



EXPLANATORY NOTE

8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue

Trio Presidency Germany-Portugal-Slovenia

To the attention of National Working Groups and International Youth Organisations¹

1. Rationale and background

The EU Youth Dialogue (EU-YD) is the European participatory process which, through cycles of 18 months over a priority topic, supports the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and ensures the involvement of young people in the decision-making process in the field of youth in Europe through an articulated dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

The 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue will run from 1st of July 2020 to 31st December 2021 under the Trio Presidency of Germany - Portugal - Slovenia. Building on the experience of previous cycles and setting the path for the following ones, this cycle aims at:

¹ Due to the COVID-19 situation the points outlined in the document might be subject to change. The National Working Groups and International Youth Organisations will be informed in due time about the changes, if any.

- Strengthening the EU Youth Dialogue as a space for meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of youth-related policies;
- Contributing to the mainstreaming and multi-level and cross-sectoral implementation of the European Youth Goals which were developed by young people during the 6th cycle of the Structured Dialogue; increasing the visibility of the Youth Goals
- Fostering multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation from local to European level in order to make the process more inclusive, visible and sustainable so that its outcomes can encapsulate the expectations of all young people living in Europe.

2. Topic and context

The topic of the 8th cycle is Youth Goal #9 “Space and Participation for All” under the title “Europe for YOUTH - YOUTH for Europe: Space for Democracy and Participation”. Throughout this process, we will look for concrete recommendations on how to implement this Youth Goal at the European, national, regional and local levels. During the implementation phase of the cycle, these recommendations will be put into practice.

Democracy, pluralism and active citizenship are fundamental values of the European Union. They include the values of freedom of expression and tolerance² and aim for the inclusion of all European citizens. But democracy is not to be taken for granted and needs to be preserved and fostered constantly, especially in challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Young people’s active and critical citizenship, their sense of initiative and creative power are essential for a vibrant European democracy. Youth organisations, cultures and youth movements have a formative influence on political and societal developments as we can see, for example, through their demand for climate action.

In order to make this positive contribution, young people need spaces where they can practice day-to-day democratic principles (such as openness, acceptance of other people’s opinions, critical thinking, recognition of diversity, negotiation of solution, reflection of own experiences), can develop a sense of self-efficacy, act on their own initiative and co-create all aspects of their life (i.e. family, leisure time, education, employment and entrepreneurship, environment, health, culture, mobility, digital sphere, politics, society).

² Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, article 2,
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9e8d52e1-2c70-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0006.01/DOC_2&format=PDF

At the same time, it is imperative to translate this engagement in alternative spaces into meaningful influence in decision and policy making since there are still barriers hindering young people from fully participating. Thus, and taking stock of the EU Youth Dialogue as a space for participation, we believe that it should have a leading role in tackling these challenges and set the path for others to follow.

Having the targets of the Youth Goal #9 as the guiding framework, this Cycle will focus on improving mechanisms for youth participation and creating (new) spaces for young people's participation in all areas of society. We want to build on the outcomes of previous cycles and strengthen the political process that the EU Youth Dialogue is.

During this cycle, we will focus on Youth Goal #9, its seven targets and the topics and demands being communicated by young people when discussing "Space and Participation for all". More information on the Youth Goal #9 and its seven targets can be found in the Annex I to this document.

3. Principles of the cycle

The 8th cycle is not primarily about high numbers of participants or the constant repetition of demands: it is about the changes that are needed to improve the lives of young people in Europe.

The 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue is based on the following principles:

- Bringing young people and youth organisations into the core of the planning, implementation and follow-up of the cycle and all regarding activities. The EU Youth Dialogue is a youth-led process. National Youth Councils shall be leading stakeholders in the National Working Groups.
- Ensuring a meaningful cooperation between the three involved EU Presidencies and its respective National Youth Councils, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission.
- Making the European Youth Goals more visible, measurable, accountable and feedbackable.
- Clearly focusing on qualitative participation formats in the methodology.
- Ensuring that participants have the required knowledge, bringing relevant decision-makers to take part in the dialogue.
- Making the EU Youth Conferences a more meaningful part of the process.
- Creating Spaces of dialogue at eye level, where all people feel comfortable and secure to work together and to create more "Spaces and Participation for all".
- Organising all events related to the EU Youth Dialogue in the most sustainable way possible, considering environmental, social and economical dimensions of sustainability.

4. Overview of the process

For 18 months, three Presidencies and in two phases, under the framework “Europe for YOUth - YOUth for Europe: Space for Democracy and Participation”, the 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue focuses on European Youth Goal #9 “Space and Participation for all”. In a coherent participation process, young people and political decision-makers in the EU discuss topics important to young people and implement dialogue results. This is how Youth Goals become Youth Actions.

Phase 1: The Dialogue. Before kicking off the dialogue activities, the first phase starts with the theme of the Cycle being explored by the NWGs and INGYOs and preparations for the qualitative consultations are undergoing. Rather flexibly, taking national timeframes and realities into account, NWGs decide autonomously when to move into the qualitative consultation process starting the dialogue activities where young people and political decision-makers discuss how the European Youth Goal #9 can be put into practice on local, regional, national and European levels. A roundtable between INGYOs and the EU institutional stakeholders takes place during the dialogue phase. It aims to gather insights into how to ensure youth participation in the EU decision-making processes.

The 1st EU Youth Conference in Germany is integrated into the dialogue phase as the major European level consultation event. There the EU youth delegates discuss how the European Youth Goal #9 can be realised mainly focusing on the European level. In addition to this, an online survey is carried out, prepared by the European Steering Group, taking input from the EU Youth Conference in Germany. There, too, young people can express their opinions and demands, which will be incorporated in the process. Possibilities to find links between the EU Youth Dialogue process and other EU wide consultation mechanisms like Flash Eurobarometer and the Conference on the Future of Europe will be explored.

Phase 2: The Implementation. At the 2nd EU Youth Conference in Portugal, the results of the qualitative consultation process and already available data from the online survey will be compiled and discussed in different formats. Concrete measures of implementation and political demands at all levels will be the outcome. The next step is the implementation of the dialogue results at European level and in the EU Member States. The dialogue phase’s outcomes are ideas and plans on how to realise Youth Goal #9 and its targets. By implementing the outcomes of the qualitative consultation process, Youth Goal #9 is turned into Youth Actions. After the EU Youth Conference in Portugal NWGs and INGYOs make the transition from the phase of dialogue into the phase of implementation, using the results of the conference as inputs and starting points but also reflecting on their local, regional, national and European realities. Wherever an implementation process has begun, this is

displayed online³. This way, more people can see the impact of the EU Youth Dialogue. The implementation will be carried out by all relevant actors. A second roundtable between INGYOs and institutional stakeholders takes place during this phase in order to further develop ideas that were created during the qualitative consultation phase.

The 3rd EU Youth Conference in Slovenia concludes the phase of implementation by looking at and evaluating the whole EU Youth Dialogue process. Gathering all results and findings of the 8th cycle, accomplishments as well as political demands will be formulated looking at what is still missing in order to create a European Union with “Space and Participation for all”.

More detailed description of the process of the 8th EU Youth Dialogue cycle can be found in Annex II and Annex III to this document.

5. Process and implementation process

5.1. Expected outcomes

The 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue focuses on effective youth participation. Therefore, a focus will be on the implementation of consultation and dialogue results and bringing about positive change. It’s all about putting Youth Goal #9 into practice, meaning: **Youth Goals become Youth Actions.**

The implementation of the Youth Goal #9 will be reflected as results of the 8th cycle in different areas and on various levels:

1. Realising the European Youth Goals: In the 8th cycle of the EU-YD, 18 months are devoted to the practical implementation of Youth Goal #9. The process is primarily concerned with finding, testing and implementing solutions developed in a dialogue between young people and political decision-makers. In this way "spaces and participation for all" can be created through effective youth participation.

2. Inputting in the work of the Council of the EU: The outcomes of the 8th cycle of the EU-YD will be summarised in a resolution to be adopted by the Council of the Youth Ministers under the Slovenian Presidency in autumn 2021. During the ongoing process of the cycle, results will also feed into two Council Conclusions planned by the German and the Portuguese Presidency on topics related to the cycle’s priority. In this way, processes can be initiated at political level in the EU.

3. Political demands and changes: Concrete political demands, deriving from the 8th cycle, will be directed at political decision-makers in both the EU and

³ More information on this will be sent to the National Working Groups and International Youth Organisations at the later stage.

the Member States. The dialogue will bring about positive change by influencing political decision-making.

4. Securing results: By making the results of dialogues and implementation processes in the Member States visible, the influence of the EU Youth Dialogue and of young people's voices becomes visible and transparent throughout the EU. The Annex III to this document provides an overview of the main actors and actions leading to this.

5.2. Role of different stakeholders

Young people play the most important role in the 8th cycle of EU-YD. Their demands and concerns, their ideas and opinions are discussed in dialogues with the relevant political decision-makers at local, regional, national and European level. Common solutions will be developed and changes will be initiated.

The **European Steering Group (ESG)** governs the process on the EU level by e.g. providing the overall guidance of the EU-YD; providing input, tools and support for the EU-YD implementation where appropriate and ensuring wide dissemination of the EU-YD results. Its detailed functions are outlined in the Council Resolution on the Governance of the EU Youth Dialogue (2019; Romanian Presidency). It consists of Trio Presidencies' teams (Ministry representatives, National Youth Council representatives), the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. Other actors that the European Steering Group identifies can be involved in the work of the European Steering Group as guests (e.g. Youth Researchers and Erasmus+ National Agencies).

The **National Working Groups (NWGs)** have an important role to play. They put the implementation of the Youth Goal #9 into their national context and develop strategies and approaches on how the ideas and demands of young people can actually be implemented. The aim is to bring the EU-YD to relevant political decision-makers and connect it with the right processes, to make the EU-YD a meaningful instrument of participation throughout the whole EU. As the EU Youth Dialogue is a youth driven process, the National Youth Councils should be leading stakeholders in the National Working Groups.

International Non-governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs) have an important role in bringing diverse European perspectives to the policy dialogue. They are ensuring quality input on the transnational dimension of the Youth Goal #9 and provide perspectives of young people from a wide geographical reach through the following activities: dissemination and active engagement with the European online survey, contribution to making the EU-YD visible on the European level and the collection of ideas on how to realise the Youth Goal #9 through roundtables with the EU institutional stakeholders. When possible the results of these roundtables together with the results of national consultations could also inform the preparation of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council ministers' meeting. Youth delegates from INGYOs will also take part in each of the conferences. The INGYOs interested

to take part in this process will be selected on the basis of a call launched by the European Youth Forum on behalf of the European Steering Group.

European Facilitator: EU Youth Conferences are supported by an experienced European facilitator. The European facilitator is selected by the European Steering Group and its role is to ensure that there is continuity and coherence between different EU Youth Conferences throughout the 8th cycle. This European facilitator will be working on designing and implementing the methodology for the EU Youth Conferences together with national facilitators and organisers from each Presidency country. The facilitator can also moderate the EU Youth Conferences if such need is identified.

5.3. EU Youth Conferences

The EU Youth Conferences play a major role in the 8th cycle. They are the moment when ideas and demands are gathered at European level, good practices and advice are exchanged, results of consultations are collected and concrete political demands are formulated. The contents of the three EU Youth Conferences build on each other. In their sequence they describe an effective youth participation process.

The **first EU Youth Conference** in Germany is an integral part of the qualitative consultation phase bringing young people from across Europe to discuss how the Youth Goal #9 should be implemented on the European level. It is a European level EU-YD event organised in parallel to ongoing NWGs and INGYOs activities and not depending on them. Its results form the basis of the EU-wide online survey and feed into the overall results of the qualitative consultation phase.

The **second EU Youth Conference** in Portugal will focus on the results of the qualitative consultation phase. What solutions were developed in dialogues? What are European ideas, what is going well, which demands can be further advanced together? Then it is time to move on to the implementation phase of the results from the dialogues = Youth Goals become Youth Actions.

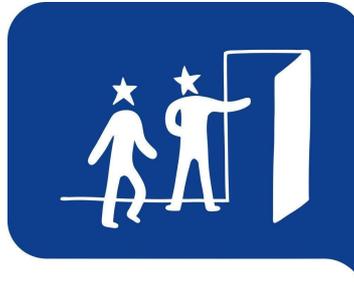
The **third EU Youth Conference** in Slovenia is about looking at the whole cycle and the first results of the implementation phase. What has worked, where are (first) changes visible? What intermediate results did the 8th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue have and what is still missing in order to create “Spaces and Participation for all”?

The overall results of the EU Youth Conferences:

1. form the basis of the online consultation process of the 8th cycle, (see: Overview of process);
2. feed into the documents of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council;

3. are put forward as political demands to decision-makers both in the EU and in the Member States in the form of Youth Actions, on how to implement the European Youth Goals.

Annex I: Youth Goal #9 SPACE AND PARTICIPATION FOR ALL⁴



Background: *Young people are underrepresented in decision-making processes which affect them although their engagement is crucial to democracy. They need access to physical spaces in their communities to support their personal, cultural and political development.*

Goal: Strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.

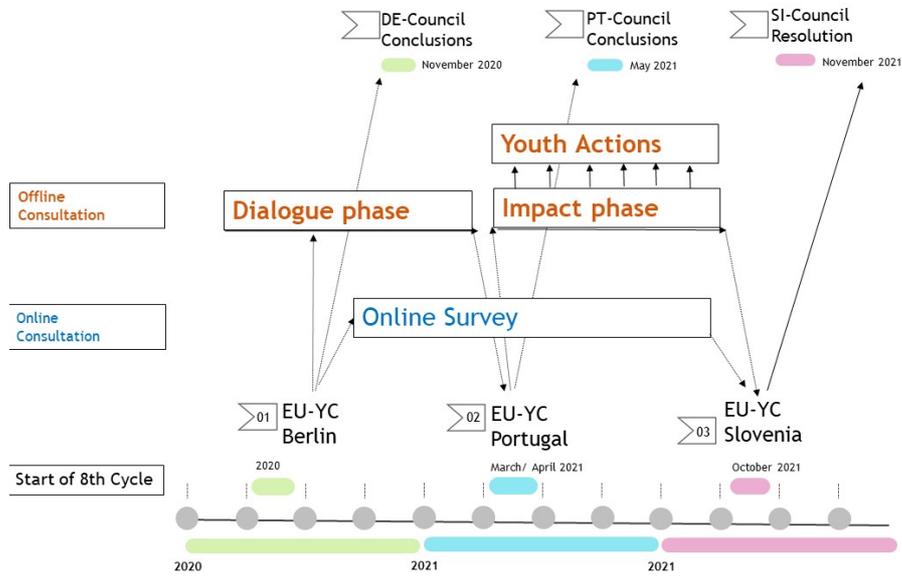
Targets

- Ensure young people can adequately influence all areas of society and all parts of the decision-making processes, from agenda setting to implementation, monitoring and evaluation through youth-friendly and accessible mechanisms and structures, ensuring that policies respond to the needs of young people.
- Ensure equal access to everyday decision making for all young people from different backgrounds.
- Increase youth participation and thus equal representation in the electoral process as well as in elected bodies and other decision-making organs at all levels of society.
- Provide youth-led physical facilities and infrastructures called youth spaces defined by being autonomous, open and safe, accessible to all, offering professional support for development and ensuring opportunities for youth participation.
- Ensure safe virtual youth spaces are accessible to every young person which provide access to information and services as well as ensure opportunities for youth participation.
- Ensure sustainable funding, common recognition and development of quality youth work in order to strengthen youth organisations and their role in inclusion, participation and non-formal education.

⁴ Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, Annex 3, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2018. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2018:456:FULL&from=EN>

- Provide youth-friendly, relevant, comprehensive information, also developed by and with young people, in order to enable youth participation.

Annex II



Annex III

Presidency	Month	Actions and Milestones		
German Presidency	July	Start of German Presidency	European Steering Group (ESG) prepares the Consultation Tools Pack. Questions focus on how to realise Youth Goal #9 and its targets	Webinar at the end of July (TBC) for NWGs and INGyOs on the Consultation Tools Pack July-December INGyOs 1st roundtable
	August		<p>Qualitative consultation/activities period is kicked off. (Run by National Working Groups (NWGs))</p> <p>August to December: Qualitative consultations are running. Outcomes are reported in an online tool throughout the consultation period</p>	
	September			
	October	EU Youth Conference (EUYC) on how to achieve targets of the Youth Goal #9 focused on the European level	Post-Conference: European Steering Group (ESG) provides a follow up to the outcomes of the EUYC, preparing the online survey. Outcomes of the EUYC to influence the content of the online survey and feed into the German Council Conclusions	
	November	End November: German Council Conclusions at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council		Post-Conference: Online Survey is launched at the end of November (developed and run by the ESG) until the end of March
	December	End of German Presidency		

Portuguese Presidency	January	Start of Portuguese Presidency	Finalisation of the reporting by NWGs and submission of the roundtable results by INGYOs at mid January	
	February			
	March	Mid Presidency (TBC) : EU Youth Conference	Findings of the qualitative consultations including the INGYOs roundtable and the outcomes of the EUYC feed into the Portuguese Council Conclusions	
	April		April-August: Impact phase. Implementation of the measures/actions developed during the Dialogue phase. Implementation activities are run by the NWGs and the 2nd roundtable of INGYOs takes place	
	May	Portuguese Council Conclusions at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council		
	June	End of Portuguese Presidency		
Slovenian Presidency	July	Start of Slovenian Presidency		
	August			
	September		September: Analysis of the results of the impact phase	
	October	October: EU Youth Conference (EUYC).	Results from the qualitative consultation's impact phase and from the online survey to	

		<p>Outcome: Youth Actions</p> <p>These answer to the question: What kinds of measures are needed on local, regional, national and European level, to put the Youth Goal #9 into action?</p>	<p>contribute to the EUYC discussions and be showcased on all levels as outcomes of the EU-YD</p> <p>Results from the qualitative consultations, the online survey as well as the discussions during the Portuguese EUYC shape the Council Resolution</p>	
	November	<p>Slovenian Council Resolution on the outcomes of the 8th cycle of EU-YD at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council</p>		
	December	<p>End of Slovenian Presidency</p>		