

Position Paper

Strengthening the EU Youth Strategy and the EU Youth Dialogue

A step forward for European Youth

Executive Summary

With the current EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 coming to a close, the next 2028 EU Youth Strategy must move from ambition to delivery - ensuring that youth participation, mainstreaming and support translate into real impact on young people's lives. This paper sets out how to achieve this through a stronger strategic framework, clearer governance of participation mechanisms, and a more effective EU Youth Dialogue.

In summary, we believe there is a need to incorporate and implement the following recommendations in the new EU Youth Strategy 2028-2035:

A Strategy that recognises young people as actors, not just beneficiaries.

- Add "Support" as an additional pillar to the existing structure of Engage, Connect and Empower;
- Define youth organisations and National Youth Councils to officially recognise them as essential actors in the youth sector;
- Directly include the European Youth Goals in the core text of the EU Youth Strategy and align each Youth Goal with its respective Directorate-General;
- Regularly monitor and revise the European Youth Goals alongside the revision of the EU Youth Strategy;
- Include a definition of youth work in the "Empower" pillar of the Youth Strategy, recognising its importance for young people.

A system that embeds youth across all policy areas and ensures meaningful participation.

- Have a dedicated chapter on the EU Youth Test as a core feature of youth mainstreaming;
- Advance and strengthen the role and standing of the EU Youth Coordinator and the EU Youth Correspondents Network;
- Evaluate and prioritise the various youth participation mechanisms currently in place on

the European level and define the most effective ones in the EU Youth Strategy alongside clear objectives.

A delivery that is funded and ensures real impact in young people's lives.

- Explain how the objectives of the Erasmus+ programme complement the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and the youth sector as a whole;
- Set up a comprehensive platform of youth-specific data at EU level;
- Continue the collection of more age-disaggregated data, including through the [Youth Progress Index](#).

As the main institutional participation mechanism for young people to shape policy at EU level, the EU Youth Dialogue deserves its own focus in this paper. We recommend the following measures to mainstream youth participation and strengthen the Dialogue as a whole:

A structure that creates spaces for young people to be heard and involved.

- Revise the structure of the EU Youth Dialogue to include a longer consultation phase and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the Youth Conferences;
- Put a stronger focus on the implementation of recommendations by directly sharing Conference and Dialogue recommendations with all relevant stakeholders;
- Give National Youth Councils and National Working Groups the tools to present the national consultation reports directly to the relevant national ministries;
- Invite relevant Commissioners and Ministers to the EU Youth Conferences to create greater overlap of policy areas.

A Dialogue that is youth-led and looks beyond the EU.

- Directly install National Youth Councils as coordinators of National Working Groups and direct beneficiaries of EUYD grants;
- Provide clear guidelines on the monitoring and follow-up of the EU Youth Dialogue;
- Establish National Working Groups in the EU candidate countries and potential candidate countries with dedicated funding to actively promote the enlargement process and prepare youth civil society for EU membership;
- Create a European Working Group, consisting of INGYOs, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Youth Forum;
- Provide dedicated funding for INGYOs to contribute to the EUYD;
- Give an expert youth delegate role to INGYO delegates during Youth Conferences.

Introduction

The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 served as a great tool to mainstream young people in decision-making and to bring youth to the European agenda. Since the publication of the last Strategy, the European Union organised the European Year of Youth (2022) which gave a renewed focus to youth as well as introducing new youth participation mechanisms, such as the President's Youth Advisory Board and the Youth Stakeholder Group. The Strategy served as a reference point for building and aligning national youth policy strategies and strengthened the visibility of evidence-based policy making. Yet, young people are in challenging situations all across Europe as one in four young people is at risk of poverty or social exclusion and only 34% of young people are feeling that their opinions are sufficiently considered in EU policymaking. The new EU Youth Strategy needs to address these problems to make sure that the **Strategy moves on from a Strategy only for youth policy towards a Strategy that also improves young people's lives.**

One core feature of the current EU Youth Strategy is the EU Youth Dialogue, Europe's largest youth participation mechanism. Having existed since 2010 as the Structured Dialogue, it ensured the inclusion of young people in decision-making processes for years. Currently running across 18-month cycles, in which young people's voices are collected on a specific thematic priority, the EU Youth Dialogue creates a crucial opportunity for young people to participate in and shape European policymaking.

This Position Paper¹ outlines key recommendations for the next EU Youth Strategy for youth mainstreaming and youth participation across all policy fields, including:

1. Strengthening the EU Youth Strategy with a fourth pillar on *Support*;
2. Elevating youth mainstreaming mechanisms in the EU;
3. Updating and strengthening the European Youth Goals;

¹ This Position Paper was drafted by the European Youth Forum, based on a series of consultations with its Member Organisations.

4. Structuring the EU youth participation mechanisms;
5. Promoting the role of youth work;
6. Better connect the EU Youth Programmes with the EU Youth Strategy;
7. Collecting youth data more effectively.

The second half of this Position Paper dives deeper into the EU's main institutional youth participation tool, the EU Youth Dialogue, including:

1. Changing the structure of EU Youth Dialogue cycles;
2. Strengthening the implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue;
3. Advancing National Working Groups;
4. Creating EU Youth Dialogue infrastructures for non-EU countries;
5. Elevating the role of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations.

Young people's vision for the next EU Youth Strategy

1. Strengthening the EU Youth Strategy with a fourth pillar on Support

The current pillar structure of *Engage, Connect, Empower* has proven to be very successful and well used by youth organisations and should be continued in the next EU Youth Strategy. The Engage pillar outlines the importance of youth participation, the Connect pillar focuses on exchanges, intercultural cooperation and solidarity, and the Empower pillar promotes for young people to take an active role in their lives. However, this structure is currently lacking a way to provide systemic support and guidance for young people. In the context of shrinking civic spaces for young people, it is crucial for identifying different ways of structural, financial and individual support and setting out guidelines on how youth organisations can be strengthened and further assisted in their work on promoting youth rights across Europe.

We therefore need:

- **A fourth pillar ("Support") on practical support mechanisms** for young people and youth organisations.
- **A definition of youth organisations² and National Youth Councils³** in the newly established fourth pillar on Support to enshrine the principle of democratic, independent and youth-led organisations.

2. Elevating youth mainstreaming mechanisms in the EU

Youth mainstreaming is a fundamental pillar of advancing young people's rights. It operates by including them in all thematic areas of policymaking that are relevant to young people, instead of focusing only on policies that explicitly include "youth" in

2 As per the European Youth Forum definition: "youth organisations are organisations (associations, clubs or movements) that are set up to serve young people, led by young people and are democratic, non-governmental and not-for-profit".

3 As per the President von der Leyen's Youth Advisory Board: "National Youth Councils are independent, representative and youth-led bodies that have been set up in all Member States. [...] Typically functioning as umbrella organisations, National Youth Councils bring together a broad spectrum of youth organisations and local and regional councils, as well as individual young people. They ensure that the diversity of needs and interests of young people, and the challenge they face, are effectively represented, making them essential contributors to inclusive discussions on youth policies."

their title. We need to improve institutional youth mainstreaming to create a Youth Strategy that really promotes the rights and needs of young people, instead of limiting itself to youth policies.

In January 2024, the European Commission announced that an 'EU Youth Check' would be set up to ensure that young people's needs are included in the legislative process. The publication of the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy further highlighted the Youth Check as a key tool for youth mainstreaming, but the Youth Check still lacks institutional recognition.

Moreover, the current EU Youth Strategy introduced an EU Youth Coordinator for the first time - a position to mainstream and champion young people across different work areas of the European Commission. Together with the EC Youth Correspondents Network, these roles function as exchange possibilities for focal points on youth issues across the different DGs, as policies for young people expand beyond the realm of DG EAC into the entire European Commission. Nonetheless, the EU Youth Coordinator and the EU Youth Correspondents Network are not reaching their full potential.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Include a chapter on the EU Youth Check in the EU Youth Strategy.** This chapter should define exactly how each of the pillars of the model should be carried out.⁴ The five pillars encompass the assessment of the relevancy of any proposal to youth, a consultation with young people, an impact analysis, the implementation of mitigation measures if a negative impact is identified and the publication of the results of the youth checks.
- **Strengthen the role of the EU Youth Coordinator.** The position needs to be the contact point for any youth policies within the European Commission and connect different DGs on mainstreaming youth. The role should be similar to the children's rights coordinator or the SME Envoy, reporting directly to the President or Commissioner responsible for youth, and having high political impact outside the youth sector.

- The EC Youth Correspondents Network should be further explored and targeted. **We expect every relevant DG to appoint their correspondent and actively promote the youth angle in their Directorate-General.**

3. Updating and strengthening the European Youth Goals

The European Youth Goals have proven to be a tangible addition to the EU Youth Strategy, providing direction and concrete planning possibilities for Member States, EU institutions and other relevant actors all over Europe. The Youth Goals can serve the creation of clear reference points and tangible objectives that play an essential role in highlighting topics that are important to young people, as their use is not always clearly defined at the moment. To maintain their relevance and to accurately reflect the ever-changing realities of young people, it is essential that the Youth Goals continue to be used and updated regularly.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Elevate the European Youth Goals to a visible and prominent position** in the EU Youth Strategy.
- **Align each Youth Goal horizontally with the Directorate-Generals** of the European Commission to directly anchor them within European policymaking. Each DG would be responsible for the implementation of the youth goal in their work area and integrate specific targets into their annual work programmes.
- **Conduct a regular review of the Youth Goals**, connected to the review of the EU Youth Strategy. This should include an analysis of national and European activities in relation to the different Youth Goals measuring the progress and developments in each of the different areas.

4. Structuring the EU youth participation mechanisms

The EU Youth Strategy sets out to empower young people by increasing youth participation. In recent years, this topic has gained attention and we have

⁴ As per the European Youth Forum's Guiding Framework for Practical Implementation <https://www.youthforum.org/policy-library/eu-youth-test-a-guiding-framework-for-practical-implementation>

seen various youth participation mechanisms emerging at the European level. These include President von der Leyen’s Youth Advisory Board, the Youth Stakeholders Group, the Commissioner Policy Dialogues with young people as well as the long-running EU Youth Dialogue.

The revision of the EU Youth Strategy allows for an evaluation and prioritisation of these youth participation mechanisms to further manifest their role in promoting young people’s involvement in European policymaking. We need an analysis of which youth participation mechanism reaches young people best and identify the strengths of these mechanisms. This would strengthen their political relevance and visibility as well as increase their direct impact on policymaking. At the same time, mechanisms that are less relevant for meaningful youth participation should be changed, adapted or removed.

We therefore recommend the following:

- The next EU Youth Strategy should include a **clear overview of the various youth participation mechanisms, including a definition of what the role and objectives of each mechanism are** as outlined in the table below.

Mechanisms	Current role & objectives	Proposed vision
President’s Youth Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a sounding board to advise President von der Leyen on issues relevant to young people. • Bring youth perspectives to the highest political level. 	<p>Clearly define the mandate of the PYAB in the EU Youth Strategy, detailing its advisory role.</p> <p>Guarantee for members of the PYAB to have a formal role in proposing agenda items for the meetings, ensuring the Board and meetings are youth-driven.</p> <p>Introduce dedicated slots for International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations based on the thematic focus of each meeting.</p> <p>Create formal and more concrete links with the EU Youth Dialogue. EUYD outcomes should inform the PYAB discussions, and the PYAB recommendations should feed into the EUYD cycles. This would anchor the PYAB’s legitimacy within the broader participation ecosystem and increase the impact of the EUYD.</p>

<p>Commissioner Policy Dialogues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable dialogue spaces which provide direct conversations between Commissioners and young people across Europe. • Ensure that youth perspectives inform policies across all portfolios. 	<p>Create a common minimum and harmonised standard for the selection process, format of the dialogues, and follow-up of the Youth Policy Dialogues (YPDs). Selection should happen in cooperation with the European Youth Forum.</p> <p>Select at least half of the participants for the YPDs from the Youth Stakeholder Group (YSG) in collaboration with the European Youth Forum, ensuring that young people entering the dialogue are representative, organised and familiar with EU policy processes.</p> <p>Structure each YPD as a sustained engagement rather than a one-off meeting, comprising at minimum a briefing phase, two to three dialogue sessions, and a documented follow-up. This would give young people the time and space to engage meaningfully with the policy process.</p> <p>Explicitly link each YPD to a specific policy initiative or legislative process within the Commissioner's portfolio so that young people's input have a concrete and tangible impact on policy outcomes.</p>
<p>Youth Stakeholders Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the EU Youth Strategy and facilitating consultations on forthcoming EU policy initiatives. • Supporting the Commission's youth check process and being a key vehicle for the 2025–2026 listening process feeding into the post-2027 EU Youth Strategy. 	<p>Define the role of the EU Youth Coordinator as chair of the YSG more explicitly to give the group direction, coherence and impact. To ensure that the group is youth-led, the European Youth Forum should function as co-chair.</p> <p>Create a space in which the YSG can oversee the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, for its stakeholders to have a structured space to monitor progress.</p> <p>Convene targeted consultations in the YSG at moments where input is needed and can still make an impact.</p> <p>Utilise the YSG as a formal pool of participants for the youth check process and the Youth Policy Dialogues. The representativeness and expertise built within the group can be actively channelled into the other participation mechanisms.</p> <p>Link the YSG more clearly to the EUYD, by systematically presenting EUYD outcomes to the YSG.</p>

5. Promoting the role of youth work

Youth work plays an essential role in the empowerment of young people to actively shape their lives and futures. Youth work holds the potential to enable young people to participate fully and meaningfully in society. Its role must be strengthened in the revision of the EU Youth Strategy.

At the moment, youth work remains underrecognised, especially in regard to its essential role in promoting civic engagement and democratic values. It needs to have a stronger section that recognises the added value of youth work within the *Empower* pillar. This definition needs to include a focus on the youth-led nature of youth work alongside its strong basis in non-formal education.

Youth work has to have a more cross-cutting focus in the strategy to ensure its prominent role in young people's lives. Moreover, the Strategy should include setting quality standards for youth work that are created in conjunction with youth organisations and young people.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Define youth work⁵ and its benefits in the Strategy** to showcase the empowering factor youth work has on young people.

6. Better connect the EU Youth Programmes with the EU Youth Strategy

The current Strategy stresses the importance of 'Mobilising EU programmes and funds' effectively and invites 'Member States to explore synergies between funding sources at EU, national, regional and local levels'. To adequately mainstream young people's interests, the Strategy should include concrete focus not only on the explicit youth programmes, but highlight all EU funding programmes and instruments that are relevant for young people as tools for youth mainstreaming. These include, among others, Global Europe (including DEAR), Agora EU, Horizon Europe,

European Social Fund Plus. Sufficient financial support and clearer guidelines for young people are essential in making sure that young people can participate in projects and training activities.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Include a concrete focus on all EU funding programmes and instruments relevant for young people as tools for youth mainstreaming.** This should fall under the new *Support* pillar of the Strategy to safeguard financial stability for youth organisations.
- **Directly link the priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme in the youth sector to the EU Youth Strategy and reflect the Strategies' objectives therein,** in particular regarding active citizenship and solidarity and high quality youth work. This would allow for a two-way symbiosis, in which the EU Youth Strategy positively influences the programmes and vice versa, allowing for a stronger focus on youth in all EU policies.

7. Collecting youth data more effectively

The current Strategy acknowledges the role of evidence-based policymaking and therefore the need to collect age-disaggregated data. Data gaps and difficulties accessing youth-relevant data represent a concrete obstacle to identifying current problems and charting a path forward. The data available at the European level (Eurostat) is not sufficient and does not enable one to get an accurate description of young people's lives. This is further challenged by the lack of disaggregated data and age range inconsistencies between instruments. This poses a real challenge to identifying the problems young people face in Europe. The Youth Strategy should chart the way to fill in the data gaps in many policy fields (e.g. environmental protection, climate change, peace and security, humanitarian action, fighting discrimination, and youth participation) and address the lack of age-disaggregated data.

5 "youth work is a practice rooted in non-formal education and community engagement that supports, educates, and empowers young people outside formal education systems. It provides spaces and opportunities for young people to develop skills, exercise active citizenship, and shape their own lives - socially, culturally, and politically" - based on [European Youth Forum Position Paper on Youth Work](#)

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Set up a comprehensive platform on youth-specific data** at the EU level to further collect and present youth-relevant data. This tool would aim to prevent data fragmentation and enhance data accessibility.
- **Further reference and use the Youth Progress Index at all levels of policymaking** to measure the reality of young people's lives.

Young people's vision for the EU Youth Dialogue

The EU Youth Dialogue - as the biggest institutional youth participatory process in Europe - is an important part of the current Strategy. So far, several hundred thousands of young people have participated in the Dialogue, bringing young people closer to EU decision-making. By creating a structured, ongoing space for dialogue between young people, organisations, and policymakers, it aims to bridge the generational gap and make EU decision-making more inclusive and democratic.

The next Youth Strategy must systematically strengthen and improve the EU Youth Dialogue. Making sure that the EU Youth Dialogue reaches young people from all backgrounds and better connects them with national and European policymaking is essential for its success and for young people's trust in the European Union.

1. Changing the structure of EU Youth Dialogue cycles

One crucial element of the EUYD process are the EU Youth Conferences, that directly bring youth delegates and ministerial representatives, as well as other high-level political decision-makers together to discuss and shape policy solutions. Nonetheless, the purpose of the Youth Conferences is not always clearly defined, with uncertainties existing in regard to the objectives of each conference, which leads to a lack of coherence across the different Youth Conferences and cycles. We expect better continuity throughout the entirety of the EU Youth Dialogue, with clear thematic red threads that are being followed and defined purposes of each conference within the cycle.

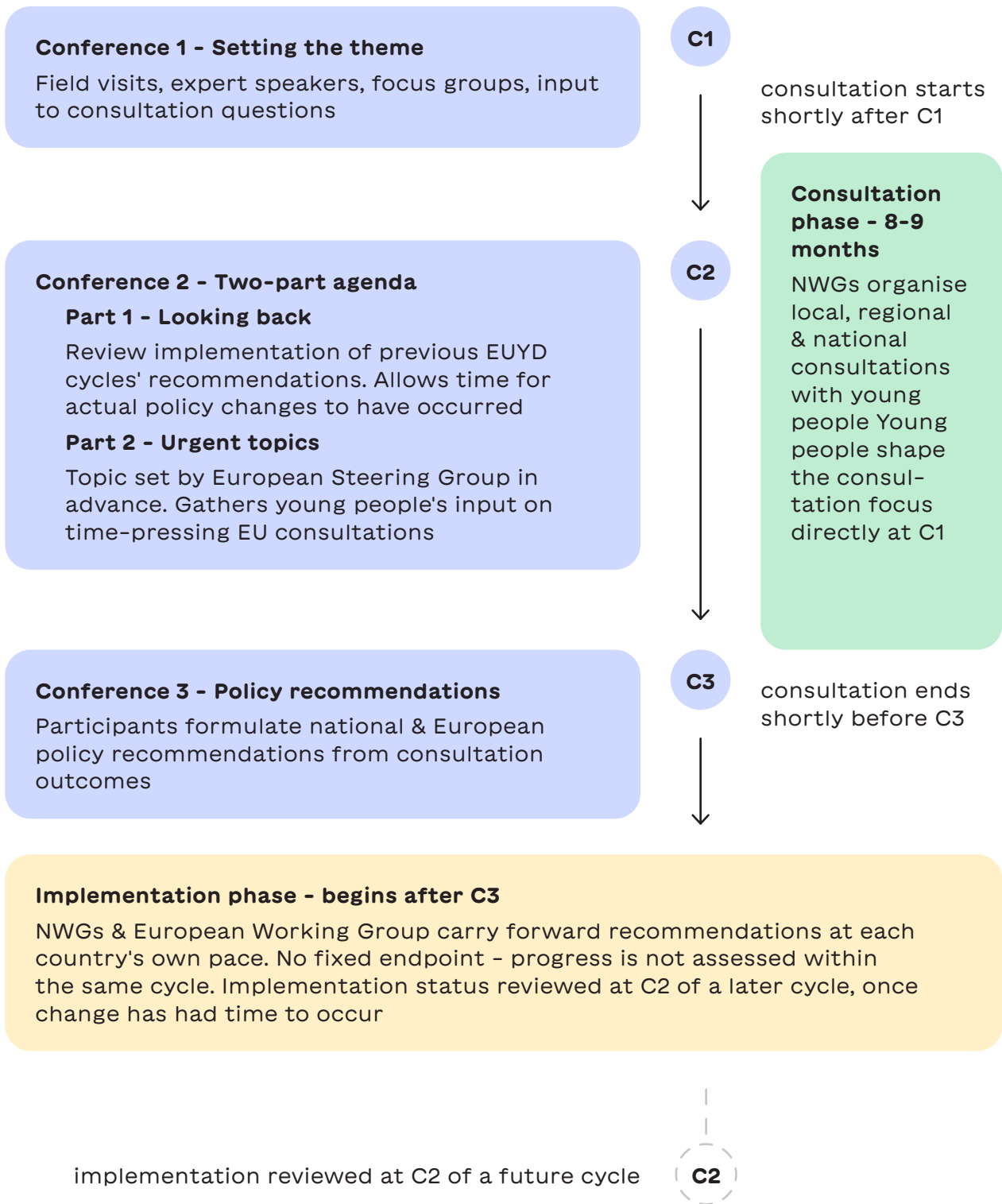
The current structure of the EUYD is lacking a concrete design and place for each conference and remains vague in its objectives. The lack of clarity in terms of conference objectives has been criticised from various stakeholders, along with the inability to adapt to current needs, as the current structure takes a lot of time.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Change the structure of the EUYD cycle.** Our proposal includes an exploration of the specific

topic during the first conference and policy recommendations to be developed during the third conference. The second conference could then have a more flexible role and be used to discuss both current issues as well as addressing implementation from previous cycles.

The graphic below showcases our vision for the EUYD structure.



More precisely, the **first conference should focus on setting the theme of the cycle**. Instead of producing their own recommendations, the conference should focus on informing the participants for the consultation and the later conferences. This could happen via field visits to organisations working on the thematic area, inviting experts and concrete focus groups that outline the thematic priority. Based on these thematic explorations, the participants should provide input to the consultation questions, outlining what the concrete focus of the consultation should be.

The consultation phase would then start shortly after the first conference, allowing for more preparation time for National Working Groups (NWGs) to organise and plan their activities for the consultation phase. To organise meaningful consultations on a local, regional and national level, we are suggesting **the consultation phase to last 8-9 months, starting after the first conference until shortly before the third conference**. That way, NWGs can prepare their activities while also having the time to do various consultations and explore the thematic areas with young people. More than that, at the first conference, young people can have a direct impact on deciding the needs for the consultation phase.

The consultation phase should also last beyond the second conference, which is why the second conference should not focus on the consultation or other specific outcomes of the current EUYD cycle. Instead, **we envision the second conference to serve two purposes**. The first half of the conference should take a **look back at previous cycles and their recommendations to review the implementation more meaningfully**. As meaningful implementation needs more time than a few months between conferences, this approach would allow for a clearer, better overview of actual policy changes driven forward by the EUYD.

The **second part of the conference can then discuss current and emerging issues** that otherwise could not be addressed as part of the EU Youth Dialogue. While one of the strengths of the EUYD is its in-depth gathering of young people's perspectives through the consultation phase, it is sometimes lacking the ability to respond to urgent topics and discussions. For this reason, the second part of the conference should be used to create a space to gather young people's input for time-pressing consultations. The topic of this consultation should be decided by the European Steering Group and communicated to the participants well in advance, in order for them to be able to prepare well for the conference.

During the third conference, participants should formulate concrete policy recommendations for the national and European levels. These recommendations would be based on the outcomes of the prolonged consultation phase and would be able to reflect even better the needs of young people across Europe. The results from the implementation phase would not be shared within the respective cycle, but take place later, when policy recommendations actually had sufficient time to be implemented. Implementation will still continue to take place within the National Working Groups and the European Working Group, but rather at each country's own speed, with status updates taking place at later conferences, and not during the same cycle.

2. Strengthening the implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue

Continuous follow-up and regular monitoring of EU Youth Dialogue outcomes and recommendations is at the moment one of the biggest challenges for the Dialogue as a whole. We need clear mechanisms and guidelines that transform the Dialogue into a mechanism that is not stopping after one conference, but creates policy change in the longer term.

The revised EU Youth Strategy should give a bigger role to the implementation of the results of the process - including ensuring that the outcomes are picked up in relevant Commission DGs and national ministries. This mainstreaming of the outcomes should be a commitment set out and further elaborated in the Strategy, as should plans to strengthen the visibility and therefore outreach of the Dialogue. That way, greater overlap between policy areas would be created with EUYD recommendations feeding more directly into all forms of policymaking and mainstreaming the outcomes of the Dialogue to a wider audience. Moreover, the data gathered during the EUYD consultations is an essential tool for making policies more connected to young people, and increasing the legitimacy and accountability of the Dialogue.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Present and discuss the outcomes of the consultation phase directly to national governments** and the relevant ministries. The EU Youth Dialogue provides in-depth overviews of the opinions of young people in the EU Member States and should further inform national and European decision-making.
- **Directly share Conference and Dialogue recommendations with all relevant stakeholders**, including the European institutions, alongside national governments and civil society actors. This sharing should not be limited to the youth sector, but expand the horizon of the Dialogue across committees, DGs and ministries, depending on the thematic priorities of each cycle.
- **Commissioners and Ministers responsible for the different thematic focus areas of each**

Dialogue cycle should attend the conferences and actively take part in the process.

- **Create clear guidelines for the follow-up of EU Youth Conferences and the EU Youth Dialogue as a whole.** Part of that should be a regular report that showcases the implementation of EUYD recommendations on national and European level.

3. Advancing National Working Groups

Strong National Working Groups are the backbone of a successful EU Youth Dialogue across the European Union. Consisting of all relevant actors at national level that are working with young people and on the thematic priority of the cycle, they are responsible for the planning and execution of the EU Youth Dialogue at national level. In these coalitions of National Youth Councils, youth ministries, national agencies and other civil society organisations, NWGs are working in very close relation to the youth sector and are able to reflect young people's realities in each member state. The direct cooperation between National Youth Councils as national youth umbrella organisations and the respective ministries allows for a stronger legitimacy of the process and better accountability and follow-up. Normally, National Youth Councils serve as coordinators of the National Working Group, as outlined in the [Council Resolution on the Governance of the EU Youth Dialogue](#).

In order for them to properly plan and execute their activities, NWGs are provided EU Youth Dialogue Grants as an important source of funding. This financial support is needed to successfully carry out all the activities of the EU Youth Dialogue, such as the organisation of national consultations and the follow-up and implementation of Dialogue outcomes. It is essential for these activities to be organised and implemented in a youth-led way, in which National Youth Councils are not dependent on their ministries' nomination to become coordinator of the National Working Group but instead are directly selected as per their role as per membership in the European Youth Forum.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Recognise National Youth Councils directly as coordinators of the National Working Groups**

to maintain the youth-led nature of the Dialogue and prevent short-term governmental changes from impacting the quality of the EUYD delivery.

- **Establish National Youth Councils as direct beneficiaries of the EU Youth Dialogue grants**, safeguarding the role of young people in the Dialogue and helping to overcome slow administrative processes in the Member States.

4. Creating EU Youth Dialogue infrastructures for non-EU countries

At the moment, EU candidate countries and potential candidates do not have a designated role and standing in the EU Youth Dialogue. As these countries are on their path to joining the EU, young people should have the possibility to shape their shared future now. The EU already runs successful actions and projects with youth organisations in the region, such as those run by DG ENEST, and these should be consolidated with the EU Youth Dialogue. Establishing EU candidate National Working Groups would increase the legitimacy of the overall Dialogue and support the EU's enlargement process by already creating spaces and structures for young people currently still outside of the EU. As NWGs cannot be successful without resources, the allocation of sufficient funding, for example via the Global Europe programme, is crucial for them to meaningfully support the Dialogue and organise consultation and implementation activities on their level.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Establish National Working Groups in EU candidate countries and potential candidates**, guaranteeing sufficient funding to support the Dialogue and organise consultation and implementation activities on national level.

5. Elevating the role of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations

The role of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs) needs to be improved. INGYOs are representing different fields of youth work and bringing European perspectives to the EU

Youth Dialogue, yet their contribution is not clearly defined and they do not get dedicated funding for their activities.

INGYOs have strong networks of member organisations all over Europe that can significantly advance the overall standing of the EUYD outcomes by reaching more young people in diverse situations. Due to their European nature, INGYOs often have strong ties to policymakers and can therefore contribute to the implementation of the EUYD, especially on the European level. More than that, they can bring a pan-European perspective to the discussions due to their European-wide membership and experiences. Similarly, as many INGYO's work towards one specific thematic focus, these organisations have certain in-depth knowledge that other youth organisations cannot provide to the same extent.

We therefore recommend the following:

- **Create a European Working Group**, consisting of INGYOs, the European Youth Forum, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The EWG should produce a European report to the consultation phase, oversee implementation and follow-up of the recommendations at European level and increase the overall impact of the EUYD.
- **Include INGYOS as expert youth delegates during EU Youth Conferences**. This should include a designated position to present findings from their work on the ground, additionally to their regular role as youth delegate.
- Provide **dedicated funding for INGYOs** to take part in and organise consultation and implementation activities of the EU Youth Dialogue. This could be allocated via the European Working Group and more specifically through the EUYD Secretariat and distributed among the INGYOs similarly to the NWG activities grants.

Final remarks

The next EU Youth Strategy offers a valuable opportunity to bring youth rights to the next level. Building on the previous Strategy, now is the opportunity to further advance youth participation, enshrine youth mainstreaming and create a clearer overview and ready-to-use toolkit on how to promote young people's interest at the European level.

Similarly, rethinking the EU Youth Dialogue to become a stronger, more meaningful and more impactful participation mechanism allows for the democratic participation of young people to further advance. Through a revisited EU Youth Dialogue, the EU can make its largest youth participation tool more impactful and youth-led.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The European Youth Forum is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, the Council of Europe or the European Youth Foundation. Neither the European Union nor any other granting authority can be held responsible for them.

