programs is high, many students can't afford it because the living standards in the different member states differs essentially. EU should work on increasing the scholarships for students with economic obstacles in order to guarantee equal access of all;



online learning platforms, which are becoming more popular after COVID-19 are a great way of learning; however some students won't be able to afford them, so they should be cheaper at least for those with less financial resources or specific state policies might be introduced in that aspect;



PROGRAMM
16:00
LGBTQ - Rights
in Tunisia
20:00
Whimsical Vibes:
LGBTQ - Rights
COME IN





some concerns related to Erasmus+ are related with the differences in the educational systems and curriculums. More students will be able to be involved in exchange programmes, if the educational systems are similar and the Universities treat the transfer of credits equally. Now under Erasmus+ each University decides how to treat the transfer of credits that stops the student from participation in the exchange. Therefore the EU should create not only a common educational system, which will make student exchanges easier but also equal treatment of the transfer of credits;



the EU should invest in improvement of the educational quality – encourage interactive educational/learning methods and engage the young people to use their free time wisely; provide adequate equipment and support to local youth territories; motivate and obliges the teachers/trainers to develop extracurricular activities for their students; motivate teachers to work in smaller out-of-town areas, so that all students receive equal education. Even each member state has some steps in that direction, efforts are needed in the direction of prioritizing the local!







initiate real citizenship education in schools/universities – theoretically students receive some basic knowledge on citizenship, but in practice many of them are unaware of their rights and obligations as citizens; the EU should work in the direction of compulsory citizenship education and define a common teaching method for European citizenship; this kind of education should start from early age; parents could be also involved by the school representatives. Civil education should leave the classrooms and the University halls and must become interactive and modern meeting the youth participation;



improve communication and cooperation at local level (between the local government and schools/higher educational institutions and private businesses) by encouraging development of local consortiums and giving them access to EU programs (CERV is a good example of such approach);



create a legal regulation about volunteering (e.g. as there is no such regulation in Bulgaria);





the percentage of youth unemployment is also very high – most of the employers want the youth to have had some experience and practice, so it is quite a challenge to find a job just after you graduate – the government could promote and encourage trainings for students in their sphere of education and even for internships;



better local level promotion of educational programmes not only for students, but for teachers as well – this promotion should be responsibility of the government at all levels, of NGOs, which work in that sphere and also of the active teachers;



better communication - create more opportunities for communication at all levels. The Z-generation is not communicating, COVID-19 also put a damage on the mental development of the young people, so at all levels communication has to be priority;







initiate at the level of the government language and IT courses for teachers and lectures with the goal to easier the communication among the different institutions in different member states;



decrease the percentage of early school leaving by encouraging the students and engaging them to participate in self constructive extracurricular activities;



develop and implement educational programs and environment of encouraging tolerance towards immigrants; however, work towards illegal immigrants' employment







educate the citizens to think green and to initiate green initiatives –to preserve our planet and our health we should take this issue into consideration and try to solve it in our daily life by being reasonable citizens, who care for the wellbeing of the whole population, not only for theirs



euro skepticism is also a crescent issue, which could be dealt with by promoting citizenship dialogue and raising the political and voting culture of the young generations;



increase the free wi-fi spots in public places. Specially being abroad sometimes it causes problems of Europeans.



Project

"HAVE YOUR SAY IN EU - CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY AND FUTURE OF DEBATE IN EUROPEAN UNION"



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