

Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the youth card:
looking ahead to new horizons

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When I think of **youth mobility**, I **used to think mainly of travel opportunities: young people** being able to **move from one part of Europe to another** for a **fraction of the cost**. Which is **true**, but it's **not the whole truth**.

Youth mobility is also about movement in:

- **learning,**
- **volunteering,**
- **and in participation.**

It's about giving young people the freedom to grow

- **Geographically**
- **Intellectually**
- **and socially.**

It **means** being able to **study abroad**, to take part in a **traineeship**, to **volunteer** in another country, to **connect across borders**, and to **gain a sense of belonging to Europe**.

In short, **youth mobility** is **not only about where** young people can go, but about **who** they can become as a result.

For me, **youth mobility** has **paved almost every part of my journey so far**.

– I'm from a small island called Malta, *not sure if you've heard of Malta*. It's a small island in the Mediterranean... the smallest EU country.. not connected by land to the rest of Europe...

But through youth mobility, I was able to:

- (1) Study law in the Netherlands
- (2) Do a traineeship at the European Parliament in Belgium
- (3) and to travel through Europe with the DiscoverEU programme

That DiscoverEU experience was truly enriching. I travelled by train across

- Austria
- Slovakia
- Switzerland and
- Germany.

Coming from **Malta**, where we **don't have trains**, learning how to **navigate Europe's railway systems** was an **adventure** in itself.

I'll share a small personal story from my DiscoverEU experience.

– When I was travelling through **Switzerland**, *not sure if you've heard of it...* a country known for its **breathtaking scenery but also for its prices!**

I spent **three days living almost entirely on bread**. I had bought one huge loaf at a supermarket and kept breaking off pieces whenever I was hungry. It wasn't glamorous, but it was one of the best trips of my life in Europe. I travelled from the south to the west to the north of Switzerland, seeing so much in just a few days. It was simple, and yet it was freedom.

That experience taught me self-reliance, independence, and creativity. It also **reminded me of what Europe means**: that you can **cross borders safely**, **meet people** from **different cultures**, and **yet still feel at home**.

These experiences shape the young people who will one day:

- lead our countries
- innovate in our industries
- and raise the next generation

If they don't get to experience mobility, they **miss out** on **developing the empathy and openness** that Europe **needs to thrive**.

That's why it's so **important** that we **continue to invest in youth mobility**.

Not just in the **big programmes**, but **also** in the **smaller, more accessible tools** *that make a real difference in everyday life*.

The **European Youth Card** is **one of those tools**. It **helps young people afford museums**, trains, **cultural events**, and accommodation. You have no idea the number of museums I decided to skip just because it's an extra 10 euros that I did not have the budget for.

Youth mobility isn't just about moving; it's about belonging.

And **when young people feel that Europe belongs to them**, they are more **likely to participate, to vote, to engage, and ultimately, to care**.

My recommendation is simple: let's make youth mobility **more inclusive, more affordable, and more visible**.

– So maybe **what we need isn't just more opportunities**, but **more affordable ones too**, so that **no young person *has to survive on bread for three days just to experience Europe***.

But jokes aside, I believe that that is **one of the most meaningful investments** we can make in **youth**, and in the **generations to come**.

Thank you