

The European Union and the Global Youth: Looking for the Snowball Effect



By Constantin Knuhr

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Table of Content

Foreword	7
Introduction.....	8
Reality Check: the EU ´s engagement as seen by the global youth.....	9
Challenges.....	16
Lack of EU Literacy and ways of engagement.....	16
Limited access to academic opportunities for non-Europeans....	16
Game Changers.....	16
Capacitate youth on how they can engage locally, not just why they should do so.....	17
Center youth programmes on young people and their capabilities	17
Enhance European media presence and accessibility for youth ...	17
Encourage exchange and utilize youth network expertise.....	18
Future global youth engagement – recommendations for European decisionmakers	19
Engage with global youth by.....	19
Enable the global youth by.....	21
Guide the global youth by.....	22
Bibliography.....	23

Foreword

The world has never been so young! Yet, young people are under-represented in politics, lost trust in institutions, feel not listened to and are left outside of the decision-making rooms.

Being at the forefront of action for peace, climate action, and equal rights, youth across the world claims a better future and demands space and resources to shape it.

This report gathers young people's suggestions on how the EU could better engage with youth. Issued in the last month of the 2022 European Year of Youth, it contributes to the broad consultation and engagement processes conducted over the past year.

The European Union listened to young people's voices and concerns across the world. Our recently adopted Youth Action Plan in EU external action presents our response to their demands to ensure young people are heard, supported and engaged.

We have deep trust in young people and we want to build a strategic partnership with them.

First of all, we plan to engage young people and increase their voice and leadership, in particular of girls, in policy and decision-making. We want to lead by example and commit to strengthen the EU institutional youth engagement.

Secondly, we strive to empower youth by reducing inequalities and by ensuring that young people have the skills and the resources they need to put the sustainable development goals back on track and shape the green and digital societal transformations.

Last but not least, we aim at increasing opportunities for young people to connect, network and exchange with their peers.

We hope our plans respond to the suggestions of young people summarised in this report and beyond: from supporting the implementation of youth-led actions at community level to improving the way we communicate; from funding to creating opportunities for young people to actively engage in the decision-making processes.

Together with initiatives such as „Young Voices“, we wish that our joint work will create a true snowball effect across organisations, institutions and governments to amplify young people's representation, voice and actions.

Our ambition is clear: empower youth and give them a real voice and the tools to shape solutions to global challenges and drive change towards a greener, fairer, and more peaceful planet.

Ms. Agnieszka Skuratowicz

Head of Unit for Youth, Education and Culture

Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA.G.3)

European Commission

Introduction

In recent years young people have played an increasingly important role in the political decision-making within their countries and on the international stage. Public initiatives like Fridays for Future have clearly showcased the youth's interest and passion for active political engagement and their concern for global issues. Similarly, young people are among the most severely affected by conflicts and the effects of climate change and other global crises. The EU, therefore, views young people as "important change makers and essential partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the European Consensus on Development"¹.

The EU together with its Member States is the top investor and development assistant provider in the world. Young people are one of the main target groups of EU funding in external action. To further emphasize the role of young people in the EU's external action, the EU is currently preparing its first "Youth Action Plan in EU External Action"². The action plan will be presented by the end of 2022. Building on this momentum. This paper will:

- Discuss the challenges that young people in the global south face,
- bring forward suggestions, or game changers, identified by selected members of the global youth, and
- based on these formulate suggestions to the EU decision makers.

This policy paper builds on a set of events and campaigns conducted by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Multinational Development Policy Dialogue (KAS MDPD) in 2021 and 2022. Most notably in a video series titled "Young Voices"³ young people, who engage in EU funded programs or project, raised their opinions about the EU's engagement in their region. The series concluded in a high level and frank dialogue with EU decision makers on the 15th of July 2022⁴. This policy paper will summarize and concretize the main results of these events-

In the first section of the paper, a selection of young people stemming from partner countries outside of Europe and from member states will share their personal experiences of working with the EU, the challenges they experienced, as well as the means with which they overcame these obstacles. These selected young people's experiences exemplify wider phenomenon within the three thematic areas of (1) climate change, (2) democracy and participation as well as (2) security and peace. The second part of the paper focuses on the problems and game changers elaborated

1 'Youth Action Plan – Involving Young People in EU External Action', Have your say, accessed 19 July 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13156-Youth-Action-Plan-involving-young-people-in-EU-external-action_en.

2 'Youth Action Plan – Involving Young People in EU External Action'.

3 "Young Voices - Perceptions on the EU's Global Engagement" - #1 Morocco, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02mGi7lcXz4>.

4 '15.07.2022, Event: Young Voices: European Engagement and the EU's Image', Multinationaler Entwicklungsdialog Brüssel, 14 July 2022, <https://www.kas.de/de/web/mned-bruessel/veranstaltungen/detail/-/content/young-voices-european-engagement-and-the-eu-s-image>.

during the closed-door policy workshop while the third part presents concrete policy recommendations for EU decision makers. With this paper we aim to identify concrete steps which the EU could take, and which could trigger a “snowball effect” both within the EU and in partner countries.

Reality Check: the EU’s engagement as seen by the global youth

Hind Abushkhadim, Project Manager, International Trainer and Advocate for Women & Youth Empowerment, Palestine

I participated in Mediterranean Youth Voices (YMV)⁵, an EU-funded program for intercultural dialogue and debate that aims at promoting a culture of dialogue among young people and build mutual understanding with their peers in the Mediterranean region. Mediterranean Youth Voices was built on the success of the “Arab Youth Voices”⁶ program which was launched in 2011 by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the British Council. In 2016, the European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, announced EU support for the Foundation to expand Mediterranean Youth Voices programs. At the EU level, the program was mentioned in the joint report on the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) review and in the first joint communication, “Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations.” The program offered young people the opportunity to meet EU decision-makers at more than one event. I was a regional debate trainer, co-founded and ran the “Bethlehem Debate Club” for 4 years. This hub helped dozens of young Palestinians improve their debating skills by holding regular public debates on important local issues and participating in several local, national, and regional debate competitions and forums. YMV is the flagship youth debate programme connecting civil society, education, and policymakers in the Southern Mediterranean and Europe. Through a range of activities, the programme provides opportunities for young creators to influence policy and media. There were many challenges in implementing the program. The biggest challenge was often mobility, such as the difficulty in obtaining visas for participants in regional and international activities, or the inability of some participants to participate for political or logistical reasons related to the refusal of an entry visa or the delay in obtaining one. Another challenge was that the youth did not have enough time to collaborate and communicate with decision makers. This meant that many meetings with decision makers did not adequately translate into clear goals and plans that could be approved and implemented by the youth participating in the program. Special visas

5 ‘Young Mediterranean Voices - Transforming Youth-Led Debate to Policy Action’, accessed 4 August 2022, <https://www.youngmedvoices.org/>.

6 ‘Young Arab Voices | British Council’, accessed 4 August 2022, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/insight-articles/young-arab-voices>.

for participation in “youth programs and activities” should be issued, the procedure of which is to be shortened and the period of validity extended. The activities between the youth and the decision-makers should be designed in such a way as to ensure real participation of the youth and give them the necessary time to formulate and present their proposals and ensure that they are implemented accordingly.

The youth programs must be designed in an authentic way, considering the real needs of youth and their social, cultural, economic, and political context in an intersectional manner that ensures the participation of all.

Khadija Amahal, Program Associate, Center for International Private Enterprise, Morocco

I was a participant in the Med Dialogue Leaders Program on Developing Critical Thinking Tools⁷, participating in an extensive bootcamp in Valencia, Spain, and meeting talented and inspiring leaders from all over the MENA region. Afterwards, I received a grant from the program to implement a local action titled “Swingm” (“think” in Amazigh) in Morocco that tackles the theme of critical thinking, combining both in-person and online activities. As part of this, 20 participants benefited from two workshops on design thinking, storytelling and videomaking. Following that, the participants engaged in a video competition addressing issues in their communities and providing recommendations for possible solutions. The top three videos won prizes to continue their journey of content creation. The online part of the action included four online expert-led sessions on topics related to developing critical thinking skills, fighting fake news, effective youth participation in civil society of political life, and the importance of volunteering for developing soft skills among youth. Lastly, the action included a series of podcast episodes dedicated to media literacy in different contexts. I was the action leader in charge of building partnerships with other organizations and individuals to implement the different activities of the program. It was challenging to coordinate the activities in a limited period, especially since I wanted to create many sustainable products that would remain available for a long period of time and can be used as a reference for young people in the future. Lucky, I had the support of a very supportive local partner - Morocco’s Friends Foundation⁸ - helping with logistics and ensuring everything was in place when I came back from Washington. I surrounded myself with people who shared the same passion for the action and received great support from my local partner. Prior to the action, I prepared alternative contingency plans ensuring the success of the planned events. The EU could support similar efforts by providing more professional opportunities for youth enabling them to

7 ‘Med Dialogue Leaders Bootcamp “Developing Critical Thinking Tools” | EU Neighbours’, accessed 4 August 2022, <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/opportunities/med-dialogue-leaders-bootcamp-developing-critical-thinking-tools>.

8 ‘Morocco’s Friends Foundation’, accessed 4 August 2022, <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/members/moroccos-friends-foundation>.

implement actions in their communities. These opportunities will also improve their lifestyle and capacitate them to serve their communities with more passion. The EU should trust young people and give them the chance to showcase their abilities to lead projects in their communities without having to rely on NGOs to apply for projects. And finally, it is vital to simplify the administrative procedures of concrete actions. This will encourage young people to apply for grants and make more impact.

Decentralize opportunities from the center, collaborate with youth and don't target them only as beneficiaries, and trust youth's actions.

Hajar el Haradi, Communications Officer, Youth Awakening Association, Morocco

Three years ago, I was chosen to participate in the European academy of Otzenhausen⁹, Germany, that was organized by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. I was a participant among 30 other young people from all over the Maghreb region. The program consisted of a series of workshops that aimed at deepening the participants knowledge about the EU as an entity, its power, and the advantages of the Union. In addition, it also



⁹ 'Oct 18, 2019, Seminar: Seminar of the European Fall Academy', Regional Programme Political Dialogue and regional Integration in the Southern Mediterranean, 17 October 2019, <https://www.kas.de/en/web/poldimed/veranstaltungen/detail/-/content/seminar-of-the-european-fall-academy>.

included a series of visits to some of the EU institutions, allowing us to get more insights into their structure and functions. When asked about the obstacles faced while participating in this event, I would have appreciated a focus on practice rather than on theory. Surely, the theoretical part is important, however, it is vital to know not just why but how we should get involved as youth in our respective communities. These questions were tackled in the different discussions during the workshops. The European Union is contributing to the prosperity of the youth's engagement in my region through the programs it sponsors and organizes. Nevertheless, my recommendation would be to focus more on the practice in these programs. As youth we have enough programs that tackle theory when it comes to the reasons why they should get involved and making them learn in theory how to do so. However, I believe it is necessary that the totality of these programs generalizes adding a practical part also, enabling the youth to practice what they learned and encouraging them to take the first step. Also, from my point of view, the youth nowadays would be more engaged and committed if they felt that they were truly actors of the change needed in their communities. This can be achieved by including them in the whole process of decision-making, beginning from their input into elaborating, drafting, adopting, implementing, and evaluating.

Let's Prioritize practice as much as we do theory

Theresa Rohrhirsch, Master International Security and Development, Jagiellonian University, Germany

Bringing in a slightly different perspective I will touch upon academic education in the field of peace and security within the EU. As a master's student of International Security and Development at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow I have the possibility to experience the benefits of studying together with my peers from non-EU countries. Being the only student in my program who grew up in the EU opens the floor to have diverse discussions and different insights from all continents. Especially in the field of international security it is crucial to leave the often-Eurocentric dominated discourses and take into account perspectives and academic work from other regions, already in an educational environment and not only when entering into the job market. Unfortunately, not that many people can benefit from such a diverse student body within their program, however, it is crucial to foster exchange and opening the academic discussions in the field of international security to tackle the global challenges we are facing. Therefore, I would recommend the EU to implement more ERASMUS Mundus Joint Masters in the field of peace and security studies. Currently, only two out of 163 programs are related to security studies. Besides introducing more programs in that field, it is necessary to allocate more funds toward scholarships for non-European citizens as well as to simplify the visa process for students from the global south.

More ERASMUS Mundus Joint Masters in the field of peace and security are needed together with more scholarship opportunities for non-European citizens.

Fotios Kotzakioulafis, European Climate Pact Ambassador, European Climate Pact, Greece

In November 2021, I was nominated as a European Climate Pact Ambassador - DG CLIMA of the European Commission - and the highlights are, among others, working on projects in Iceland, Greece, and the European Union as a whole. In addition to that, I actively participated in two high-level EU Policy Dialogues with the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans and with the Commissioner Sinkevicius. My work is mainly focused on coordinating with like-minded stakeholders from across Europe and providing updates on EU policies, such as climate-related ones, while also inspiring others to take climate action. Further, in my position I encourage citizens, from the public and private sector, as well as policymakers, to get involved in tackling climate change. In this regard, the primary difficulty I face when addressing people is that many of them, especially youth who would love to actively participate but do not know how, lack EU literacy. Despite the availability of many tools for participation, young people often do not know of their existence. I am trying to combat this issue by consolidating EU sources and creating either informative presentations or short speeches about how youth may better benefit from all the (funded) opportunities provided by several EU Institutions. It goes without saying that the Country Coordinator for the European Climate Pact in Greece, Constantinos Machairas, has supported me a lot when it comes to material, good practices, and various ways of approaching different target groups. My recommendations to EU officials responsible for youth engagement would be to better communicate their amazing hard work to youth, by inviting more and more young people to take part in policy dialogues, high-level events, and to keep funding several opportunities for them. For example, the increase of expenditure to Erasmus+ programs is a great choice, which will bring young Europeans closer to each other, by also showing them the benefits of the European Union in our daily lives.

Well-structured funding for activities that will engage and motivate young people to get more knowledgeable when it comes to EU. Creation of EU Youth Ambassadors, similar to the European Climate Pact Ambassadors, but for the European Union.

**Emilia Maria Burgos, European Climate Pact Ambassador,
European Climate Pact, Argentina**

I am an Ambassador of the European Climate Pact, currently working on a project on sustainable fashion called “Fashion for climate”¹⁰. In addition, I participated in the European Social Innovation Competition 2020 “Reimagine Fashion”¹¹. As an EU Climate Pact Ambassador my responsibility lies with raising awareness about the climate crisis and contribute to finding sustainable solutions together. The main goal is to provide a space for people across all walks of life to connect. We need to work together to tackle climate change and environmental degradation. As Ambassadors we inform, inspire and support climate action in our communities and networks contributing to the European Climate Pact.



10 ‘Fashion for climate’, accessed 4 August 2022, <https://sites.google.com/view/fashionforclimate/p%C3%A1gina-principal>.

11 ‘Commission Announces Winners of the 2020 European Social Innovation Competition | Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs’, accessed 4 August 2022, https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20211007070302/https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/commission-announces-winners-2020-european-social-innovation-competition_en.

The biggest obstacles in the beginning were the geographical distance and time difference between the EU and Argentina. Nevertheless, I have been able to join most of the meetings and training provided. Furthermore, I am connected with other ambassadors of the European Climate Pact through the National Ambassadors Network, coming from Germany, Italy, Croatia, France, Spain, and Portugal. I can participate in virtual events and discuss solutions for climate change and sustainability. In my opinion, for the EU to improve its commitment to young people, it is necessary to create academic working groups and interregional exchanges between the EU and Latin America to share different experiences and solutions to fight climate change.

As part of the Erasmus+ Program through the European and Latin American universities should have academic exchanges on issues on the international agenda such as climate change. The EU through funding could help research projects and knowledge exchange

Freddy Bilombo, Master Climate Change and Development, University of Reading, Republic of Congo

As a Policy Analyst volunteer at YES EUROPE¹², we used to follow ongoing 'hot policy topics' of the European Union Commission, such as the 'EU Green Deal' or 'Natural gas and Nuclear as Green Energy'. The aim is to facilitate the discussion with young leaders from Africa and Europe, and to raise their awareness on the most pressing issues of our century – energy poverty and climate change. One of the main challenges is to develop an educational toolkit for the thematic areas of energy and climate change which is adapted to a young audience. To overcome this challenge, we used to conduct research on the different topics, narrow them down, and find areas of interest for young people, which further their understanding of the challenges their communities are facing at the frontiers of energy and climate change. Then, we connect with technical experts who volunteer their time sharing their knowledge on those topics and help young people to identify niches for youth-led advocacy initiatives. In this regard, the European Union could implement a multi-pronged approach to improve its engagement with young people in the Republic of Congo and Africa. First, the European Union's local representation should engage with youth networks at the local level to communicate their projects and the role young people could play therein. Second, the European Union should create more networking and funding opportunities to enhance the skills of young people.

The European Union should increase funding opportunities – scholarships, fellowships, grants, capacity-building, networking events – to enhance young people skills, especially in the fields of energy and climate change.

12 Salla Nieminen, 'Home', YES-Europe (blog), accessed 4 August 2022, <https://yeseurope.org/>.

Challenges

During the online closed-door policy workshop “Young Voices: European Engagement and the EU’s image” on July 15th, 2022, participants voiced numerous challenges which young people face when working with the European Union or try to engage in EU-funded projects and programmes. In the following, the most relevant will be further outlined and discussed.

Lack of EU Literacy and ways of engagement

The knowledge of the European Union, its functionality and the possibility for direct engagement appears to be limited. Access to comprehensive, practical, and youth-friendly information about the institutions was criticized as limited. Despite the high motivation of young people, the limited access to practical information deters some of the efforts to actively engage in the EU political decision making. In addition to that, the EU faces communication as another challenge. It publishes different formats for a wide array of audiences. However, a version for young people is still missing. Similarly, despite the existence of far-reaching opportunities for funding and possibilities for active engagement, young people from across the globe find it difficult to access and understand this information. This unfortunately inhibits young people from participating and therewith does not further their interest in politics. As a result, the distrust towards and disappointment with European institutions is rising.

Limited access to academic opportunities for non-Europeans

Academic education especially in the field of security and peace studies remains Eurocentric. Within the vast opportunities offered by the ERASMUS MUNDUS Master catalogue only two out of 163 programs are related to security studies¹³. The majority of students come from within the EU and therewith further a European perspective. Making use of expertise and experiences from outside the EU should be a priority. Further, the lack of easily accessible knowledge on funding imits the possibilities for people coming from outside the European Union, as well as their mobility and the access to visa opportunities.

13 ‘Erasmus Mundus Catalogue’, accessed 3 August 2022, https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/scholarships/erasmus-mundus-catalogue_en.

Game Changers

In order to mitigate these challenges, different “small game-changer” – different small steps the EU could take to enhance the effectiveness of its engagement with the global youth – were collected. These can be structured in the following sub-categories:

Capacitate youth on how they can engage locally, not just why they should do so

The European Union in its trainings and workshops for youth engagement should also put an emphasis on the practical side of engagement on a local level. Questions of why youth should get involved in their communities are perceived to already have been covered sufficiently. For young people knowing how to engage practically in their communities is a vital skill that, however, still needs to be explored more in-depth during EU trainings and workshops. In this regard, the EU might benefit from the creation of educational toolkits, as described by Freddy Bilombo above, specifically designed for approaching young people and examining topics of global relevance such as climate change, and how these can be tackled in local communities through active youth engagement.

Center youth programmes on young people and their capabilities

Young people participating in the KAS MDPD Young Voices Project have voiced their wish that “youth programs must be designed in an authentic way, considering the real needs of youth and their social, cultural, economic, and political context in an intersectional manner that ensures the participation of all.” The EU should put young people at the center of their youth engagement and not only collaborate with them as beneficiaries but also enable their autonomous action and planning capabilities. In this regard, the EU could further the creation of professional opportunities for young people in the sphere of local engagement. In addition to that, in order for the youth to receive the necessary education, the access and availability under the ERASMUS Mundus umbrella should be facilitated. Funding opportunities and the access to visas is vital for non-European youth to benefit from education in the EU. Further, the EU could play a vital role in facilitating networking opportunities and connecting young changemakers among each other.

Enhance European media presence and accessibility for youth

As outlined above, the EU's work is not sufficiently advertised for the youth to know of the vast variety of opportunities. It would therefore be advisable for the EU to make better use of its social media channels, promote youth policy dialogues and other high-level events in which young people can directly engage with European decision-makers and actively engage in the decision-making process. In addition to that, the EU should enhance the accessibility of its policy documents. As argued by some of the young voices, youth-friendly policy documents and short explanation videos on complex EU policies would enable youth to better understand the institutions. This, naturally, should be accompanied by easily accessible online trainings and webinars on current global challenges such as climate change and energy security for instance.

Encourage exchange and utilize youth network expertise

Young people are oftentimes connected in the local communities. The European Union could increase its engagement with these local networks and therewith benefit from the vast expertise. These youth networks can also offer opportunities for advertising the EU's engagement in partner countries and possibilities for the youth to actively engage in these projects and programmes. Regionally and internationally youth networks can play a vital role in joint action against global issues such as climate change. The EU could facilitate the exchange between these networks and therewith become the forerunner on coordinated regional and potentially global youth action.

Future global youth engagement – recommendations for European decisionmakers



This policy paper elaborates some concrete recommendations for the European Union to enhance its international youth engagement. In this regard the EU should:

Engage with global youth by...

1. ...Creating Youth Sounding Boards in partner countries

The already existing Youth Sounding Board for International Partnerships¹⁴

¹⁴ 'Youth Sounding Board', accessed 3 August 2022, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-sounding-board_en.

brings together young people from across the globe to advise EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen and DG INTPA on making the EU's external action more participatory and engaging for young people. This concept should also be implemented on a national level within the EU's partner countries. Young people who actively want to engage in the political decision-making should have the opportunity to directly consult with the EU representations in the countries on matters of programming and future programme design, for example in the run-up of the national multiannual financial frameworks or the mid-term reviews. It is important that the young people form a representative group coming from all sectors of society, and the EU needs to make the selection process of the board as transparent as possible. The creation of, and active engagement by the EU delegations with these national Youth Sounding Boards ensures a sustainable and in-depth exchange with relevant actors on the ground and cements young people's engagement in the EU's external action.

2. ... Establishing a network of EU Youth Ambassadors.

From within the aforementioned National Youth Sounding Boards, an EU Youth Ambassador could be elected. Similarly to the EU Climate Pact Ambassadors, these Youth Ambassadors will form the closest link between the EU, the EU's representations, as well as the Youth Sounding Boards and the young people within the country. The EU should capacitate these Youth Ambassadors with the necessary training (thematic education on topics of global concern, application for EU funded programmes, programming, etc...). Following that, the Youth Ambassadors will themselves take on the responsibility to train and the members of the Youth Sounding Boards and the wider group of young people in their home countries. It is vital for the EU to also enable regional and international exchange between these Youth Ambassadors on a regular basis.

3. ... Creating sustainable links to the vast networks of civil society.

The efforts of young people within the Youth Sounding Boards often coincide with the efforts of CSO networks in partner countries. However, there seems to be a duplication in the work which urgently needs to be addressed. The EU, in this regard, can bring together both sides on a regular and continuous basis to exchange and coordinate their efforts. This can happen within the aforementioned regular meetings of the national Youth Sounding Boards, in which representatives from CSOs are invited to participate. Based on the topic of discussion, the invitation can be addressed to CSOs working directly on the specific topic or which have a demonstrated interest in these issues.

Enable the global youth by...

4. ... Providing training opportunities on the topics of project planning and the application for local small-scale programs.

The EU should capacitate young people to showcase their abilities and passion for local action. In this regard, university groups, political (youth)

parties, NGOs coordinated by young people, as well as young professionals and young politicians need to be especially targeted. This can happen in coordination with the EU Youth Ambassadors and the Youth Sounding Boards in the partner countries.

5. ... Creating more ERASMUS Mundus Joint Masters.

The EU could consolidate its offers of ERASMUS Mundus Joint Masters globally. Especially in the fields of peace and security, as well as climate change and energy studies, the content discussed remains mainly Eurocentric. However, in these fields – and on topics related to other global challenges – expertise and knowledge from outside the European Union can certainly enrich the quality of education. This also goes hand in hand with the extended provision of funding opportunities, and extracurricular trainings and workshops.

6. ... Sharing best practices to actively engage in the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU should support young people in identifying potential gaps in their country's fulfillment of relevant United Nations directives, and then capacitate them to actively find solutions in cooperation with their national governments. The EU could collect best practices, such as the case of Finland's comprehensive engagement of young people in the drafting of its National Action Plan: Youth, Peace and Security¹⁵, and draw conclusions for its external action and international youth engagement from these proceedings.

Guide the global youth by...

7. ... Creating EU-Youth Dialogue Hubs.

In addition to the existing network of EU representations across the world, open spaces for dialogue between the youth in the respective partner countries and the European Union and EU member states representatives and actors should be created. These so-called EU-Youth Dialogue Hubs shall serve as centers for political dialogue and joint learning, but also as a location for trainings and information exchange. These localities should be easily accessible for interested young people and could potentially include a library with relevant information on the EU and its engagement in the partner country, conference and working rooms, as well as spaces for social gatherings like a café. The Youth Dialogue Hubs should also be open for usage for local actors that want to promote European values.

8. ... Making information more accessible for young people.

The EU is publishing its policy documents in a vast variety of languages and forms. However, a youth-friendly version is in many cases still lacking. Visualizing the information more comprehensively and therewith helping

15 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, 'Youth, Peace and Security : Finland's National Action Plan 2021–2024', 20 August 2021, https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163334/UM_2021_05.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

young people navigate the complicated contents of different policies could enhance the EU's image among young, highly motivated people who wish to actively engage in the political decision-making process of the EU. Further, short explanatory videos specifically explaining complex policies for young audiences would support the global understanding of the EU. In this regard, the existing range of trainings and webinars could be further extended to cover global challenges and help find solutions to tackle these issues. These forms of communicating and explaining the complexities of the EU then need to be more prominently advertised through the EU's social media channels, and later with the help of the EU Youth Ambassadors transferred to young people and youth networks in partner countries

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