

ACTIVITY REPORT

Partial Agreement Seminar: ‘Youth as promoters of sustainability: the EYC as a tool to reinforce sustainable mobility’

29 November – 1st December 2023

Vitoria Gasteiz, Basque Country

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1. Introduction

Last 30th of November and 1st of December took place in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country, Spain, the Seminar of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card and the European Youth Card Association (EYCA). This seminar, under the name of *“Youth as promoters of sustainability: the European Youth Card as a tool to reinforce sustainable mobility”* was focused on the concept of Sustainability and how to mainstream it through the potential uses of the Youth card.

This event was co-organised by the Council of Europe, the EYCA association and the Government of Euskadi, General Secretariat for Social Transition and Agenda 2030 - youth direction, institution that hosted the event in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Sustainability is a topic with multiple meanings and the young generation is becoming one of its stronger promoters. Considering that the core mission of EYCA is to encourage youth mobility (facilitating transport, accommodation, leisure or cultural options), it is relevant to consider sustainable options in order to become reliable stakeholders in the European Youth field. This seminar has been an opportunity to learn, debate, reflect and construct new possibilities to be practical and useful for the youth card promoters.

2. Objectives and target

The **objectives** of this event were:

- To create synergies between public sector, youth card organizations, NGOs, young people and companies to advance sustainability in youth mobility;
- To offer a unique space for members of the PA on Youth Mobility to build stronger partnerships with the European Youth Card organizations in their countries;
- To identify concrete ways to use the EYC as a means to provide young people with green and digital services in smart cities (and beyond).

The event showcased **experts in the field of sustainability, researchers and EYCA members who shared valuable practices** from diverse perspectives, aiming to inspire each participant. It also featured collective reflection sessions to actively engage participants and promote the sustainable use of the Youth Card.



Target

- Figures: The event hosted a total of **45 participants** coming from 17 different partner countries, with diverse profiles of organizations, public institutions, NGOs or youth representatives.
- Profiles: There were participants from regional and national governments, from NGOs, from the private sector, and also from youth card associations and youth activists.
- The countries represented were: Georgia, Albania, Andorra, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Rumania, San Marino, Finland, Slovakia, Turkey, Lithuania, Greece, France, Netherlands and Spain.

3. Program agenda and content

To align with the expectations and interests of the event coordinators, the agenda was structured as follows, spanning a duration of one and a half days:

DAY 1 - 30th November 2023

Development outline:

The initial session was aimed to provide a contextual understanding of sustainability, exposing participants to various approaches, experiences, and good practices across different sectors. Participants were encouraged to reflect on the broader context of this framework and begin contemplating potential connections within their own realities and actions.

The agenda included the following content:

1. Welcome from the organizing institutions

The various organizing institutions that played a crucial role in shaping this event were actively involved in the main opening of the Partial Agreement Seminar. The opening was led by **Mr. Manel Sánchez**, the Director of EYCA. On a regional level, the responsibility rested with the **municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz**, represented by Mr. **Oskar Fernández Jaras**, and the **regional government of Euskadi**, where Mrs. **Miren Saratxaga**, the Director of Youth, extended a warm welcome to the participants.

On a different note, **Mrs. Clementina Barbaro** from the **Council of Europe** and **Mr. Miguel Perestrello**, the **President of EYCA**, also extended their welcome to participants and expressed gratitude to the hosting partners in Vitoria-Gasteiz.



The program's content structure incorporated a diversity of speakers aimed at delivering ideas, content, information, and good practices related to Sustainability as a broad concept. Additionally, these discussions were directly linked to youth mobility, forming the central theme of the event.

The program for the initial day included the following speakers and content:

2. Keynote speaker - Natalia Ciobanu PhD

Profile of the speaker: Natalia is a sustainability professional, with a PhD in Resilience of social-ecological system to climate change impacts. She has over 15 years of experience in the sustainable field supporting, advising and collaborating with diverse stakeholders. Her experience is also based on volunteering for multiple initiatives, development of services as youth worker, trainer and facilitator on sustainable topics.

Topic: *Between policy compromises and greenwashing. Youth pushing the Green Agenda.*

Conference highlights:

Natalia's presentation was focused on the analysis of the concept of sustainability and all its dimensions, and also the role that citizens play, both on a personal and professional level.

She shared and described in detail how the main pillars of Sustainability are connected with several global and european frameworks as Agenda 2030, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), or with european policies as the Green Deal.



Considering her special motivation in pursuing engagement across sectors, she shared information to increase the general understanding of the complexity of the current situation in terms of sustainability and use of resources. Indeed, she connected her presentation with issues and concepts related to this complexity as:

- The feeling of **limitlessness**, for our way of living as if there was an unending amount or resources.
- The development of a **Cowboy economy**, as a system where consumption and production generate growth when they are expanding, but the limitation is not considered.
- The increase of the **Eco-anxiety**, the feeling of young people being anxious about their future, in particular related to environmental issues.

And what can we do? She brought some proposals:

- **Reassess our instructions' role** in a context that needs to change our economic model, and define the reasons why we have to change.

- **Promote the worldview of “Spaceship Earth”**, encouraging all citizens on Earth to act as a harmonious crew towards the sustainability of our planet.
- **Implement and act based on the diverse frameworks** that are already promoting a transformation in our way of producing, consuming, recycling, etc. (Getting deeper into all the issues developed in agendas as 2030 or the Green Deal).
- **Re-understand the concept of Economic growth**, that does not mean to create “more”, but to reflect on how we do it.
- **Connect with the ESG (Environmental, social and corporate governance) framework**. It can support the assessment of business practices and performance on various sustainability and ethical issues. It can be a supportive tool to measure viability and trust.

Natalia concluded her speech by reflecting on the role of youth in promoting a more sustainable future. She encouraged the integration of sustainability into the strategies of participant organizations, emphasizing the potential contribution through the use of the Youth Card.

3. Success models - sharing good practices

YECA MEMBER: MOVIOJEM - WEBSITE - Portugal

Profile of the speaker: **José Sousa** is the Deputy-Director of the Marketing Department at Movijovem in Portugal. He has been working in the development and management of the European Youth Card (Cartão Jovem), for the last years. Furthermore, he has been a member of the EYCA board and member on the Coordination board of the Partial Agreement for Mobility through the European Youth Card.



Topic: Reinforce Sustainable mobility - MOVIOJEM.

Highlights of the presentation: José Sousa made a detailed introduction to all the services and actions that are taking place from Movijovem to youth in Portugal. He described diverse services related to hosting international, to Hosting at Portugal, also about the uses of the Youth Card and the Intrarail.

Their actions are focused on several areas of contribution:

- Youth policy
- Youth mobility
- Youth participation
- Youth benefits and
- Youth development

José described different actions and projects which are currently in development and connected with sustainability, as:

- Benefits from **public transportation** (bus and Railways).
- The specific program IntraRail is about promotions and discounts in train services and accommodation, in coordination with youth hostels.
- The use of a **biodegradable PVC youth card**
- The **youth card forest**, that contributed to reforestation, territorial cohesion, and youth participation in a medium -long term.
- The development of the **youth card APP**, avoiding the plastic card.
- Of the **Wallet**, that is including multiple cards in one.
- In order to promote the youth involvement there is a program “**PlataForma J**”, a panel with youth related issues, that allows youth to provide ideas, insights and expectations, that can be inspiring for future actions.

José also described some **actions that will take place into the Plan 2024** in Movijovem. Some of the initiatives considered are:

- Movijovem is planning to provide a youth card for free in 2024 to attend a new big community of users.
- A new initiative into IntraRail, where national youngsters that finish their studies will have the opportunity to have a 100% paid trip of 3 days, 2 nights within train and accommodation covered.
- There will be new advantages in goods and services provided in the digital environment.
- There will be new partnerships with companies that provide services and products (in the framework of the Youth Card), that measure the carbon print.
- There will be, as well, new partnerships with NGOs that are working in Sustainability specifically directed to the youth segment.

[EYCA MEMBER: Euskadiko Gazteriaren Kontseilua - WEBSITE](#)

Profile of the speakers:

Miren Saratxaga, Youth Director of the Government of Euskadi and
Iratxe Uriarte, representative of the Basque Youth Council.

Highlights of the presentation: Miren and Iratxe shared a bit of their actions and plans focused on the connection of the youth actions with Sustainability. They provided some specific data and information regarding the contextualization of the specific situation of Euskadi, as:

- The low rate of youth unemployment and school leave in this region
- The high percentage of awareness on youth about the current situation of a climate emergency,
- The lack of trust on international agreements, based on a study on youth

They also described the connection that the regional policy has got in relation with the Agenda 2030, related to the pillars of People (equity), Planet (Ecology), Prosperity (solidarity) and Peace (Human Rights).

The government from Euskadi is promoting a society that respects the environment, nature and fights against climate change. In this direction, the institution is promoting public transportation and fostering necessary conditions for young people to be regular users of this kind of transportation.

Regarding the **use and promotion of the youth card**, there were several data provided:

- The youth card is provided since 2019, and it is for free
- It represents different discounts and special offers, as well as a free travel insurance for card holders.
- Currently there are a total number of 150.000 card holders in Euskadi
- Regarding **sustainable actions or activities**, there were highlights some as:
 - There is not printing card - it is a digital version
 - There is a youth hostel card, for hosting discounts
 - It is promoted the sustainable tourism and local commerce
 - Currently there are more than 1350 establishments that offer services related to organic food or sustainable mobility.



OTHER STAKEHOLDERS: EUROCITIES - Juan Caballero

Profile of the speakers: Juan Caballero, is a former journalist working on Mobility projects at Eurocities since 2015. He has been coordinating the EuropeanMobilityWeek secretariat for the last nine years. His special areas of work are related to behavioral change, awareness-raising and also citizen's participation.

Highlights of the presentation: Juan described the organization that he was representing, Eurocities. It is the biggest network of cities in Europe (it has more than 200 member cities, with a total population of approximately 150 million people). This network is already working on sustainability projects in different fields such as urban mobility. It is working in a transversal way with the different partner member cities, making the most of networking at sharing knowledge at the European level.

Juan's presentation was built on the premise that *there is no quality of life without sustainability*. On this basis there were several relevant content provided:

- Eurocities work in different thematic areas such as: Governance, environment, Digital transformation, mobility, culture, migration, climate, jobs and inclusion, economic development and food.
- It is needed to work together (in this case the sum of cities and its institutions) in order to reach quality of life.
- When talking about mobility we have to consider not just people, but also goods and things that also move. And when talking about mobility they propose a new concept that is "mobility as a Right".
- Their concept related to climate change is about "adaptation and mitigation of the effects of it", but not trying to fight against climate change.

Juan has been coordinating the #EUROPEANMOBILITYWEEK secretariat for the last 9 years. It takes place around the middle of September of each year, promoting in different European cities spaces on the streets where to discuss with people different issues that affect citizens and their cities themselves.

Eurocities made a noteworthy contribution by outlining **five ways cities can involve young people in urban mobility planning and campaigns**. These recommendations stem from an online workshop conducted in 2021. Through this initiative, Eurocities aims to promote the following guidelines for effectively engaging and connecting with the youth as a target group:

- To listen to young people, not just use them to just market or promote our work
- To involve young people from different backgrounds
- Their involvement should be beneficial for everyone.

- Transport is key for personal development, so its cost can limit employment or education opportunities for youth
- Young people are more likely to use sustainable transport options, so we may use that potential to reach them.

Concerning Eurocities' Social and Environmental strategy, various priorities are noteworthy. These include supporting employees in their personal and professional development, promoting their health and wellbeing, and establishing sustainability principles for projects, policies, and partnerships.

4. Collective participation - reflecting on Sustainability

As a collective endeavor, there was an invitation to contemplate the personal and shared interpretations of sustainability. Participants formed teams to collaboratively brainstorm, addressing various questions to grasp their initial perspectives on the seminar's central theme. The primary contributions have been documented in **Annex 1**.



The slides and presentations of DAY 1 can be found in this [LINK](#)

DAY 2 - 1st December 2023

Development outline:

The second day took place in Ataria, an environmental studies center in Vitoria-Gasteiz. The objective of the second session was to explore additional good practices and experiences, fostering a creative environment for envisioning various sustainable project ideas associated with the use of the Youth Card.

The agenda included the following content:

1. Success models - sharing good practices

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS: DEMSOC - Juan López-Aranguren

Profile of the speaker: Juan graduated in architecture from the Higher Technical School of Madrid. He has developed community architecture works in favelas and peripheral neighborhoods in different parts of the world, putting into practice methodologies of social action and innovative qualitative intervention. For two and a half years he has been coordinating a program of public and community art from the Madrid City Council. Furthermore, he has been working for Democratic Society for the last 3 years, the organization he is currently representing.

Title of the presentation: *Sustainability and community engagement - Strategies for a networked approach.*



Highlights of the presentation:

Juan focused his presentation on the relevance of creating networks and collective participation in order to build intentional relations and processes, both to achieve transformational change. DemSoc promotes a Networked Approach, also related to a climate democracy approach, considering it as a way to build relations with concrete purposes and generating impact. Some of the key ideas shared were:

- Leveling grounds: to assure the active participation of citizens.
- Promote an active belonging: to make sure participants feel part of.
- Prototyping culture: Test and progress step by step, as perfection can not be reached from the beginning. It is necessary to have an open mind to think differently, from experimentation, from a new imaginary.
- Meaningful inefficiencies: it is relevant to promote the personal connections , thanks to the tangential content that can generate links and maybe support the main content.
- More is more: involving others also brings co-benefits.

Juan introduced a dynamic to underscore the importance of networks and strategies for their expansion. Additionally, he applied the "Stakeholders Engagement Process Canvas," a method specifically designed to structure communication actions that enhance stakeholder engagement. This tool serves to deepen participants' comprehension of the networking process.

2. Success models - sharing good practices

Furthermore, there was an opportunity to showcase new EYCA best practices, fostering inspiration for other EYCA members and organizations based on their prior experiences, with a particular emphasis on sustainability.

EYCA MEMBER: Montenegro - Center for youth education WEBSITE

Representatives: Amar Mulić and Jugoslav Radović

Highlights of the presentation:

The EYC is the only official free benefit card for young people in Montenegro, providing approximately 270 different discounts in the country, and another 70.000 through Europe. This NGO is promoting the use of the EYC with different aims: provide information, and encourage mobility, employment, development of youth policy at the local level and digitalization. Thanks to the youth card different partnerships are being promoted among EYCA, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, local government, universities or international organizations.



This NGO is promoting different cards for different youth profiles. It is also developing an intense communication and marketing work in order to engage youth in Montenegro.

EYCA MEMBER: Institute Balearic of Youth - WEBSITE

Representative: Victòria Solera Ripoll

She has been responsible for the EYC in the Balearic Islands for 10 years, and she has been working at IBOVE managing youth programmes since 2001.

Highlights of the presentation: Victòria presented the different actions that are taking place in the Balearic Islands related to the youth card and youth actions. She highlighted

an innovative and engaging sustainability initiative, the "Environmental Video Contest," as the main experience she shared. The objective of this event is to enhance the environmental knowledge and awareness of citizens, with active participation from Youth Card holders and educational institutions. Several winning videos were showcased as illustrative examples.



EYCA MEMBER: CJP - WEBSITE

Representative: Noor Weggemans

Highlights of the presentation: One of the main goals of CJP is making arts and culture accessible for young people. This organization champions youth engagement through the arts, playing a significant role for various reasons: it empowers young people to express themselves and fosters creativity, and serves as a platform to share

thoughts and feelings. Presently, the organization hosts 1.2 million cardholders, utilizing a digital format for accessibility and convenience.

EYCA MEMBER: Ministry of Social cohesion and Family, Greece

Representative: Pinelopi Louta

Highlights of the presentation: Pinelopi shared some of the main actions that are being developed from the Ministry of Social cohesion and family. They are making a free distribution of the youthcard for unemployed



youth. Additionally, they actively promote mobility, strive to mitigate inequalities, and particularly emphasize the enhancement of human rights.

The Youth Card also includes cultural discounts for museums, concerts, and venues. As another noteworthy example, it contributes to raising awareness about critical issues such as climate change and the digital transition.

EYCA MEMBER: Agencia Catalana de la Juventut

Profile of the speaker: **Corina Pirvulescu.**

Highlights of the presentation: Corina presented A short presentation of this organization, focused on the specific sustainability actions that are being developed. The carney jove of Catalonia is promoting the inclusion of new discounts sustainability-related. They want to guarantee the balance between economic growth, care for the environment and social wellbeing. Some of those actions are:

Organic food and fair-trade food (local, Km 0); sustainable fashion, sustainable mobility, bulk products; natural and ecological cosmetics, and cultural and free time activities.



The slides and presentations of DAY 2 can be found in this [LINK](#)

3. Collective participation - reflecting on Sustainability

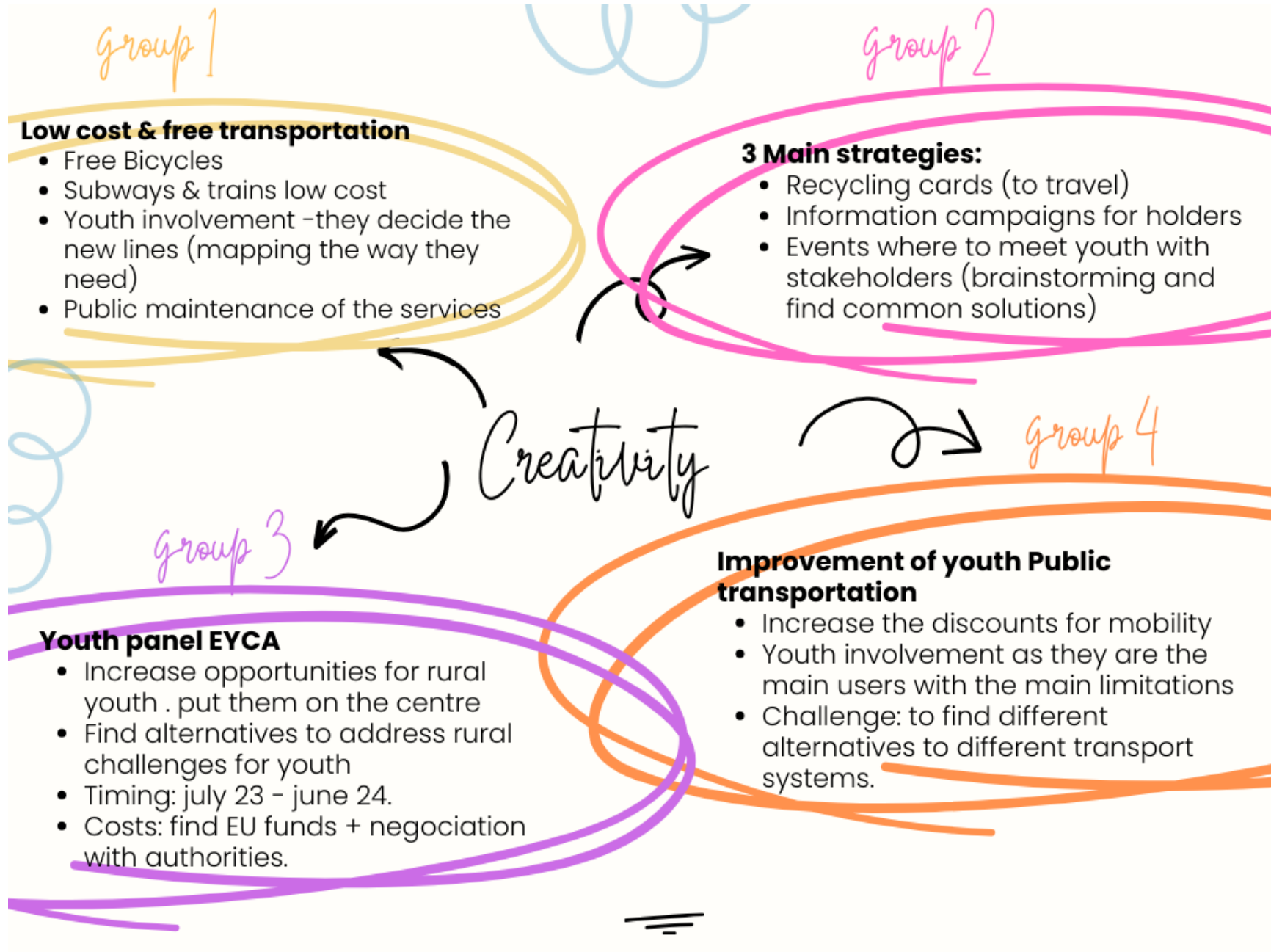
As a final collective initiative, participants were encouraged to identify potential actions and projects that could be undertaken through the EYC, specifically aligned with sustainability. Leveraging the diverse concepts, ideas, experiences, and good practices discussed throughout the event, participants were inspired to formulate new ideas, actions, and projects applicable to their respective contexts of intervention, envisioning future applications of the Youth Card. The central question guiding this exercise was:

How can you bring the concept of Sustainability in your own context (considering potential uses of the YouthCard)?

Then, the participant groups were also invited to consider several elements in their creation:

- **Sustainable mobility of youth** may be a priority in the design
- **Viability** - Will we be able to make this happen?)
- **Timing** - Will we be able to make this in a short or medium term?)
- **Costs** - We will be able to manage the expenses?)
- **Youth Involvement** - Each action should give protagonist to youth.

The next annex reflects the ideas that were drafted and shared after the co-creation space.



The closing of the event was again on the hand of the Director of EYCA, **Mr. Manel Sánchez**, the president of EYCA, **Mr. Miguel Perestrello**, the Youth Director of the government of Euskadi, **Mrs. Miren Saratxaga** and **Mrs. Clementina Barbaro** on behalf of the Youth Council.

4. Evaluation from participants

A final evaluation was delivered to participants to measure diverse elements of the seminar. A summarize of the results, thanks to the responses of some participants, is shared as follows.

- Coordination for the assistance to the seminar. It was 80% valued with the maximum valoration.
- Accommodation in Vitoria-Gasteiz. 100% also achieved the maximum points.
- Meals: duration and quality. 90% valorated in 5 (maximum valor).
- Logistics and location. It was 80% maximum valoration, and 20% 4 points.
- There were some comments regarding the need for some fresh air, the fact that it was closed and small space; but there were also some positive valorations about the coordination and preparation.
- About how meaningful was the content of the seminar: It was valorated in 60% with the maximum punctuation, then 30% with 4 (over 5), and then 10% 3.
- The conference from the external speaker. Got a good valoration with the following rates: 33,3% with 5 points; 40% with 4 points and then 26,7% with 3 points.
- Good practices. It was also very well valorated with the following rates: 90% with 5 points and 10% with 4 points. The main observations were: how relevant it is to share good practices of different countries; that were very well presented and meaningful; that was a relevant element for learning. And specially that these were sessions that provided ideas and supported understanding of the different profiles of EYCA members.
- The facilitation and conduction of the process. It was valorated in 80% with the maximum punctuation (5) and then 10% with 4 points, and 10% with 3 points. The main observations pointed out were that there was short time available for the dynamics; that maybe a more clear connection between the topic, presentations and the activities could be helpful. Furthermore, it was also vert well valorated, specially the the management of the time and process itself.

The most relevant content provided during the seminar was listed as follows:

- Good practices
- Network activity that was a good exercise to understand how do networks are developed
- The focus on the practical content, that is the most interesting for participants
- Interesting information that was delivered
- The collective reflection, when there was an opportunity to discuss and get to know each other's realities better.

Other suggestions or comments:

- Proposal of including more members sharing good practices from their countries
- Invite more young people as participants to share their expectations of the EYC
- Again, relevance of inviting young representatives from each country to get to know what they see as potential additional benefits through the EYC
- The practical experiences are very meaningful for that kind of events
- To leave more space and meaningful time for the group activities
- Promote more networking possibilities in the frame of the seminar
- Promote ways how to get involve from each partner in such topics
- It was observed as well that participants have a lot to learn on the connection between sustainability and youth mobility. It should also be interesting to have a gender reflection analysis on the best practices on youth mobility.

5. Learning outcomes and highlights

As a general balance of the seminar, some elements can be highlight as learning outcomes:

- Integral approach of the concept of Sustainability, that was linked to different content, and focused on social, economical and environmental dimensions.
- Presence and voice given to youth, an important element that is promoted into the EYCA and Partial Agreement events.
- Team building opportunity: this was definitely an opportunity to work together and define together new strategies and actions, both from EYCA members and other participants from the Partial Agreement.
- Learn from experience: the best valorated content of the seminar was the good practices sessions where participants shared their success stories. Of course learning from experiences is a great example of innovation and those inspiring sessions will also promote the replicability of actions in other contexts.

