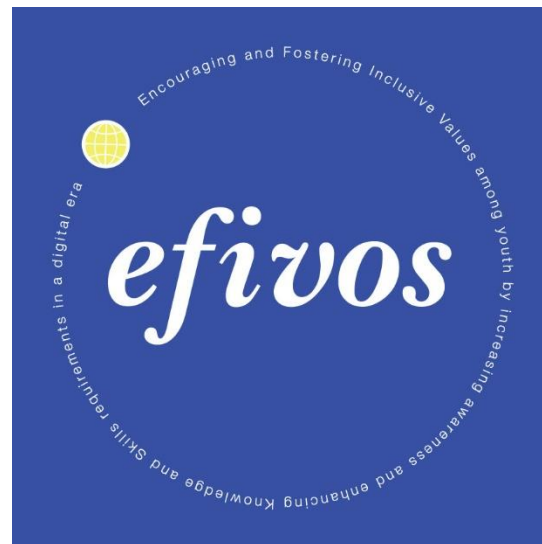


EFIVOS in Europe: Youth Participation in the Democratic Process through Journalism and Media



Work Package n°2: Workshops on EU institutions and policies - Reports



Contents

Network for Children’s Rights (Greece)	3
Crossing Borders (Denmark)	9
Dedalus (Italy)	10
GEYC (Romania)	12
Pacto Verde (Spain)	17
Citizens in Power (Cyprus)	18
HESED (Bulgaria)	19
Concluding remarks	24
Images	24

Network for Children's Rights (Greece)

1st Day of the Workshop

Location: Teen Spirit I (NOSTOS - Shelter of Unaccompanied Minors)

Date: 29/06/2023

Duration: 3h

No. of participants: 5 (1 girl, 4 boys)

Age of participants: 17-24

The workshop started with the ice-breaker, the introduction game and the presentation of the EfivosII project. The next activity was to familiarize the participants with the decision-making institutions of the European Union (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission European Parliament, the European Bank and the European Court of Justice). A power point presentation and laminated images were used for their presentation and to support the activity, which the participants worked on. They then discussed with each other, divided into groups of 2-3 people, and completed a worksheet that accompanied the activity, where they had to match images of the European decision-making bodies with their names. Two of the participants, although they were aware of the existence of the European Parliament, did not know what its purpose was. They reported that they knew this institution from information they had received through the media and social media. The rest were not aware of the EU decision-making bodies, nor of the purpose of any of them. With the help of the pictures, an attempt was made to help the participants to distinguish the EU institutions and, through the discussion that followed, to understand the goal of each of them.

The discussion then focused on the role of the institutions and how they cooperate with each other in the decision-making processes and the legislative procedures followed. A brief reference was also made to the EU's complementary institutions and to the three principles governing the way the EU acts (delegation, proportionality and subsidiarity). It was observed that the participants were not familiar with any of the terms mentioned. At the end of the activity, the facilitators gave the participants the necessary time to discuss and answer any questions. Following the activity, a break took place so that the participants could have time to rest and receive a snack and juice of their choice.

After the break, the next activity focused on EU action themes. The participants, getting in touch with the EU youth agenda, preferred to focus on issues related to the promotion of inclusive societies and quality jobs for all. These themes are a matter of constant concern for these participants due to their refugee background. In this activity, participants were divided into 2 groups and asked to write down their suggestions for promoting the themes they had decided to focus on.

Initially both groups felt that modern societies are not inclusive and that there is not enough interest from the governments of the countries to achieve this. They also felt that not having a similar initiative serves society since these initiatives bring about change and societies do not want to change. To the question "What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives?" participants answered

that local authorities need to communicate with young people and then involve them in their actions. Firstly, it is necessary to listen to them and include their suggestions or invite them to implement them together. Local authorities could also open their doors to listen to people with a migrant profile living in their areas and help create the conditions for improving their living conditions.

They also considered that intercultural actions are not enough to familiarise the local population with the customs and traditions of people from different countries. Hence, these actions need to take into account the opinion of the refugees themselves instead of being planned solely by locals. They also considered it necessary for local authorities to provide more open spaces for meeting and skills development, which would help to get to know people and create a friendlier social environment of acceptance and inclusion.

To the question "What reforms would you propose in your city?" respondents answered that they would prefer a city that is more youth-friendly because cities are designed to meet the needs of adults. Public transport mainly operates at times that cater to working people rather than young people and this becomes even worse at weekends when services are further reduced. Multipurpose open spaces for young people could be created in municipalities, with easy access for young people from other countries with different cultural backgrounds. They also found it necessary to ensure unhindered access to social welfare services without bureaucratic obstacles for young people in need. For example, there is a possibility that they may not be able to secure a place in a shelter and may need support at multiple levels, such as clothing, health care and psychological support. Furthermore, due to the modern living conditions of young people, with the increased stress and insecurity they experience about their future and choosing or finding a job, psychological support is a key area of empowerment that municipalities need to focus on.

As for enhancing the inclusiveness of modern societies, both groups believed that change should start with education at both school and civic level. Children in schools, with the help of teachers and the support of the EU, should learn about all cultures and religions, and European exchange programs for pupils could also take place outside the borders of the European Union. Erasmus+ programs could also involve countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia so that young people and cultures can mix with each other. Participants saw this as a way of providing opportunities for young people from countries facing difficulties and a way of getting to know people.

Another way in which education could increase the inclusiveness of societies is through joint actions in municipalities where citizens can be exposed to "communities" that have been created within them. An example of such action can be observed in the Congolese Community that has been created in the centre of Athens (Pagrati) or the Afghan Community. The municipalities, in cooperation with local communities, could create joint activities or workshops to get to know each other and exchange cultural elements, which could potentially improve the treatment of immigrants and their daily life. All of the above, and in particular the infrastructure for meeting places and support for activities, could be supported by EU funds.

At the end of the presentation all the references and sources that were used in order to accumulate information for this workshop were given to the participants. This was done in order to give them the proper means to expand their knowledge even further if they wished to.

Finally, participants in a circle took part in the closing activity, where they asked questions - and gave feedback. Time was given for discussion, questions and the expression of concerns.

2nd Day of the Workshop

Location: Teen Spirit II (NOSTOS - Shelter of Unaccompanied Minors)

Date: 07/07/2023

Duration: 3 h

No. of participants: 7 (7 boys)

Age of participants: 15-18

The workshop started with the ice-breaker, the introduction game and the presentation of the EfvosII project. The next activity was to familiarize the participants with the decision-making institutions of the European Union (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission European Parliament, the European Bank and the European Court of Justice). A power point presentation and laminated images were used for their presentation and to support the activity, which the participants worked on. They then discussed with each other, divided into groups of 2-3 people, and completed a worksheet that accompanied the activity, where they had to match images of the European decision-making bodies with their names.

Three of the participants, although they were aware of the existence of the European Parliament, did not know what its purpose was. They reported that they knew this institution from information they had received through the media and social media. However, as they noted, they did know about the European Union and some of the countries that belong to it. They also knew about the European Bank and one of them knew Cristine Lagard, who according to him made decisions about EU funds. A discussion among the participants followed about which areas and what financial amounts are allocated by the European Bank to the member countries. The others were not aware of the EU decision-making bodies, nor of the purpose of any of them. With the help of pictures, an attempt was made to help participants to distinguish the EU institutions and, through the discussion that followed, to understand the goals of each of them.

The discussion then focused on the role of the institutions and how they cooperate with each other in the decision-making processes and the legislative procedures that follow. A brief reference was also made to the EU's complementary institutions and to the three principles governing the way the EU acts (delegation, proportionality and subsidiarity). It was observed that the participants were not familiar with any of these terms. At the end of the activity, the facilitators gave the participants the necessary time to discuss and clarify their questions. Following the activity, a break took place so that the participants could have time to rest and receive a snack and juice of their choice. During the break there was a discussion among the participants who came from African countries (Somalia and Guinea) about creating a similar union to that of the EU that includes African countries and the creation of a common currency as a means of empowering African countries. The discussion ended with one of them informing

us that when he returns to Guinea and becomes President of the country, he will create the analogous association of African countries and make Africa a strong continent that will not need the assistance of external powers.

After the break, the program activity focused on EU action themes. The participants were introduced to the EU action themes and preferred to focus on issues related to education for all. This theme is an ongoing concern for these participants due to their refugee background, as it is particularly challenging for them to keep up and integrate with the Greek schooling system. In this activity the participants were divided into 2 groups and were asked to write down their suggestions for promoting the themes they had decided to focus on.

Each group approached the issue of education and also answered questions, such as “What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives? What reforms would you propose in your city?”. This was done in order to create an action plan that could be implemented either by the EU or by national/local authorities. As part of this activity, participants had to present the difficulties they encounter on a day-to-day level that make their living conditions more difficult. In the second phase they had to come up with proposals for local actions aimed at bringing about positive change and explain ways in which young people can contribute to that and improve their living conditions.

Initially, both groups believed that the Greek educational system is tailored to only Greek citizens and that there is great difficulty in integrating foreigners in a school designed for students who speak exclusively Greek at home. The positive aspect, they noted, is that education in Greece is a free good, but in the end it benefits those who have the means to keep up with the pace.

To the question "What would increase your interest in participating in local initiatives?" respondents answered that local authorities need to communicate with young people and then involve them in their actions. First of all, municipalities could promote a more refugee-friendly education for people with a refugee background. Additionally, they can provide spaces for learning or to continue learning the languages foreigners spoke back home with competent teachers. They could also promote the operation of schools based on international and commonly used languages, such as schools with English or German as the main operating language. Greek in these schools could be taught as a second language. In this way, those who want to move to foreign countries would have the necessary skills and knowledge to do so. The funds needed to set up and run these schools could come from EU funds. However, for this to take place it is of imminent necessity that local authorities listen to people of migrant backgrounds living in their areas and to help ensure that measures are in place to improve their living conditions. Alongside the school, municipalities could implement educational programs that would aim to promote interculturalism and help citizens become familiar with cultural elements of other countries. Local authorities may also consider it necessary to promote the exchange of views and ideas between citizens through open meetings and discussions. A key element in these gatherings would be the promotion of respect by and for all.

To the question "What reforms would you propose in your city?" respondents answered that they would prefer a city that is more friendly to young people, where they feel they belong and their needs are met. They would like the municipalities in which they live in to focus on improving the living conditions of young people and supporting their free expression. The example they gave in terms of free expression was the creation of local radio stations, where young people, regardless of their origin, skin color and spoken language, would be in charge of broadcasting. They also proposed the creation of local

newspapers for young people, which would be distributed free of charge. These would discuss issues of concern to young people today, with a focus on choosing and finding work, developing their personal skills and providing opportunities to enrich their qualifications. Another theme could be to inform young people about the Erasmus+ programs that are being implemented, so that everyone has the opportunity to apply to participate in them. This newspaper would be written exclusively by young people and could be financed by the EU.

All agreed that change needs to start with education, both at school and at a civic level. Children in schools, with the help of teachers and the support of the EU, need to be informed about other cultures, religions and people's rights. By doing so, children will be able to understand from an early age that diversity is not a cause for division and that all people are equal regardless of colour, gender, religion, nationality and language. In order to achieve this, they believe that the EU's financial and institutional support is needed. They also consider it important for the EU to provide incentives for Member State governments to implement similar education and skills promotion programs for young people.

At the end of the presentation all the references and sources that were used in order to accumulate information for this workshop were given to the participants. This was done in order to give them the proper means to expand their knowledge even further if they wished to.

Finally, participants in a circle took part in the closing activity, where they asked questions - and gave feedback. Time was given for discussion, questions and the expression of concerns.

3rd Day of the Workshop

Location: Youth Center, Konstantinoupolis 189, Athens (Network for Children's Rights)

Date: 24/07/2023

Duration: 3h

No. of participants: 9 (6 girls, 3 boys)

Age of participants: 15-24

The workshop started with the ice-breaker, the introduction game and the presentation of the EfivosII project. The next activity was to familiarize the participants with the decision-making institutions of the European Union (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission European Parliament, the European Bank and the European Court of Justice). A power point presentation and laminated images were used for their presentation and to support the activity, which the participants worked on. They then discussed with each other, divided into groups of 2-3 people, and completed a worksheet that accompanied the activity, where they had to match images of the European decision-making bodies with their names. Five of the participants were aware of the existence of the European Parliament, the European Bank, the European Court of Justice and had a general knowledge of the purpose of these institutions. They reported that they had gained this information through the media, social media, school and their participation in some of the European projects implemented by the Youth Center part of the Network for Children's Rights. The rest were not

aware of the EU decision-making bodies, nor of the purpose of any of them. However, all participants knew about the EU and its Member States, common policies and currency. With the help of the laminated images, an attempt was made to help the participants to distinguish the EU institutions and, through the discussion that followed, to understand the goal of each of them.

The discussion then focused on the role of these institutions and how they cooperate with each other in the decision-making process and the legislative procedures that follow. A brief reference was also made to the EU's complementary institutions and to the three principles governing the way the EU acts (delegation, proportionality and subsidiarity). It was observed that the participants were not familiar with any of these terms. At the end of this activity, the facilitators gave the participants the necessary time to discuss and clarify their questions. Following the activity, a break took place so that the participants could have time to rest and receive a snack and juice of their choice. During the break there was a discussion among the participants about the leading figures who hold influential positions in the European decision-making bodies, such as Christine Lagarde, Roberta Metsola and Charles Michel.

After the break, the next activity focused on EU action issues. Participants were introduced to the EU action themes and preferred to focus on the issue of sustainable green Europe. This theme is an ongoing concern for young people, especially those living in city centres, due to the limited green spaces and the covering of urban spaces with concrete. In this activity participants were divided into 2 groups and were asked to write down their proposals for promoting the themes they had decided to focus on.

Each group approached the issue of sustainable green development also answered questions, such as "What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives? What reforms would you propose in your city?". This was done in order to create an action plan that could be implemented either by the EU or by national/local authorities. As part of this activity, participants had to present the difficulties they encounter on a day-to-day level that make their living conditions more difficult. In a second phase, they had to come up with proposals for local actions aimed at bringing about positive change and explaining ways in which young people can contribute to it and improve their living conditions.

Initially, both groups felt that green development in Greece has been sidelined due to the rapid pace of urbanisation in recent years. Green spaces have been sacrificed and been replaced by huge apartment buildings that often hide the sun in the city. Young people have no spaces to enjoy nature and to take advantage of all it could offer them. This has an impact on the mental health of young people and the residents of central Athens as a whole.

To the question "What would increase your interest in participating in local initiatives?" respondents answered that local authorities need to communicate with young people and then involve them in their actions. First of all, municipalities could promote a more citizen-friendly city. They could organize educational days to teach about nature and its benefits. This civic education needs to start in the early school years, where pupils could, for instance through tree planting projects, enhance the city's green lungs and raise awareness of its importance. Additionally, school classes with tree and park sponsorship programs could take over the care of their local green spaces. In this way, from an early age, citizens could act as protectors and defenders of green spaces, which would gradually lead to the green development of cities.

To the question "What reforms would you propose in your city?" respondents answered that they would prefer a city that is more friendly to young people, where they feel they belong and their needs are met.

They would like the municipalities in which they live in to focus on improving the living conditions of young people and to strengthen public transport services. This would both benefit the lives of the citizens and reduce emissions to the environment. In particular, it was mentioned that reducing car use in the city equals more oxygen. To be effective, an increase in the frequency of services would have to be combined with a reduction in the cost of public transport tickets and free use by students and people with refugee backgrounds' or increased financial difficulties. This is one way of making public transport more attractive to citizens.

Another proposal was the creation of green spaces on the roofs of apartment buildings. The EU could also help in this initiative with funding programs. There could also be free bicycle stations within municipalities, so that all citizens could use bicycles to get around the city and not have to resort to using cars. To make this initiative more attractive, it could be combined with the creation of open social heating spaces for the winter months and cooling spaces for the summer months, where citizens would have the opportunity to rest and continue their walk or daily routine in the city.

All agreed that change needs to start with education, both at the school and civic level. Children in schools, with the help of teachers and the support of the EU, need to be made aware of the importance of green spaces in the city. In this context, children from an early age will be able to understand that living in a city without parks will also have a serious impact on their psychosocial development. In order to achieve the above, they believe that EU financial support and institutional backing is needed. They also considered it important for the EU to provide incentives for Member State governments to implement environmental education programs in schools.

At the end of the presentation all the references and sources that were used in order to accumulate information for this workshop were given to the participants. This was done in order to give them the proper means to expand their knowledge even further if they wished to.

Finally, participants in a circle took part in the closing activity, where they asked questions - and gave feedback. Time was given for discussion, questions and the expression of concerns.

Crossing Borders (Denmark)

24th and 25th July – Crossing Borders Office meeting room

The two-day workshop held at the Crossing Borders office meeting room on the 24th and 25th of July was a successful event, facilitated by two facilitators. The workshop aimed to foster engagement and learning among the participants, all of whom were dedicated volunteers at Crossing Borders. With a total of 20 attendees, including 12 females and 8 males. Day 1 and day 2 of the workshop had the same agenda and procedure.

To set the tone and encourage active participation right from the start, the facilitators introduced an interactive icebreaker called "One Word." In this activity, each participant was asked to jot down a single word that encapsulated their thoughts on the European Union (EU). Within a brief two-minute time frame, the room was abuzz with creative words reflecting the diverse perspectives and emotions regarding the EU. The words were compiled on a whiteboard, creating a visually engaging compilation of everyone's ideas, and setting the stage for the main workshop activities.

Following the icebreaker, the facilitators introduced the Efivos project, providing a comprehensive overview of its objectives and how it aimed to bring about positive change in society. By showcasing the project's website, the participants were able to gain a deeper understanding of its scope and potential impact.

A significant portion of the workshop was dedicated to exploring the EU institutions and policies. Through an engaging PowerPoint presentation, the participants were taken on an insightful journey through the intricacies of the EU's decision-making processes, institutions, and its various policy areas. The facilitators explained the roles and functions of key EU institutions, shedding light on the crucial mechanisms that drive EU actions and initiatives.

To promote further engagement and to encourage critical thinking, the participants were divided into smaller groups of five. Each group was given thought-provoking questions to ponder and discuss. Some of these questions revolved around their sense of representation in their local communities, their aspirations for specific action plans to be implemented in their countries, and their evaluations of the effectiveness of existing action plans.

The group discussions were lively and spirited, with participants exchanging diverse viewpoints and proposing creative solutions to various societal challenges. The facilitators ensured that the participants felt comfortable expressing their ideas freely, fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for everyone involved.

Then the groups were tasked with presenting their ideas and conclusions. Some groups opted for expressive drawings and visual aids, while others presented eloquent speeches and compelling PowerPoint presentations. One particularly imaginative group even put together a short play centered around Climate Policies, which left the audience both enlightened and entertained.

Concluding the workshop, the participants were given the opportunity to fill out an EU survey. Additionally, the facilitators took the time to discuss the upcoming work packages and future plans, inspiring the participants to consider further engagement and collaboration within the Efivos project.

Dedalus (Italy)

The second meeting of the Efivos II project took place in the intercultural center “Nanà” (in Naples) and it was structured in two days. The activity involved a total of 36 young participants, whose age range was between 14 and 24 years old. Most of the participants were unaccompanied minors with a migrating background, coming from non- European Union countries. The workshop also included some volunteers, cultural mediators, operators, educators, psychologists from the “Dedalus Social Cooperative”.

The meeting was organized in three sections; at the beginning the participants took part in an ice-breaking game, useful to get them to know each other and to create a friendly climate before the presentation.

After the ice breaking game, one of our operators introduced the topic and the objective of the meeting. In order to let the participants have a better overview on the matter of the project, we dedicated the first part to a presentation of the main European Institutions and the policy making processes. The

majority of the participants did not show basic awareness of the European institutions and policies mainly because of their heterogeneous provenance, but, despite that, they showed a great interest in learning about the European Union and its policies.

The presentation of the main European Institutions was followed by a focus on the “Youth EU Agenda”, with the aim of understanding whether the teenagers had a pre-existing knowledge about its topics and to stimulate their interest. In order to make the presentation more accessible to the participants, the operators translated the slides and the debate in different languages, such as French, English, Arabic, Urdu and Bengali. Although most of the youngsters did not have previous knowledge of the Youth Agenda’s topics, they were very interested in different topics, particularly, in gender equality and education.

During the third part of the meeting, the participants were asked to express their opinion and ideas on the topics of the “Youth Agenda” and they were more interested in. When it was asked to indicate the most important topics, the participants chose to focus on gender equality and on education.

The participants were divided in two small round tables in order to guarantee a balanced and enriching discussion. The debate was guided through some questions prepared in advance by the operators. The questions concerned the participants’ personal experience and the possible actions of the European Union. The participants wrote their opinions on some post-its, later attached on a board. After this brainstorming phase, we concluded the workshop with a collective discussion and the drafting of some possible action plans.

We concluded the meeting by filling in the EU survey.

European participants didn’t find any difficulties in completing the survey. However, for most of the not European participants it was very hard to understand and fill in the survey because they couldn’t find the translation in their native language, such as Arabic, Urdu and Bengali.

Outcomes

During the first meeting, we discussed the topic of “gender equality” in the European Union.

- When it was asked to define the meaning of gender equality, most of the participants outlined the importance of having equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender.
- The second and the third questions were about the current situation in Europe within the working and education field. According to the majority of the participants, the goal of gender equality in these fields has already been met in EU countries, as men and women have more access to equal education and work than in extra-EU countries. On the other hand, most of the EU participants highlighted the ongoing gap in salaries and in accessing education between men and women in some EU countries.
- The last question concerned the knowledge of the LGBTQIA+ acronym. The majority were not able to explain its meaning, whereas the remaining respondents, who had a European cultural background, were much more informed about the topic.

The action plan that came out of the discussion can be summarized in 3 points:

1. a specific law that guarantees the respect of gender equality;
2. sanctions to the enterprises that do not guarantee equal salaries;
3. encouraging the dialogue on these topics by creating workshops among the civil society.

On the second day we discussed the topic of education:

- All of the participants agreed that their academic level is improving. The non-Italian participants stressed the progress they made in reading and writing in Italian, thanks to the Italian classes held at “Centro Nanà Dedalus”.
- The second question investigated the subjects and the skills that the youngsters consider important to improve their future. They all outlined the importance of learning languages - such as Italian and English - and the acquisition of digital and technical skills. Some of them also expressed the need to acquire more manual skills to be applied directly in the working field, such as cooking and mechanics.
- When it was asked to describe their dream school, the answers included: the use of different languages and bilingual books to help foreign students translate vocabulary and grammar rules from their native language in the target language, in order to enable the inclusion of different cultures within the school; a clean canteen where to share meals all together; a well-equipped gym where to practice sports; more digitized spaces.

The action plan that came out of this discussion can be summarized in 3 points:

1. provide schools with digital instruments;
2. encourage cultural mediation in schools through a specific training for teachers and the use of multilingual books;
3. guarantee school accessibility by offering free access to public transportation.

In conclusion, we noticed that the workshop enhanced the awareness of the participants on the Youth Agenda topics and on the EU institutions, by allowing the exchange of opinion among both European and non-European youngsters on different arguments such as education and gender equality. The majority of those participating in the project were enriched by the dialogue and willing to deepen their knowledge through taking part in new workshops. On the other hand, the workshop was useful to the operators for better understanding the needs of the youngsters living in Europe and their desires and projects for the future.

GEYC (Romania)

1st Day of the Workshop

Location: "Queen Mary" Highschool, Bulevardul Victoriei 112, Dorohoi

Date: 17.07.2023

Duration: 3 h

No. of participants: 14 (10 girls, 4 boys)

Age of participants: 15-18

We started with the introduction of the project EFIVOS and a small energizer. Then we opened the topic by presenting the main EU decision-making institutions (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission), which the students only heard about vaguely and where not aware of the attributions of none of them. We also focused particularly on making sure that the students do not confuse the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe (which is not a institution of the European Union) between each other.

We then summarized the way that all these institutions work together and how are decisions made through the ordinary legislative procedure by showing them a diagram and a short video posted by the representation of the European Commission in Romania.

Afterwards, we briefly talked about the EU complementary institutions and their competences and went a bit more into the details about the 4 priority areas of the European Council in the 2019-2024 strategic agenda.

We then talked about the areas of EU action and the 3 principles that determine how and in what areas the EU may act (conferral, proportionality and subsidiarity). None of the students was familiar with either of these terms or their implications. After this discussion, the students had a 20 minutes coffee break where they received snacks and beverages such as juice and water,

After the break, we choose to focus on a particular topic of EU actions that we deemed the most relevant for the students, education. Here we talked about priority areas of the EU in educational policies (Initiatives for better quality and more equity, initiatives for teachers, trainers and school directors, digital education, ecological education).

We then presented all the main study opportunities in Europe and youth exchange programs that the students can access such as Erasmus+ projects either through their school or NGOs, the European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU. The group was pretty much split. Some of the students were aware of some of the opportunities (no one was familiar with all) and even went in some projects and exchanges themselves while the rest has never heard of these opportunities but showed a visible interest to take advantage of them moving forward.

All the links from the resources used to gather the theoretical information for this workshop were added at the end of the presentation and the students were made aware that if they want to go deeper on anything we have discussed and more, they can access them freely.

In the last part of the workshop, the students assumed a more active role by firstly answering into teams to 3 questions (What is the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development? What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives? What reforms would you propose in your city?) and then based on the answers highlighted in this exercise, they had to pick a single area that they considered

important and create an action plan that could be implemented either by the EU or the national/local authorities. Therefore, the participants had to: explain some of the problems they identified based on the chosen topic, discuss local actions in this field, propose a positive change and explain how youth can contribute (and benefit) towards this change.

At the question „ What is the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development?“, the students were not familiar with the topic and they all had to look up information about the Agenda and the SDGs. After, the students correctly identified the reasons for the creation of the Agenda 2030 and what it stands for and decided together which ones of the SDGs they deem as being the most relevant for them personally or their community and then assess if they think those particular SDGs are achievable in the current available timeframe. The students first picked 4 Quality Education, which they think is achievable by 2030, 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth which they thought could not be achieved at the proposed date as they had a pretty bleak picture in mind related to the Romanian labor market, especially related to the unemployment rate, 13 Climate Action, where they were a lot more optimistic regarding the target and thought that it can be achieved by the 2030 deadline and lastly, 5 Gender Equality, they once again do not expect to be achieved any time soon.

At the question „ What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives?“ the students answered that: the local authorities could reach out to them, send them a digital presentation on how they could get involved, making it clear what benefits could result from their involvement, they also wished for some mentorship from people from different domains so they could learn from them, they proposed some intercultural activities, self-development activities supported by the decision makers and youth exchanges.

At the question „ What reforms would you propose in your city?“ the students answered that: they would like an improved infrastructure, more specifically a better public transport and railway system, something that could be achieved through cohesion funds or through PNRR (Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan) but that would require input and willingness to act from the national authorities as well, they also wished for more vocational high schools to be built in the city, the creation of youth spaces and also financing free psychological and counseling sessions for young people that need them.

In total, there were three groups and three action plans, on the topics of: Gender Equality, Climate Action and Quality Education.

The plan on **Gender Equality** stated that just as in the work environment, there is gender discrimination in the school environment as well. There was a special focus made by the girls (this group was made up from only girls) that in the rural area (where many were coming from), girls are encouraged to stay at home rather than pursue an education and that traditional gender roles are still strongly upheld by most families. They suggested that this problem should be tackled through education by having a clear gender component taught in schools, to students, as well as to teachers.

The plan on **Climate Change** stated that people were not educated enough on ecofriendly practices and actions that they could take and that they also needed incentives to form the good habits necessary for stopping climate change. Therefore, the state should make sure that the citizens are aware of the need and motivated enough to act for the benefit of the planet. Also, the state should use its power to reduce the CO2 emissions by closing down installations and power plants that use finite natural resources such

as coal and wood and support the introduction of more sustainable alternatives, as well as promoting the usage of electric cars.

The plan on **Quality Education** stated that young people from the rural area have a hard time getting to and from school in the city (a lot of the students present were from the villages around the Dorohoi and some had to wake up as early as 5.30 in order to reach school on time). They suggested financing the necessary infrastructure to create dorms for students, either inside each highschool or general ones in one part of the city where students from all highschools could stay at. The action that they themselves could do to make this real was sensitizing the public opinion by making this need clear to the wider population, signing a petition and submitting it to the local authorities, asking the local authorities to create the general dorms for students or lobbying around the principle of each school to make private dorms for their students by accessing EU funds.

2nd Day of the Workshop

Location: "Queen Mary" Highschool, Bulevardul Victoriei 112, Dorohoi

Date: 18.07.2023

Duration: 3 h

No. of participants: 15 (10 girls, 5 boys)

Age of participants: 16-18

We started with the introduction of the project EFIVOS and a small energizer. Then we opened the topic by presenting the main EU decision-making institutions (the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission). By far the most well-known one was the European Parliament and some of the students even had a basic understanding of its attributions but knew very little about the other institutions, except for one student that seemed more well informed. We also focused particularly on making sure that the students do not confuse the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe (which is not a institution of the European Union) between each other.

We then summarized the way that all these institutions work together and how are decisions made through the ordinary legislative procedure by showing them a diagram and a short video posted by the representation of the European Commission in Romania.

Afterwards, we briefly talked about the EU complementary institutions and their competences and went a bit more into the details about the 4 priority areas of the European Council in the 2019-2024 strategic agenda.

We then talked about the areas of EU action and the 3 principles that determine how and in what areas the EU may act (conferral, proportionality and subsidiarity). After, the students had a 20 minutes coffee break where they received snacks and beverages such as juice and water,

After the break, we choose to focus on a particular topic of EU actions that we deemed the most relevant for the students, education. Here we talked about priority areas of the EU in educational policies (Initiatives for better quality and more equity, initiatives for teachers, trainers and school directors, digital education, ecological education).

We then presented all the main study opportunities in Europe and youth exchange programs that the students can access such as Erasmus+ projects either through their school or NGOs, the European Solidarity Corps and DiscoverEU.

All the links from the resources used to gather the theoretical information for this workshop were added at the end of the presentation and the students were made aware that if they want to go deeper on anything we have discussed and more, they can access them freely.

In the last part of the workshop, the students assumed a more active role by firstly answering into teams to 3 questions (What is the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development? What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives? What reforms would you propose in your city?) and then based on the answers highlighted in this exercise, they had to pick a single area that they considered important and create an action plan that could be implemented either by the EU or the national/local authorities. Therefore, the participants had to: explain some of the problems they identified based on the chosen topic, discuss local actions in this field, propose a positive change and explain how youth can contribute (and benefit) towards this change.

At the question “What is the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development?” the students gave a brief definition of it and its objectives and then voted on which SDGs they considered as being the most important ones for their community and the top 3 choices were: 4 Quality Education, 13 Climate Action and 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.

At the question “What could increase your interest in participating in local initiatives?” the students answered that: they would like an increase in public institutions transparency, a way to cooperate with public institutions so that citizens could also purpose initiatives, offering young people trainings and other such opportunities of professional development, encouraging public participation by having more meaningful public consultations, encouraging volunteering and giving special recognition to outstanding citizens.

At the question “What reforms would you propose in your city?” the students answered that: they would like a walkable city where the focus is on the pedestrians, not on the cars, more bicycle lanes, the development of a cultural center and encouraging artistic events, encouraging truism.

There were three groups and three action plans un total, on the topics of: Quality Education, Climate Action, Sustainable Cities and Communities

The plan on Quality Education stated that not all students have equal access to quality education and that students from rural areas are more often then not at a disadvantage. For solving this problem, the students have suggested the creation of dorm with cafeteria for those coming from a long distance (the same idea as the group from the previous day although the participants were different and they didn't know each other which show that this is a well-known need among students), free public transport for students and teachers coming from outside the city (including trains), free access to a psychologist because those students usually come from a difficult background and the creation of extracurricular

activities such as afterschool clubs in the school perimeter. All these actions could be financed either by the school themselves or the local authorities with the help of European funds.

The plan on Climate Action stated that excessive deforestation is an acute problem in the region and that in order to combat it, there should be informational campaigns, reforestation initiatives that would involve citizens as well as local authorities, increasing the fees for cutting down trees illegally and finding more sustainable alternatives to wood in the areas where it is predominantly used.

The plan on Sustainable Cities and Communities stated that in Dorohoi city public transportations is inefficient and that there should be special lanes or another way to facilitate public transport, especially in the busy areas of the city such as the city center. Apparently local authorities do not listen enough to public opinion and old buildings that have an increased risk of falling down during an earthquake should be demolished while the rest should be renovated. There needs to be more green spaces and bicycle lanes, as well as an active and systemic effort of the local authorities to encourage and support community volunteering and the involvement of normal citizens in public actions.

Pacto Verde (Spain)

General Information

In July 2023 (July 5th and 7th) Pacto Verde organised two workshops in Huelva, Spain, at the facilities of the Universidad de Huelva.

The purpose of these workshops is motivated by the need to increase knowledge and awareness of the EU's democratic institutions, policies and procedures. The trainers in these workshops were Marta Hernández, project coordinator of EFIVOS in Pacto Verde and Nereida Varela, President of the organisation.

The total number of participants in these sessions is 22. In these sessions we had the participation of 14 girls and 8 boys and all of them were Spanish. Regarding the age range, we can highlight participants from 18 to 24 years old, but most of them were around 20-22 years old.

Methodology

The workshop was organised with the help of the project documentation, together with the preparation of a Canva presentation and documents to be printed out for the participants.

Both sessions started with a phase of getting to know the participants in terms of age, name, educational background, etc. Then we moved on to the focus of our workshops by introducing the project EFIVOS IN EUROPE and distributing a handout about the project. In the same way, we started to ask the participants about their knowledge of the European institutions using the Canva presentation and then answered some questions in groups in the handout.

In these sessions, we discussed with the participants that the European Council has set the 4 priority areas in its 2019-2024 strategic agenda and what they were. We talked about the role of youth organisations in the personal and professional development of young people and we were surprised that almost none of the participants knew of local organisations with which they could communicate for

further self-development. It was at this point that we began to talk about the opportunities that exist for young people. Among the opportunities and priorities that the participants highlighted in our workshops were: equality, progress in education, better access to the world of work, migration, social inclusion, and so on.

There were many different kinds of reactions, most were interested in the issues, while others admitted they knew nothing about the EU. Most participants knew very little about EU policies before the workshop, but once the workshop was over they were better able to grasp the concepts.

Questions:

Did the young people know about the topic? Very little, we discussed with the participants that the European Council has set the 4 priority areas in its 2019-2024 strategic agenda and what they were. We talked about the role of youth organisations in the personal and professional development of young people and we were surprised that almost none of the participants knew of local organisations with which they could communicate for further self-development.

What was the part that they were most interested in? They were interested in the sustainable development goals, showed a special interest in the future of Europe regarding young people and education.

Which do they consider most important? They showed much interest in the EU's relationship with youth. Among the opportunities and priorities that the participants highlighted in our workshops were: equality, progress in education, better access to the world of work, migration, social inclusion, and so on.

Have they taken part in a similar activity regarding the topic? No

What are their thoughts on the topic? They see this as something important to take into account and admit that they had not been concerned about the issue before.

How do they feel after the workshop on the topic? They found it very interesting and seemed enthusiastic about the workshop.

Citizens in Power (Cyprus)

Description

C.I.P. Citizens in Power organised two workshops under the context of the WP2 Efivos in Europe. WP2 enabled the organisation of two workshops on the policies and functions of the European Union and other related bodies.

The workshops were based on the guidelines provided by C.I.P. and they took place on the 4th and 18th of July 2023. The first workshop was delivered in Nicosia, at the Home for Cooperation, which is a bi-communal café located in the Green Line in the centre of Nicosia. The second workshop was delivered in a local coffee shop in the centre of Larnaka.

Both workshops were organised with participants from different European countries as well as with both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. There were 27 participants in total.

The most interesting part of these workshops is the fact that the participants were aware and had previous knowledge and expertise on the European Union bodies and policies. As a result, the workshops focus on developing action plans and developing new ideas which could potentially increase the participation of young people in the process of European Union related decision making.

Methodology of the workshops

The workshops were planned in cooperation with other European projects, and people from the wider C.I.P. network were invited to take part. The majority of the participants were university students (local and from other European Union countries) and young youth workers and educators.

The activities of the workshops included a short introduction to the project, as many of the participants were not the same as those who took part in WP2. Then, there was a group discussion on European policies and the related-bodies and participants exchange knowledge over the different functions of the European Union. The last part of the workshops included group work and participants developed their own action plans and the suggestions to increase the participation of the youth in the European Union decision-making.

The participants discussed and analysed topics related to gender equality, women empowerment and the inclusion of vulnerable communities within the European Union structures. In addition, there was a particular focus on the role of schools and how they can contribute in increase the awareness and knowledge of children and teenagers regarding the European Union. It was suggested that national competitions are organised within schools on projects and activities that relate to the European Union policies, transforming students into young politicians and giving them space to learn and interact with European Union policies and institutions.

These workshops did not include participants who did not had prior knowledge of the European Union and its bodies and policies and as a result the workshops were mostly based on discussion between the participants and did not include a more 'formal' introduction to the European Union.

Results of the workshops

The overall comments received by participants at the end of the workshops were very positive. Young participants had the opportunity to network with each other, exchange knowledge and talk about their previous experiences participating in European projects and other relevant activities. They were interested in finding ways to implement some of their ideas on a local, national and even European level and they engaged actively in the group discussion and the creation of their own action plans.

HESED (Bulgaria)

Demographics

- What - workshops
- Where - Kystendil

- When – 17-18.07.2023.
- Who – 2 groups of young people
- How many people – 21
- Why (short description of the workshop)

The workshop followed the program proposed in the guidelines- in the first part were presented the European institutions, in the second part the young people worked in small groups by answering the questions proposed in the manual. Analyzing the group dynamic during the workshop we can assume that the second part of the workshop was more interesting, and the participants were very active. Our young people chose to work on the topic of mental health because it seems important and close to their daily lives.

Methodology:

How did you plan the workshop? We selected and invited young people from Kyustendil with whom we have worked on other youth initiatives. Those young people are representatives of the local Roma community and local youth leaders.

We chose to run the workshops in a one-day format with 6 hours duration. The workshops took place in HESED`s community center in the Roma neighborhood in Kyustendil.

Two professionals were working with the groups - a facilitator and a co-facilitator.

Participants were offered some refreshments during the workshops.

	Agenda and instructions
20 min	Welcome to the participants and presentation of the purpose of the training Objective: Increase young people's knowledge and awareness of EU institutions, policies and democratic procedures. Countering disinformation among young people. Promoting democratic participation of young people through journalism and media literacy. The overall aim of the project is to create tools that can give voice to young people in Europe and make them able to present their views and influence public debate and discourse, with the ultimate and long-term goal of shaping the next set of EU actions in a way that responds to their concerns for the future.
20 min.	Define Group Rules
40 min	Acquaintance / icebreaker Human bingo (Annex 2) If the participants do not know each other, you should adapt the exercise so that the youngsters get to know each other before they start playing.

40 min.	Present EU institutions and policies to participants
30 min	break
20 min.	<p>Explain to the participants that two topics that are important for young people have emerged from the focus groups – mental health policies and green policies.</p> <p>Have a discussion on topic that young people want to work on and vote.</p> <p>Voting may be secret or open.</p> <p>Important! Comment that voting is a basic democratic principle and this is how it is determined which proposal is supported by the majority - then the minority must accept the decision of the majority.</p>
20 min	<p>Presentation of measures. included in the European Youth Strategy, work on the priority chosen by the group.</p> <p>(Presentation option 1; option 2)</p>
100 min	Young people work in small groups to answer presentation questions.
30 min	break
40 min.	<p>Group discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. explain some of the problems they have identified based on the chosen topic; 2. discuss proposals for local action in this area; 3. what can in the desired change in this area.
15 min	<p>Closing</p> <p>Mood Barometer</p> <p>How I feel from 1 to 10.</p>
10 min	EC questionnaire

Which were the activities?

Welcoming and familiarizing young people with the objectives and the program of the seminar; forming the rules; icebreaker; introduction of EU institutions and policies; discussion and voting on which of the two proposed topics young people want to participate (based on the activities in WP1 eco policies/mental health); presentation of the measures included in the European Youth Strategy; work in small groups on the selected topic; presentation of content in the large group; discussion; Feedback; completing an EC questionnaire.

What were the reactions?

The young people took their participation in the seminar seriously and responsibly. Some of them showed a lack of interest in the presentation of European institutions. The highest motivation and willingness to participate were when working in small groups.

What was the knowledge before and after?

At the beginning of the seminar there was no information on the European institutions and EU policies. None of them knew the topics of work in depth. After the participation, there was a significant amount of

new information received from the presenter, as well as from each other as ideas and shared experience during the work in small groups.

What was the approach/methodology?

To perform the workshops, we followed the guidelines proposed by C.I.P.

What went wrong?

We did not have challenges during the workshop, that worth to be mentioned, except this that the young people made very quick evaluation of the local situation by answering to all the questions that there no local policies and initiatives related to the topic.

Was any material produced?

We have produced a PPT presentation in Bulgarian – presenting the EU institutions, as well the Bulgarian Youth Strategy.

Questions:

Did the young people know about the topic?

Very few young people had initial information on the subject. Most of them shared fragmentary and decidedly unstructured pieces of information - they had heard about the European Parliament, the European Bank, the European Court of Justice. Most of the impressions they have is received from the media- TV, but never had a special interest on the topic.

What was the part that they were most interested in?

Both groups chose to work on the topic of mental health. Despite their ignorance of the European Union's policies on the subject, they thought very deeply about the importance of the topic at the local level. They hesitated a lot about which would be the more valuable approach – whether policies related to prevention or those with intervention and real care for people experiencing some kind of mental suffering or illness. Both groups tied the topic of mental health to the topic of addictions.

At the local level there is almost no care for children and adults with addictions. They stated that more and more young people in their environment have an increased interest in the use of alcohol, drugs and recently a lot of people who are addicted to gambling. They pointed out that the young people underestimate the risks related to those behaviors because they are related with pleasant experiences in the beginning and because most of the young people in Roma community are using alcohol and smoke from very early age. Depression and suicide prevention was also mentioned in the discussions.

One of the young people shared about a known person suffering from mental illness and the inability to support him due to refusal and denial of the problem. He told of the "toxicity" he had taken in an attempt to engage with the problem.

Which do they consider most important?

The most important in relation to the working topic in both groups was the need to promote it. To be advocated in all institutions – kindergartens, schools, churches, organizations. This should be a policy to be planned and coordinated by local municipalities with the help of local youth organizations and NGOs.

Some young people who attend churches in the community say that the topic is not directly discussed there. The young people expressed their opinion that public figures, local leaders, celebrities should be engaged with the issue. Thus, society as a whole will also develop greater continuity, tolerance and understanding towards people experiencing mental suffering/illness.

Opinions were shared about the treatment facilities for the mentally ill. The hospitals should be modernized and repaired in order to become more welcoming and cozier for the accommodated, not gloomy and cold, as they have been seen in the media.

In addition, young people also mentioned self-support groups. As well as investing in the professional development of practitioners from supporting professions - psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, therapists. promoting the role of local NGOs and service providers, such as HESED and providing funds for preventive programs in the community.

They shared that in their opinion it is very worth investing in any activities for children from an early age that would improve their mental health – sports, activities, healthy eating, education of interests, opportunity to engage in useful and age-appropriate social groups.

Have they taken part in a similar activity regarding the topic?

For all young people, the topic was new.

What are their thoughts on the topic?

The topic is very important for young people because it is related to their way of life. Alcohol and smoking are part of youth culture, as is smoking weed, which many boys have experience with.

The young people expressed the opinion that they do not know how they can influence European policies or local policies on the topic, but more than half of the young people shared that they would participate

in initiatives advocating the topic. They will participate as volunteers in information and awareness-raising programs.

How do they feel after the workshop on the topic?

All the feedbacks were very positive. Only two of the boys shared that the topic with its importance has burdened them.

Concluding remarks

In sum, a total of 176 young people participated in the EFIVOS in Europe WP2 workshops on EU institutions and policies. Young people identified common concerns among the 7 partner countries. Of particular importance was the need for countries across the EU to create inclusive, respectful environments for young people to engage in. To do this, young people identified the need for local authorities to communicate with young people, provide information in multiple languages and improve infrastructure such as public transport which young people rely on. The focus on creating youth friendly cities was touched on by almost all partners and young people expressed an interest in gender equality and female empowerment, as well as eco-friendly practices and actions. Interestingly, HESED was the only partner that reported young people raising concerns about mental health in their communities, namely depression, suicide prevention and addiction.

Images






CrossingBorders

Funded by the European Union



This project has been funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme. This deliverable reflects only the views of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Project Number: 101081482

Funded by the European Union



This project has been funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme. This deliverable reflects only the views of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Project Number: 101081482




Citizens, Equality, Rights
and Values programme


efivos


PACTO VERDE
ASOCIACIÓN ANÁLISIS DE INNOVACIÓN SOCIAL Y MEDIOAMBIENTAL

Funded by the European Union

Erasmus network
CrossingBorders
dedalus
geyc
PACTO VOICE
CITIZENS IN POWER
hesed

This project has been funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme. This deliverable reflects only the views of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Project Number: 101081482

geyc
Support for a better youth

dedalus

Funded by the European Union

Erasmus network
CrossingBorders
dedalus
geyc
PACTO VOICE
CITIZENS IN POWER
hesed

This project has been funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme. This deliverable reflects only the views of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Project Number: 101081482

This project has been funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme. This deliverable reflects only the views of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project Number: 101081462

