

European Youth Forum Press Release
14 October 2021

The European Year of Youth should pave the way for a lasting change

In response to the European Commission Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022, the European Youth Forum's **EU Policy and Advocacy Manager, Anna Blackwell** said:

“We are excited by President Ursula von der Leyen’s decision to designate 2022 as the European Year of Youth. During the pandemic, young people made immense sacrifices to protect our societies and now it is time for Europe to lend them a hand.

Young people’s interests and concerns are wide-ranging - from the climate crisis, to the health crisis, from education to economic policy. This is why we hope to see the Commission mobilising a budget for the year that will come from a wide variety of sources, not just reallocations from the existing Youth Programmes, which would not represent an increase in investment in young people. The same cross-sectoral approach should continue beyond the Year of Youth, to truly ensure that all EU policies are delivered and developed with a youth lens.

The coming year should be the start of a positive change. In 12 months’ time, after the activities and events have ended, we want to see meaningful policies that leave a lasting impact on young peoples’ lives and futures, for example the banning of unpaid internships and other impactful EU-wide changes. We look forward to seeing a commitment to this legacy from all EU institutions and member states. We are looking forward to working closely with the institutions and our members to make the Year a lasting and impactful success.”

Notes to Editors

- Today, the European Commission published a communication on the Year of European Youth (available here) which details several proposals to support young people but does not include a dedicated budget.
- During 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, a significant amount of funding was made additional through sources outside 'Creative Europe' - the European Commission's flagship programme to support the culture and audiovisual sectors.
- Young people have experienced substantial loss of work and income during the pandemic as a result of unemployment and reduction in working hours. According to [Eurostat](#), in August 2021, 2.833 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU and the youth unemployment rate was 16.2%, nearly three times the EU's general unemployment rate of 6.8%.
- According to a [research](#) published by the European Youth Forum in June, young people have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic:
 - Young people experienced substantial loss of work and income, with young people in marginalised situations being twice as likely to be affected by job loss. Unemployment rates have the potential to increase young people's risk of long-term unemployment, exclusion from labour markets and society generally as they grow older.
 - The shift to digital learning caused by the pandemic seems to have had negative consequences for students' learning. Around two-thirds of students surveyed (65.3%), indicated they were learning 'significantly less' or 'slightly less' since the start of the pandemic.
 - Nearly two-thirds of young people may be affected by mental health and wellbeing issues throughout the pandemic. Young women's mental health and wellbeing was notably worse than young men's. Young people in marginalised situations are also worse affected.
- The European Youth Forum is the largest platform of youth organisations in Europe with over 100 members, representing tens of millions of young people from across the continent.

Contact information

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