



Webinar

Making a Difference Through Electoral Participation: Youth Engagement in the European Parliament Elections

Tuesday, 16 April 2024 at 16:00 – 17:15 (CET)

Background

The European Parliament elections are a critical moment in the democratic processes of the European Union, yet historically, young people have been underrepresented in these elections. Despite making up [17% of the EU population](#), the voice of youth (15-29 year olds) remains significantly marginalized in EU political decision-making processes.

The 2019 elections marked a shift as youth participation contributed to the first rise in voter turnout since 1994. Despite an observable increase in political activism among young people, with involvement in associations, demonstrations, and digital advocacy, there still persists a sense of disconnect between the EU decision-makers and the youth demographic.

Notwithstanding initiatives like the [European Year of Youth in 2022](#) and their active participation in the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), the representation of young individuals in the European Parliament remains disproportionately low. There are only two MEPs under the age of 30 in the outgoing legislature, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced youth representation. Younger MEPs can serve as advocates, effectively articulating the concerns and aspirations of their generation. By bringing youth-centric issues to the forefront of the political agenda, they can inspire greater engagement and involvement among young individuals.

Various solutions are pursued to dismantle barriers for youth participation and representation in the EU Member States. These include lowering the voting and candidate age, implementing youth quotas, facilitating online or postal voting, and integrating civic education into school curricula. However, also informal barriers that discourage young people from engaging in politics, including information gaps and the perceived lack of impact of electoral engagement on the functioning of the European Union, need to be recognised and tackled, in particular to reach also young people outside formal employment, education or training.

Objective

Encourage various forms of youth participation in the 6-9 June European Parliament elections by providing an overview of opportunities and requirements, offering solutions to formal and informal barriers, pointing to a variety of youth-tailored information resources, and demonstrating the impact of electoral engagement on national and EU-level decision-making.

Impact

- Enhanced awareness and knowledge of suffrage rights and of how to overcome possible barriers to exercising them;
- Greater awareness and use of a variety of available national and EU-level information resources on how to exercise voting rights, how to make informed electoral decisions and on other opportunities of political engagement;
- Increased engagement in electoral conduct as polling staff, party agents or observers.

Agenda

16:00 – 16:10 **Welcome and introduction - [Election-Watch.EU](https://election-watch.eu)**

16:10 – 16:20 **Setting the scene - “All the difference you can make when you use your vote”**

- Rareș Voicu, Board Member of the European Youth Forum ([EYF](https://eyf.eu))

16:20 – 16:30: **Questions and Answers**

16:30 – 16:50: **Showcasing engagement options for a young generation of voters**

- Ana Valiente (Youth Outreach Unit European Parliament): How to engage young voters
- Hendrik Nahr (Head of European Affairs, [Make.org](https://make.org) & Co-Coordinator of [EurHope](https://eurhope.eu)): European political parties’ positions exploration tool
- Veronika Hincova Frankovska (Project Manager at Demagog.SK): Youth debunking election-related disinformation
- SEEEDS / Election-Watch.EU Videos and Q&A

16:50 – 17:10 **Questions and Answers**

17:10 – 17:15 **Conclusions and Closing Remarks**

Moderators: Michael Lidauer & Tatyana Hilscher-Bogussevich, [Election-Watch.EU](https://election-watch.eu)



Baseline:

- How many young and first-time voters are there in the EU?
- What are existing barriers for their political participation?
- What are tools to enhance young voters' interest and knowledge to participate?

Focus:

- Information portals and helplines for young voters
- Infographics and easy to read/disseminate voter information materials
- How to reach those who are not informed and do not have an interest in politics

Questions to discuss:

- Why is it important to vote in the EP elections?
- What is the impact of your vote?
- How can you hold your party/candidate/MEP accountable?
- Apart from voting and standing, what are other ways of getting involved in the elections?

Q&A: Zoom Q&A function, advance consultation for questions

Webinar Registration: Please register and submit your questions through this [link](#).