THE CONGRESS LE CONGRÈS
COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CG(2026)51-18
13 October 2026

Summary of projects drawn up and implemented by youth delegates

Summary

This report provides an overview of initiatives led by Congress youth delegates in 2026 between the March and October sessions of the Congress. Each project summary is structured to address four key questions:

1) What were the aim and objectives of your project
2) What activities have you developed to achieve your objectives?
3) What were the project's main results?
4) What are the lessons learned after the implementation of the project?

If I Had the Mic: Youth Political Voices
Enia Hoxha
ALBANIA, Online - national coverage

1) Aim:
To encourage young people in Albania to engage with political and democratic issues by giving them a simple, accessible way to share their views, concerns, and recommendations with decisionmakers.
Objectives:
To involve at least 20 young people from Albania in an online campaign on democracy and political participation by October 2026.
To collect at least 10 short video or written submissions from young people expressing their concerns and suggestions for change.
To raise awareness among young people about youth participation, democratic involvement, and trust in institutions through social media.

2) The project was implemented through the online campaign “If I Had the Mic: Youth Political Voices.” The campaign took place entirely online over approximately one month.
The main activities were:
Developing the campaign concept, visual materials, and participation rules.
Contacting youth organisations, student groups, youth councils, and informal youth groups to encourage participation.
Launching the campaign through direct outreach and word of mouth, using the question: “If you had 1 minute to speak directly to decisionmakers in Albania, what would you say?”
Collecting short video submissions from young people on democracy, political participation, and the changes they would like to see.
Supporting the dissemination of the submissions by encouraging participants to share their videos on their own Instagram stories using the hashtag #IfIHadTheMic.
Methods used: online campaign, direct outreach, word-of-mouth communication, video submissions, social-media dissemination, and sharing through youth groups and online channels.

3) Around 25 young people participated directly by creating and sharing video submissions for the campaign. The submissions addressed different issues related to democracy, political participation, and the changes young people would like to see in Albania. Participants shared their videos on their personal Instagram stories, which allowed the campaign to reach audiences beyond the direct participants.
It is difficult to measure the exact reach of the campaign, as the videos were shared through participants’ private stories and personal accounts. However, based on the estimated number of views per story, the campaign likely reached several hundred people indirectly per post/person. In addition, the campaign concept and materials were shared with an informal youth group channel of around 1,000 members, which included both direct participants and other young people interested in the topic.
Lastly, the campaign created an accessible space for young people to express their views during a period of significant political tension in Albania. It also showed that peer-to-peer sharing can be an effective way to disseminate youth-led content, even without a dedicated project social-media page.

4) The campaign was implemented during a period of intense political tension in Albania, with ongoing protests led by young people and students. This made the implementation more challenging, as it was important to keep the campaign focused on constructive civic expression rather than allowing it to become part of polarised political debate.
One key lesson was the importance of protecting participants. Because the political environment was highly polarised, it was necessary to ensure that young people could express criticism without being exposed to targeting, hate speech, or being presented as acting against a particular political side. The campaign also confirmed that social media is a fast and effective tool for reaching young people. It allows information to be shared quickly, makes content more engaging.
At the same time, the experience showed that direct outreach, informal youth groups, and word of mouth can be more effective than relying only on a new project page, especially when there is limited time to build an online audience.
I would note that for future editions, I would allocate more time for outreach and follow-up, involve partner organisations earlier, and consider creating a shared platform to make the campaign easier to document.

Magazine: Understanding Europe and Andorran Politics
Anna Palomera Clapisson
ANDORRA, Andorra

1) To create an accessible and engaging magazine for young people in Andorra, providing them with a clear understanding of the Council of Europe and how the political system in Andorra works. The project aims to make complex institutional and political topics easier to understand for young people. The long-term objective is to encourage Andorran youth to stay informed, develop a better understanding of Andorran politics and to participate more actively in these processes.

2) To achieve the objectives of the project, I carried out desk research using information from official sources from the Council of Europe and Andorran public institution, as well as other reliable open-access sources. I then adapted the content to make it clear and engaging for young people, focusing on explaining the Council of Europe, Andorra's participation in the Organisation and Andorran politics. Lastly, I brought the information together digitally in a magazine's format.

3) The final product is a magazine covering three key areas of Andorra's democratic life. It has been specifically developed for a young audience, with the aim of making complex political topics easier to understand and bringing young Andorrans closer to politics, ultimately encouraging greater interest and engagement in democratic processes.

4) The importance of creating youth-oriented resources that make information on political and European affairs easier to access and understand in order to foster engagement.

Youth Civic Camp
Lilit Sofyan
ARMENIA, Gyulagarak, Lori

1) The "Youth Civic Camp" project aimed to empower young people in Gyulagarak community to participate more actively and meaningfully in local decision-making by strengthening their civic awareness, participation skills, and capacity to identify community needs and develop youth-led solutions.

2) The activities comprised a collection of workshops. A self-recognition and professional orientation workshop, to understand strengths and weaknesses, thinking on current labour market and young people' roles in it. A digital literacy & AI workshop, using digital tools and AI for learning, information-seeking, civic engagement and project initiation. A volunteering & community engagement workshop with the Young European Ambassadors Network, exploring youth civic engagement and developing youth-led solutions to local issues. A youth participation & local governance workshop to learn how LSG works, youth rights and participation mechanisms, including participatory budgeting and ways to influence local decision-making. In addition, the Camp also comprised a community needs and solution-mapping, an environmental clean-up action and reflection sessions.

3) 35 young participants developed teamwork, communication, collaboration and presentation skills through practical group activities. They increased their knowledge of youth participation and local decision-making mechanisms, including participatory budgeting, the 'Teselem' mobile platform and Council meetings. Participants identified local community challenges and designed 3 youth-led solutions, encouraging further civic engagement and participation in community life. They were engaged in an environmental clean-up action in the community and in a mini campaign called 'do not pollute, protect the environment'.

4) I have learned that young people engage more actively when hard topics are presented through gamified and interactive activities rather than theory alone. The combination of local decision-making topics with practical exercises helped participants to better understand how they can contribute to their community. Finally, linking civic education with topics of direct interest to young people, such as AI, career orientation and volunteering, increased engagement.

Unboxing Participation - Jugend, Demokratie und du / Tische der Vielfalt - Europa beginnt bei dir und mir
Miriam Egger
AUSTRIA, Dornbirn (Vorarlberg) / Innsbruck (Tyrol)

1) First, to inform students about youth participation, the Jugendbotschafter*innen Vorarlberg, Palumba.org, the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Second, to

motivate young people to get active themselves by providing low-threshold entry points into engagement. Third, collecting insights from young people in Vorarlberg on how they feel, what they need and what is missing in participation structures in Vorarlberg. And creating a report out of these inputs to share with local-decision-makers.

2) Interactive Installation (exhibition) in the foyer for one week while a musical on youth participation and intergenerational cooperation was performed. Themes included democracy, being informed, active participation and engagement in civic life, the Congress & Council of Europe and the European Charter on Youth Participation. The installation offered visitors the opportunity to explore different topics and to also share their perspectives on a set of questions. All inputs were analysed and a report was written.

3) 2,130 visitors (mainly students aged 12-19) were reached. They had the possibility to explore democratic values, understand legal structures and frameworks for citizen participation and receive information in an easy manner and opportunities to engage themselves further after the exhibition. In total 3.640 answers were analysed for the report.

4) European values and complicated concepts like the Council of Europe can be communicated to a diverse target audience when it is designed in an understandable and accessible way. Young people are willing to and want to share their perspective when you give them the opportunity to do so.

What Transfeminist Solidarity Demands From Feminist Movements
Alex Shah
AZERBAIJAN, Luxembourg

1) The aim of my project was to contribute to feminist and democratic dialogue by examining what meaningful transfeminist solidarity requires in practice. Through an article, I sought to encourage young people, feminist movements and civil society actors to reflect on equality, intersectionality, representation, power-sharing and collective action amid growing anti-rights movements. Objectives are to raise awareness of transfeminist solidarity as a shared political practice rather than simply the inclusion of trans people.
To explore barriers to solidarity, including competition over funding and resources, safety concerns, unequal representation and the distribution of emotional and political labour.
To promote dialogue between feminist and LGBTQI+ movements and challenge narratives that frame women's rights and trans equality as conflicting goals.
To amplify marginalised perspectives, particularly those of trans, racialised, migrant and other underrepresented communities.

2) The main activity was researching, developing and writing an advocacy article entitled “What Transfeminist Solidarity Demands From Feminist Movements.”
The activities included:
Desk research and analysis: Reviewing transfeminist theory, feminist approaches to intersectionality and solidarity, and relevant research and resources produced by TGEU.
Critical reflection: Examining how power imbalances, scarcity, safety narratives and unequal responsibility can undermine solidarity between feminist and LGBTQI+ movements.
Advocacy writing: Developing an accessible, public-facing article connecting theoretical discussions with practical questions for feminist movements and civil society organisations.
Knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising: Preparing the article for publication to make transfeminist perspectives more accessible to young people, activists and wider audiences.
Connecting youth participation with public debate: Using my experience as a Youth Delegate to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to contribute a youth-led perspective to discussions about equality, political participation and solidarity.

3) The main tangible result was the development of the article “What Transfeminist Solidarity Demands From Feminist Movements.” The article provides a critical, accessible analysis of the relationship between feminist movements and trans communities, moving beyond general statements of inclusion to examine the practical conditions necessary for solidarity from a youth perspective. The project created a written resource that can contribute to public discussion, youth engagement and advocacy around transfeminist solidarity. Its wider reach and impact will depend on publication and dissemination.

4) One of the main lessons was that solidarity needs to be discussed in practical and structural terms, not only through positive language or declarations of support. Meaningful solidarity requires changes in how movements distribute resources, share responsibility, make decisions and respond to disagreement.

The project also reinforced the importance of intersectionality. People can experience gendered oppression differently while still working together against the structures that produce inequality. Recognising these differences can strengthen collective action rather than undermine it.

Local Democracy for a New Belarus: Two Voices, Ten Questions
Maksim Zalatsko
BELARUS, POLAND

1) To show how local self-government could be rebuilt in a democratic Belarus, drawing on the work of the Coordination Council's delegation to the Congress. To present the CC–Congress co-operation and its results and compare the Belarusian system with the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Outlining realistic reform scenarios and their risks as well as creating an accessible publication for European and Belarusian audiences.

2) Through question design, with ten identical questions grouped into five thematic blocks as well as written interviews with the Speaker of the Coordination Council and the Head of the CC Delegation to the Congress. My work included document research on Congress Bureau decisions, the 2026–2027 Co-operation Programme, Congress expert opinions and the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Design and layout of the publication, including a photo gallery from Congress meetings as well as its dissemination among Congress members, the Belarusian democratic forces and youth networks.

3) A published 26-page interview, Local Democracy for a New Belarus, with two leading voices of the Belarusian democratic forces. A clear overview of the CC–Congress co-operation and the reform proposals for local self-government in Belarus. A side-by-side comparison of the two leaders' positions on reform, risks and priorities. A practical reference for Congress members, European local authorities, experts and young people.

4) Asking both speakers identical questions made their positions easy to compare and showed both shared ground and different emphases. Linking answers to official sources (Bureau decisions, expert opinions, the Charter) made the publication more credible. Complex reform topics reach a wider audience when presented in a clear interview format. Youth delegates can add real value by turning institutional work into accessible content.

"POV: we are shaping democracy"
Lore Sleeckx
BELGIUM, Flanders

1) I set the following aims at the beginning of June: The primary aim of this project is to connect the lived experiences of young people and the political decisions that shape their future. My central objective is the creation of a “Youth Manifesto”, a document that serves as a definitive roadmap of how the younger generation envisions the future. This memorandum will outline the specific policy changes they expect from policy makers (call-to-actions), talking about the current state of democracy, rule of law, human rights, peacebuilding, security, etc.
I aim to create a shift in public discourse through media attention of the youth manifesto in Flanders. This way I could raise public awareness about the unique challenges youth face in an increasingly volatile world. On a political level, I seek to outreach to policymakers, to present a series of concrete "call-to-actions." This will depend on the political will of these important policymakers to welcome young people for a conversation on the “Youth Manifesto”.
For this project I will also work together with our UN Youth Delegates within the Flemish Youth Council, since they also work a lot on youth, peace and security. This “Youth Manifesto” will also serve as an important document for them when attending the United Nations General Assembly. Where we aim to ensure that our local concerns resonate within the global dialogue on peace, security, and the preservation of democracy.

2) To achieve our objectives, we developed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather young people’s perspectives on democracy, civic space and the future, and translate these insights into concrete policy recommendations.
Quantitative online survey: We conducted an online survey with 100 young people from across Flanders. The survey explored their views on democracy, civic participation and the future. Questions addressed, among other things, whether they preferred a democracy where decisions are made collectively or a system led by one strong leader, the ways in which they had already expressed their opinions, the barriers they encountered when participating in society, and how hopeful they felt about the future.

Qualitative focus group and discussion: We organised a qualitative consultation with around twenty young people from JNM, a youth organisation focused on nature and the environment, based in Gooik, a relatively rural area in Belgium. We discussed the same key questions with the participants, using them as a starting point for a broader conversation about democracy, civic space and the future of our world. This allowed us to explore young people's experiences, concerns and expectations in greater depth.
Analysis and synthesis of the results: We brought together the findings from both consultations to identify common concerns, expectations and priorities among young people. Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights helped us capture both broader trends and individual experiences.
Development of a youth manifesto: Based on these findings, we developed a youth manifesto outlining concrete policy objectives for decisionmakers on young people and democracy. The manifesto argues that democracy should inform, involve and care for young people. It concludes with five calls to action directed at policymakers.
Preparation for policy advocacy and political engagement: The manifesto serves as an important advocacy tool for the Flemish Youth Council. For the past few weeks, Femke, our UN youth delegate, took the manifesto with her to the UNGA to engage with policy makers and advocate for youth-friendly democratic processes, and bring young people's perspectives on democracy and civic space into political discussions.

3) The project's main result is the development and publication of a Youth Manifesto on democracy, civic space and the future, based on the perspectives and experiences of young people in Flanders. The manifesto has been published on the Flemish Youth Council's website and translates young people's views into concrete policy recommendations for decisionmakers. The manifesto highlights three key expectations for democracy: it should inform young people, involve them in decision-making and care for them. It concludes with five calls to action for policymakers, providing a basis for future advocacy and political engagement by the Flemish Youth Council. Another important result was the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on young people's perspectives. The online survey gathered responses from 100 young people across Flanders, while the qualitative consultation enabled more in-depth discussions with young people in Gooik. In addition, we are currently working on a visual report presenting the survey results through graphs and figures. This report is still in progress and will make the findings more accessible and easier to use in future advocacy work. Published manifesto: https://vlaamsejeugdraad.be/nl/nieuws/pov-were-shaping-democracy.
Quantitative survey :
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&token=ad1e390dc0554b05a697a2986b20335a&id=My5Rt-Gm7kiGOHDEr8665qu3039OM0ZOgR1sZR18MIZUNzZOTFZRTjg0OUhUNlQwV0pPUEZRRTNBQyQlQCN0PWcu&analysis=false

SheltHER
Elena Nikolova
BULGARIA, Sofia BELARUS, POLAND

1) The aim of SheltHER is to create a digital safety network for women in Bulgaria who are victims of domestic abuse and gender-based violence, addressing two critical gaps: the severe shortage of official shelter capacity in Bulgaria, and the lack of accessible, peer-driven safety information. Objectives: To provide women in crisis with immediate, practical guidance on how to safely escape an abusive situation. To build a community-driven blog platform where women can share firsthand escape advice, tactics, and support. To create a peer-to-peer refuge matching system connecting women who need temporary shelter with women who can host them. To ensure all users' safety and privacy through GDPR-compliant data practices and privacy-first design

2) Platform development: building a web application with two core modules: a curated safety tips section and a community blog where registered users can post and comment. Refuge matching feature: developing a system where volunteer hosts can list their availability and approximate location, and women in need can send connection requests; full address is only shared privately after a match is accepted. Legal compliance work: drafting Privacy Policy, Terms & Conditions, and Cookie Notice in both Bulgarian and English, in line with GDPR requirements.

3) Two concrete results have already been achieved during the development phase: A comprehensive collection of high-quality, practical safety tips on immediate refuge has been researched and compiled. A GDPR-compliant foundation has been established, including a Privacy Policy, Terms & Conditions, and Cookie Notice in both Bulgarian and English, with privacy-first principles embedded into the platform architecture from the outset.

4) While the project is in its development phase, the process has already highlighted several important insights:

- The near-total absence of digital, peer-driven safety resources for women in Bulgaria confirms the urgency of this initiative
- Privacy and safety design must be embedded from the very beginning - not added later - especially when the target users are in vulnerable situations
- Legal compliance (GDPR) for platforms dealing with sensitive data requires careful, early planning even for non-commercial, individually run projects
- Simplicity and accessibility under stress must guide every design decision - the platform must be usable by someone in a crisis moment, not just in calm conditions
- The shortage of official shelter capacity in Bulgaria means that community-based solutions like SheltHER are not supplementary - they are necessary

Kakše Međimurje Očemo?
Samanta Slana
CROATIA, Međimurje region

1) It aims to provide a clearer picture into the needs and expectations of residents living in the Međimurje region of Croatia. the goal is to strengthen citizen participation in local and regional decision-making by giving residents of the Međimurje County a platform through which they can express their views, identify local challenges, and contribute to shaping the future development of their region. The objectives were: To assess resident satisfaction with life in Međimurje Conty and identify their key values. To identify their main problems and unmet needs, as well as areas requiring greater attention and resources. To communicate the perspectives of the residents to the regional decision-makers, including the Regional Governor, to support more responsive and citizen-centres decision-making.

2) A google forms document accessible to all citizens of the region.

3) The project provided the regional governor with more insight into the priority of the residents, as well as their challenges and hardships. The form also highlighted the areas where the people see a need for greater attention and resource allocation.

4) Most people do not wish to dedicate their time to communicate their concerns with decision-makers or do not care about it. It is challenging to get the people to join an initiative, and the time of year is crucial. This project should have been realised while the majority of the people were not out on a vacation. Having support and connections is crucial.

Implementing the Revised European Youth Charter: From Theory to Local Action / Revidovaná Evropská charta participace v praxi
Alexandra Obracajová
CZECH REPUBLIC, country-wide and online

1) The main aim of the project was to organize an online discussion and workshop to explain what the Revised European Youth Charter is and how young people can use it in practice, while also informing the public about the functioning of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities through educational social media posts. To achieve this, the primary objectives were to show young people what practical tools they have at their disposal when they want to get involved in decision-making in their city or region, and to raise awareness about these institutions among Czech youth via digital outreach. Additionally, a key objective was to foster an open dialogue where participants could identify and discuss the main barriers they face, such as a lack of confidence when dealing with local politicians.

2) I developed a combination of digital outreach and an interactive online event. First, I utilized social media to share educational posts on the Instagram account @coe_youth_czechia to inform the public about the Council of Europe and the Congress. Second, I organized a online discussion and workshop. During this workshop, I delivered a presentation explaining the institutions of the Council of Europe, the concept of co-management, and the core principles of the Revised European Youth Charter. I practically demonstrated the RMSOS framework (Right, Means, Space, Opportunity, Support) and introduced specific methodological tools for local engagement, including the "Have Your Say!" manual, the Engage Youth Platform, and the Democracy Reloading Toolkit. Finally, the event concluded with a facilitated discussion space where participants could ask questions and debate real-world barriers to youth participation.

3) The project successfully informed young people about concrete mechanisms to influence their local environment through a digital campaign consisting of six educational posts on the social media account. This digital outreach was followed by an interactive online workshop where participants gained a clear understanding of the Revised European Youth Charter and practical evaluation frameworks like RMSOS. By focusing on real-life examples, the workshop gave participants practical arguments they can actually use in their towns. We discussed how to move past just being a "consultative voice" and start actively sharing the decision-making with local authorities. What I found most valuable, however, was getting their honest feedback on the Charter itself. We talked about what they find most useful about the document, what feels missing, and what they would add to make it even better for their daily realities.

4) I spent a long time thinking about how to present the Revised European Youth Charter so it wouldn't feel like just another bureaucratic document. Through this challenge, I learned how to effectively simplify complex frameworks and present them in a much more engaging way. Interestingly, the vast majority of the participants had never heard of the Charter before, which made it incredibly rewarding to introduce them to completely new, practical information. The project also confirmed that young people are genuinely interested in improving their communities, but one of my biggest takeaways was seeing who else wanted to get involved. I realized that youth workers, NGO representatives, and educators are equally eager to understand these tools, as they are actively looking for new ways to guide young people toward meaningful participation.

From Voting to Decision-Making: Youth and Local Democracy
Mikhail Gladyshev
ESTONIA, Narva-Jõesuu linn, Ida-Virumaa

1) The aim of the action was to create a space for young people to discuss their role in local democracy and better understand the connection between participation, representation and decision-making. The main objectives were:

- To increase awareness among young people about youth participation in local democracy and the importance of being involved in decision-making processes.
- To encourage young people to think about different ways of participating in local decision-making, including the possibility of becoming future candidates.
- To collect ideas and perspectives from young participants about challenges and opportunities related to youth participation and representation.

2) The main activity was a local discussion event organised in Narva-Jõesuu with young participants aged 16–20. The event started with a short introduction based on my experience as a youth delegate at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the topic of youth participation in local elections in Estonia. The introduction focused on the difference between increasing youth participation as voters and the still limited representation of young people among decision-makers. After the introduction, participants took part in an open discussion where they shared their opinions, experiences and ideas about youth involvement in local democracy. A local stakeholder was invited to contribute to the discussion and share practical insights about local decision-making. The main ideas and reflections from the discussion were collected and shared after the event to increase the visibility of the topic.

3) The project created a space for young people to discuss local democracy and their role in decision-making. Around 15 young people participated in the activity and had the opportunity to share their views, discuss existing challenges and explore different ways of becoming more involved in their community. The discussion helped participants better understand that democracy is not only about voting but also about taking part in shaping decisions that affect local communities. The action also strengthened the connection between European-level discussions and local youth perspectives in Narva-Jõesuu.

4) One of the main lessons was that young people are interested in discussing democratic participation when the topic is presented through practical examples connected to their everyday lives. The discussion showed that many young people have ideas and opinions about their communities but do not always see clear opportunities to influence decisions. Creating simple and open spaces for discussion can help reduce this gap and encourage more young people to participate.

Youth Activism Panel Discussion
Eeva Ferrer
FINLAND, Helsinki

1) Provide tangible tools, inspiration, contacts, and opportunities to network for young people to start activism/advocacy projects. Showcase different youth activism initiatives and facilitate the sharing of

best practices. Empower young people to speak out, get organized, and actively participate in democratic and social discussions even in times where in many countries youth activists and advocates face hardships and even persecution, in Finland youth organizations' financial resources are cut, the world is facing many complex challenges, and youth's belief in the future is crumbling. Bring attention to various causes such as media education, the climate crisis, refugee's rights, Sami people's rights.

2) A panel discussion with 3-5 youth activists from youth organizations and grassroots initiatives (e.g. climate, Sami rights, disabled people's rights, human rights, women and girls' rights, racism) moderated by the YD.

Part 1: The panel discussion will include an introduction to the Rejuvenating Politics initiative.

Part 2: A panel discussion structured around pre-shared questions, with the panellist having the opportunity to interrupt and also ask each other questions after their answers.

Part 3: Now I would like to open the floor for the audience to ask questions.

After the panel a short guide will be comprised based on the panel findings to be disseminated to participants.

3) Tbc

4) Tbc

Environmental prerogatives at the European local level: the right to a healthy environment
Zoé Zurawski
FRANCE, 46 Member States of the Council of Europe

1) The main goals were to understand the ongoing process within the Council of Europe regarding environmental issues, the adaptation to ecosystem collapse, and how pressure can be increased by civil society to help the ECHR adopt the right to a healthy, clean, and sustainable environment. Especially regarding the First Forum for Environmental Rights Defenders, my goal was to inform people about the event, about the fact that the Council of Europe is acting on this topic, and that civil society has the power to push for further action.

2) I wrote and launched a petition on Change.org and did a lot of communication work around it. I also had a strategic plan for further actions, but due to a lack of budget, time, prominent contacts, and support from my own regional and local authorities, these actions could not be implemented as part of this petition campaign. On the other hand, this experience and work laid the foundation for my current campaign work with CIEL. With their help, their contacts, shared intelligence from all members, and a budget, we will have much more potential to carry out different actions in different countries.

3) I reached people in different member states, from different social and academic sectors. It was a door-opener for my participation in the First Forum for Environmental Rights Defenders in Strasbourg, and it helped me develop my own network, which then led to my participation in the much bigger Campaign for the Right to a Healthy Environment with CIEL. It led me to take on a large part of the strategy work within my Taskforce, and thereby a more legitimate role in increasing mobilization of younger generations and thereby pressure on the member states of the CoE.

4) A project takes a lot of effort, time, and budget. It works much easier with allies and a large network of specialists. Even if my petition did not reach all 700 million people across the 46 member states, it was a sign, and it got heard by CIEL. At first, I saw my project as a failure because there was no direct, concrete impact, but in the end, it opened the door to a much bigger project where I can take responsibility for something I had already thought through and experienced. This is very empowering and even leads to an extension of the project.

Rejuvenating Local Democracy in Georgia
Diana Grigorian
GEORGIA, Tbilisi

1) Aim: To explore young people's views and experiences of participation in local decision-making processes and create a space for young people to discuss barriers to participation and develop practical recommendations for more meaningful and inclusive local democratic participation. Objectives: To understand how young people perceive their influence on local decision-making. To identify the main

barriers preventing young people from participating in local public life. To create a safe and interactive space for young people with different backgrounds and perspectives to discuss local democratic issues. To strengthen young people's media literacy and resilience to disinformation. To develop practical recommendations for improving youth participation in local democracy.

2) Conducted an anonymous online survey with 44 young people from different municipalities across Georgia. Organised a one-day youth workshop with representatives of different youth organisations. Held a simulation council where participants took different social roles and discussed local budget allocation and community issues. Organised an online meeting with Gubaz Koberidze from the Council of Europe's Youth Department. Conducted a practical exercise on how facts, disinformation and different perspectives influence public attitudes and decision-making. Held a recommendations lab where participants jointly developed practical recommendations for youth participation and media literacy.

3) The project collected the views of 44 young people from different municipalities across Georgia and identified key barriers to youth participation in local democracy. The survey showed that 72.7% of respondents were not involved or only slightly involved in municipal public life, while 72.1% felt that their opinions could not influence decisions in their community or municipality. The main barriers identified were societal polarisation, distrust in institutions, lack of information and disinformation. The workshop then transformed these findings into a set of practical recommendations focusing on youth participation, media literacy, inclusive communication, safe digital participation and stronger feedback mechanisms between young people and decision-makers.

4) The project showed that young people's low participation is not necessarily caused by a lack of interest. A major issue is the belief that participation will not lead to real change. Young people are more willing to engage when they trust institutions, feel safe expressing their views and believe their opinions will genuinely be reflected in decisions. It also showed the value of combining research with interactive participation: the survey helped identify the problems, while the workshop allowed young people to discuss them and develop concrete solutions together.

Queer beyond borders - Queer sans frontières - Grenzenlos Queer
Bjarne Lock
GERMANY, Mainz, Rhineland-Palatinate

1) The overall aim of the project was to establish an inclusive cross-border space for young LGBTQIA+ youth (ages 16–20) from Rhineland-Palatinate and Bourgogne-Franche-Comté to connect, share their personal experiences, and build solidarity across the Franco-German border. Specifically, we aimed to:

- Connect young people from both regions around queer activism and human rights,
- Offer a welcoming, supportive space focused on personal empowerment and self-confidence
- Build intergenerational ties by connecting youth with local activist groups like QueerNet RLP and Collectif 17 mai,
- Keep everything fully accessible by providing continuous translation and daily language animations so language level wasn't a barrier,
- Encourage active civic participation through creative activities, like producing a short film together, simulating an EU debate on LGBTI rights, and meeting with local political decision-makers in Mainz.

2) Over five days in Mainz, we put together a mix of educational workshops, public action, creative work, and political exchange:

- Interactive workshops on queer identity, terminology, and reflection (like Kahoot quizzes, the "Gender Unicorn", and the "Identitüte" workshop),
- Public action at Mainz CSD Pride, starting with a sign-making workshop and marching together in the parade,
- An intergenerational evening with Collectif 17 mai from Besançon, featuring speed-geeking discussions on coming out and activist experiences,
- A youth film project where participants conceptualized, scripted, and shot a short film about their ideal queer future,
- A role-play simulation of the European Parliament debating EU monitoring of LGBTI rights restrictions,
- A visit to Mainz City Hall for a direct Q&A with the Mayor and municipal officers, followed by a queer history walking tour of the city,
- Daily language animations to keep communication playful and accessible across both languages.

3) The exchange created a real sense of community and lasting connections across the border. The participants produced their own short film envisioning better queer futures, which we screened at City Hall for local officials and radio journalists. The youth got a direct taste of civic participation by speaking with the Mayor of Mainz about local queer policies. In our final evaluation, 100% of participants said the project met or exceeded their expectations, all of them wanted to do another exchange like this, and most felt more motivated to keep learning the partner language.

4) First, keeping the language threshold low and offering continuous interpretation really works—it made everyone feel included regardless of their French or German skills. Second, making a short film in just a couple of days was super rewarding, but it was tight on time; future exchanges should give youth more space for creative brainstorming. Third, choosing cheaper accommodation that was further out meant long daily commutes (30–60 mins each way), which added fatigue, so staying closer to activity spots is definitely worth prioritizing next time. Lastly, marching at the back of the Pride parade was a great call for group members sensitive to loud noise or crowds.

Itt Kezdődik - It Starts Here
Virág Komenda
HUNGARY, Kisbér, Budapest, Szeged, Pomáz, Súr, Győr, Nagykanizsa, Mezőberény, Tata, Tatabánya

1) My project aims to create meaningful connections between young people, youth municipalities, local authorities and decision-makers, while collecting and sharing good practices related to youth participation at local level. Objectives were:

- to raise awareness about the role and opportunities of the Youth delegate and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- to create direct opportunities for dialogue between young people and local, national and European-level decision-makers
- to strengthen cooperation and networking among youth municipalities in Hungary
- to identify and collect good practices related to youth participation and youth representation at local level
- to better understand the challenges faced by youth municipalities and the different models used across Hungarian municipalities
- to provide young people with opportunities to discuss their ideas, needs and experiences directly with decision-makers
- to summarise the experiences and lessons of the project and contribute to further development of youth participation in Hungary

2) National Conference of Youth Councils: A national conference was organised with approximately 100 participants, bringing together representatives of youth municipalities, young people, professionals working with youth and decision-makers. The conference provided a national platform for networking, exchanging experiences and discussing the functioning and future of youth municipalities. Participants could share challenges, examples of successful local initiatives and ideas for strengthening youth participation.

Visits to youth municipalities and collection of good practices: A national mapping and networking process was launched to learn more about different youth municipality models in Hungary. So far, 11 municipalities have been contacted, and the process is still ongoing. Through these contacts and visits, the project collects information about how youth municipalities operate, how young people are involved in local decision-making, what kind of relationship they have with local governments and what challenges they face.

Model Municipality: A Model Municipality activity will also be implemented as part of the project in cooperation with local authorities in two different municipalities. Inspired by the Model UN methodology, the activity will give young people the opportunity to experience how local decision-making processes work in practice. Participants will take on different roles, discuss local issues, develop proposals and simulate debates and decision-making procedures. The aim is to make local democracy more understandable and accessible, while helping young people develop their communication, negotiation and active citizenship skills.

Hike and informal discussion with Kata Tüttő: A hiking programme combined with an informal conversation is going to happen in November with Kata Tüttő, President of the European Committee of the Regions. The aim was to reduce the perceived distance between young people and high-level decision-makers and create an informal environment in which participants could ask questions and

discuss democracy, local participation, European decision-making and young people's opportunities to influence public affairs. And also to share more about the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the European Committee of the Regions.

Networking and stakeholder engagement: Throughout the project, contacts have been established with youth municipalities, local governments, youth professionals and decision-makers. The project therefore also serves as a network-building initiative that can support future cooperation between youth participation structures across Hungary.

Closing conference - October 2026: The project will conclude with a closing conference on the 8th of October. The event will provide an opportunity to present the experiences gathered during the project, showcase good practices identified through the youth municipality visits and discuss possible next steps with young people, professionals and decision-makers.

Methods used: national conference, networking events, study and field visits, informal dialogue with decision-makers, facilitated discussions, peer learning, good-practice collection, stakeholder interviews and exchanges, model local governments and dissemination activities.

3) One of the most visible outcomes was the national conference for youth municipalities, which brought together around 100 participants. So far, 11 municipalities have been contacted as part of the good-practice collection process, helping to identify different local models, challenges and successful approaches to youth participation. For me personally, one of the strongest results has been the relationships created during the project. The many meetings, visits and conversations with young people were often very intensive and tiring, but at the same time they gave me an enormous amount of energy and motivation. It was inspiring to see how active, open, curious and connected young people can be, regardless of the background they come from. Many of the young people and local groups I met have invited me back to their events several times since our first meeting, which shows that these encounters did not remain one-off activities, but developed into lasting relationships and cooperation. Another important result is how much I learned from the participants themselves. Their experiences, questions, ideas and enthusiasm helped me understand much better what young people expect from local democracy, what kinds of opportunities they are looking for, and what barriers they face when they want to become more active in their communities. On a personal level, the project has also helped me clarify what kind of work I would like to continue doing in the future.

4) One of the main lessons is that there is significant interest among young people and youth municipalities in exchanging experiences with similar initiatives from other parts of the country. Youth municipalities operate in very different local contexts, and there is no single model that works everywhere. Creating opportunities for peer learning therefore has considerable value. Another important lesson is that direct and informal contact with decision-makers can significantly reduce the perceived distance between young people and political institutions. The project has also shown the importance of local partnerships. Reaching young people and understanding how youth participation works locally requires cooperation with municipalities, youth workers, youth organisations and active young people themselves. The good-practice collection has demonstrated that successful youth participation depends not only on formal structures but also on the quality of cooperation between young people and adults, access to information, continuity and the willingness of local decision-makers to involve young people meaningfully.

Women in Local Government – Gendered Realities
Þórhildur Vígdögg Kristínardóttir
ICELAND

1) Spread awareness on what it means to be a woman in local government as an elected official; such as the onboarding process (what did you wish women entering office would know – what would you have liked to know etc.), day to day tasks, arising challenges and how to tackles them. Pinpoint particularities of gendered realities and barriers that come with it, such as heightened expectations, heavier workload, and increased backlash and hostility. Document why women in municipal politics often complain about feeling unprepared entering the role of elected official and often do not seek a second term due to exhaustion and systemic barriers. Involve youth in this conversation through social media platforms.

2), 3), 4) Due to personal difficulties, the project was delayed but I plan to implement it within the given timeframe before the next youth delegates are appointed.

Black Youth and Democracy: Who gets a seat at the table?
Rayaa Onog
IRELAND, Dublin City Council South East Area

1) The project's aim is to explore Black young people's experiences of, perceptions of, and participation in democratic and political life in Dublin and in the western diaspora in Europe. Through facilitated discussion and open debate, the project aims to provide a platform for young Black people to express their views on political representation, institutional trust and inclusion in decision-making. The project also aims to identify the barriers that may limit young Black people's engagement with democratic institutions, alongside the opportunities and changes they believe would encourage more meaningful participation.

Objectives:

- To create an inclusive space for young people of colour to discuss their experiences of democratic and political participation.
- To gather young people's perspectives on the social, institutional and practical barriers that may discourage their participation, while also sharing mine to identify measures that could make democratic institutions more accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of ALL youth.
- To communicate the findings and recommendations to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, raising awareness of the perspectives expressed by young people of colour and highlighting opportunities for local and regional authorities to strengthen their engagement with minorities.

2) The project was executed as an in-person event, bringing together approximately 100 participants to reflect on the relationship between young people of colour and democratic institutions. The activities combined introductory presentations, facilitated discussion, interactive digital polling and finally open debate to encourage participants to share their perspectives and consider how political institutions could become more inclusive and accessible. The event began with an opening presentation exploring the importance of youth participation through the story of a young person of colour (myself), political representation and the lack of it in some youth spaces and inclusive democracy. I also introduced the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and contextualised the project within wider efforts to strengthen young people's participation in democratic life. Young people were invited to consider whether political representation translates into meaningful participation, why young people of colour specifically may disengage from political institutions, and what local and regional authorities could do differently to engage young people. Participants were invited to respond to statements concerning Black young people's political participation, the importance of representation and the need for political institutions to reconsider how they engage with young people. Using an interactive activity similar to Mentimeter, I asked participants to identify three actions political institutions could take to make Black young people feel more included in democracy. I wanted these responses to provide initial insights into perceived barriers to participation and potential areas for improvement from the youth themselves. The main outcome of this project is to move beyond discussing political representation in theory by creating an opportunity for young people of colour to articulate their own perspectives and contribute ideas for strengthening democratic participation. The project was promoted through various African and Afro-Caribbean societies across all universities in Dublin, primarily through Trinity College Dublin's Afro-Caribbean societies, and finally across social media platforms.

3) My project wasn't simply a conversation about whether Black young people see themselves represented in politics or why there is a lack of engagement. Its main goal was to open up a deeper question: what happens when young people grow up between political systems, inherit their families' relationships with politics, and are expected to participate in a democracy they have not necessarily been taught how to navigate? One of the most significant insights to come from the discussion was the relationship between young people's political engagement and the environments in which they are raised. Participants reflected on the fact that they are from diasporic backgrounds, where their families' engagement with politics in their countries of origin may be limited or may overpower their engagement with local politics within Europe. The discussion also opened up a wider reflection on the relationship between diaspora identity and political belonging. Young people may grow up within European democratic systems while having limited opportunities to learn about the political institutions, histories and current affairs of their families' countries of origin. This highlighted the possibility that some young people experience a gap between their cultural or familial connections to a country and their understanding of its political life, therefore leading to a lack of engagement.

4) As a young person of colour involved in democratic institutions, I wanted to create a space in which Black young people could reflect on our relationship with politics without assuming that our experiences, interests or reasons for participating would be the same. One of the most important insights was that political disengagement should not automatically be interpreted as apathy. Throughout the discussion, participants raised questions about the political knowledge they had acquired through their education, the extent to which politics featured in their family lives and their awareness of opportunities to become involved. These reflections encouraged me to consider whether what is sometimes described as a lack of interest may, in certain circumstances, also reflect a lack of access, encouragement or meaningful opportunities to participate, as evident in the responses. Growing up between cultures and political systems can also create complex relationships with democratic participation. Equally, growing up in a European democracy does not automatically mean that young people are equipped with the knowledge, confidence or practical understanding needed to participate in it. On the other hand, it also highlights the urgent education reform needed to start engaging young people on democratic conversation. Seeing people from similar backgrounds in positions of political leadership encourages young people to imagine themselves within democratic institutions. However, representation must be accompanied by opportunities to contribute.

Local Democracy in Times of Climate Crisis: Lessons from Cesena's Flood
Mattia Frasca
ITALY, Cesena, Emilia-Romagna

1) The aim was to explore how the climate crisis can test local democracy, using Cesena's May 2023 flood as a case study. Notably, the project explored how environmental emergencies affect the relationship between citizens and democratic institutions. Its objectives were to examine perceived institutional presence and trust; explore responsibility across local, regional, national and European levels; document community mobilisation and young people's contribution; and translate residents' experiences into evidence-informed proposals on democratic resilience.

2) The project combined the following activities:

- Online consultation: design and dissemination of a questionnaire with structured multiple-choice questions and optional open-ended questions.
- Community and institutional outreach: promotion through local and youth networks, social media, messaging groups, printed materials and word of mouth, alongside requests for support from elected representatives, municipal offices and local media.
- Analysis: descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, exploratory age-group comparisons and qualitative review of respondents' experiences.
- Publications: preparation of a detailed report and a shorter policy brief in English, French and Italian, presenting the findings and five recommendations for local and regional authorities.

3) The project transformed 201 questionnaire responses into a detailed report and a shorter policy brief in English, French and Italian, documenting how an environmental emergency is experienced not only through damage and recovery, but also through trust, accountability and the relationship between citizens and institutions. The analysis identified an association between declining trust and perceived gaps in institutional presence and support. It documented responsibility attributed across levels of government and showed that a current local institutional reference can coexist with criticism and expectations of accountability. Community mobilisation — including young people's widely recognised contribution — was examined as both a source of resilience and, for many respondents, a response to perceived institutional shortcomings. These findings informed five recommendations on the democratic dimension of climate resilience, addressing institutional capacity, clear responsibilities, coordinated volunteering, visible post-crisis follow-up and participation beyond the emergency. The publications provide a concrete local evidence base for wider discussion of environmental and democratic resilience. Full report (EN, FR, IT): https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22903066

4) The experience highlighted the importance of combining institutional backing with local relationship-building. The Congress's support, including the Secretary General's letter, provided a valuable basis for outreach, while securing practical cooperation from municipal offices proved more challenging than expected. For future initiatives, I would seek to establish local contacts earlier and agree on specific forms of support from the outset. Individual representatives and community networks also played an important role in dissemination, demonstrating the value of working through several complementary channels.

Media literacy regarding political communication and its influence on young voters
Kristers Uglanovs
LATVIA, Riga/Valmiera

1) To see the influence of media and the scope and reach of political communication, as well as tactics and the reach on young people.

2) Survey and a lecture.

3) 102 young people surveyed and a lecture coming.

4) Tactics used are quite effective and yield results even if they are propaganda and disinformation.

Football Meets Politics: Bridging Youth and Parliament in Liechtenstein
Laurin Specht
LIECHTENSTEIN, Liechtenstein

1) Aim: To reduce the distance between young people and political institutions in Liechtenstein by creating an informal, low-threshold setting for direct dialogue between youth and Members of the Landtag.
Objectives: Bring together young people (aged 14 to 25) and Members of the Landtag at one shared event. Hold a structured political dialogue on topics directly relevant to young people. Make youth concerns visible to decisionmakers and the wider public. Test a format that can be repeated in the future.

2) Preparation: an organising team was set up with the Jugendrat, Members of the Landtag were invited through the Landtag secretariat, and the event was promoted via schools, social media and youth organisations.
Event: a political dialogue session in a speed debating format on three theses (voting age 16, housing costs for young people, AI and the future labour market), with mixed teams of youth and MPs and a closing audience vote. This was followed by a football match between FC Jugendrat and FC Landtag and informal exchange afterwards.
Methods: speed debating, audience voting, sport as a trust-building and networking element, promotional activities.

3) The event brought together around 90 people, including 10 Members of the Landtag and around 15 members of the Jugendrat who played in the football match. Liechtenstein's largest newspaper attended the event, and the country's largest television channel also reported on it, which gave the project strong public visibility. The Landtag responded very positively to the format and intends to continue it as an annual match. The project also helped to advance the Liechtenstein Youth Strategy. A further match against the Government is currently being considered.

4) Sport works well as an entry point because it removes hierarchies before the political discussion starts. Short, dynamic formats keep young people more engaged than long panel discussions. Early coordination with the Landtag is essential because of MPs' schedules. Reaching young people outside existing youth structures requires more targeted outreach than mobilising Jugendrat members. Follow-up steps should be defined before the event so that results lead to concrete political outcomes.

Rejuvenating Politics: Active Youth Beyond European Youth Parliament
Kasparas Skuja
LITHUANIA, Vilnius

1) Aims included spreading awareness about the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, empowering young people to know their rights when participating in civic and political life on various levels, from local to international affairs. Also, the event helped bring together youth from different educational institutions in Vilnius, many of whom did not know each other before, and the opportunity to exchange perspectives allowed them to network, thus creating a community of active young people, who, as far as I know, still keep in contact.

2) This was delivered as a training module as part of the Training Weekend of European Youth Parliament Lithuania. Participants took part in discussions, answered questions, shared opinions and exchanged perspectives. In addition, a theoretical part allowed them to take away from the event the actual practically applicable knowledge of the Charter and its importance in multilevel governance.

3) The participants of the event left knowing about the main ideas discussed and the general principles behind the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. They learned how this Charter translates onto their everyday life, ensuring rights of self-organisation and inclusion in political decision-making on different levels. Also, the participants developed a network of local young people who can implement the Charter's ideas in their local and regional communities - student unions, schools, neighbourhoods, and so on.

4) One of the main lessons learned was that young people engage more actively when they can see how civic participation and their rights apply to their everyday lives. Combining theoretical knowledge with discussions and the exchange of perspectives made the topic more accessible and practical. The project also showed the value of bringing together young people from different educational institutions, as networking helped create connections and encouraged participants to continue engaging with civic participation in their local communities.

Youth newspaper + human rights classes
Esther Adelakun
LUXEMBOURG, Luxembourg city & Esch-sur-Alzette

1) I conducted two projects: For the first one, I visited a multitude of high schools throughout Luxembourg to teach them about human rights. These roughly 2h long classes included workshops, games and interactive means for young people aged 12-16 to learn about their rights, where they come from and the importance of it. The second project was a youth newspaper, in collaboration with a multitude of NGO's as well as local changemakers, we created a newspaper that would combine all of Luxembourg's best youth opportunities for them to engage in societal life. I strongly believe that access to information is the pillar of democracy and giving young people the tools to engage themselves and engage their critical thinking and to advocate for themselves is crucial of a strong democratic society. The newspapers were printed out in 400 copies and distributed across high schools in Luxembourg.

2) A multitude of interactive seminars in high school classes + distributing newspapers.

3) Classes: the results were amazing, students showed great interest in knowing their rights and how to enforce them. Through games they also understood that our rights need to be upkept and still fought for and I think it was genuinely helpful. Newspapers: during distribution, students showed great interest in wanting to contribute to NGO's and had a lot of questions on where to start.

4) Working with high schools and NGO's and young people is AMAZING! At first I wanted to have a project based around a conference but i discovered that grassroot projects and on the field work are much more for me.

Social Media for Democracy
Cara Borg Aquilina
MALTA, online

1) To strengthen young people’s digital civic literacy by equipping them to recognise, produce and share accurate, responsible and democracy-oriented social media content, while demonstrating how digital platforms can make democratic dialogue more accessible. Objectives:

- Credibility and verification: equip participants to identify credible information and distinguish it from misleading, sensationalist or AI-generated content;
- Production capability: develop practical skills to make democratic and institutional messages engaging, accessible and competitive for attention on social media;
- Communicating complexity: show how technical and institutional language can be made understandable without losing substance;
- Civic translation: encourage participants to identify democratic values important to them and translate these into online advocacy and awareness-raising;
- Confidence to participate: empower young people to share their views, experiences and ideas publicly, regardless of audience size;
- Access and connection: connect participants from Malta and beyond through an accessible online format, while raising awareness of the Congress, its Youth delegate programme and the Rejuvenating Politics – Making Democracy Younger initiative.

2) The project was delivered as a single one-hour online event combining three methods — a moderated expert panel, a practical production workshop and an open audience question-and-answer segment — supported by a preparation and a follow-up phase. Preparation phase. Design of the concept and

thematic framing; identification and recruitment of speakers across three distinct profiles (youth delegates with substantial online audiences, professional content producers, and an academic specialising in digital pedagogy); development of a full moderator pack setting out the run of show, opening and closing scripts, speaker introductions and a tailored question set with follow-ups and reserve questions for each speaker; design of a promotional flyer in the visual identity of the Congress and the Youth delegate programme; outreach and promotion; technical set-up and moderation arrangements on Zoom. Moderated panel discussion. A structured discussion with Ms Veronika Novotná (EU Youth delegate to the United Nations) on what actually reaches audiences online, editorial judgement and pre-publication verification, and on communicating institutional subject matter to people with no prior exposure to it; and with Dr Patrick Camilleri (Senior Lecturer and Digital Pedagogist, University of Malta) on digital leadership, critical and cognitive thinking in an AI-mediated information environment, source verification, and the ethical dimensions of posting and sharing. Practical production workshop. A screen-shared demonstration by Omar and David Becerril Villegas of Aeterno Media covering their full production pipeline — idea, audience definition, scripting, filming and post-production — with worked examples, platform-specific technical requirements, recommended free and low-cost tools, and a survey of widely available AI content tools together with the disclosure obligations that attach to them. Audience question-and-answer and open chat. The chat was kept open for the full hour and used as a parallel channel for questions and peer contributions, with questions taken and answered live and in writing throughout, and a closing question put to all panellists.

3) The event delivered practical content across all three strands, strong audience engagement and demand for continuation. Aeterno Media provided a transferable production pipeline from idea and audience identification to scripting, filming, editing and post-production, covering hooks, audience personas, script structure, pacing, platform formats and safe zones, lighting, audio and the different functions of reels and carousels, using accessible free or low-cost tools. Ms Novotná established a responsible-publication standard based on verifying data, retaining reliable sources, precise wording and editorial judgement beyond engagement metrics. She also offered a method for communicating institutional content: simplify it from the perspective of someone unfamiliar with the institution, then check that precision has not been lost. Dr Camilleri placed critical thinking at the centre of digital literacy, distinguishing technical skill from human agency and emphasising purposeful AI use, authorship, interpretation and verification through triangulation and original sources. Ethical sharing, consent, freedom of expression and harm were also addressed. Participants actively discussed platform strategy, reach, youth participation, misinformation, AI-generated content, pluralism and democracy. The cross-border, intergenerational panel also increased visibility of the Congress, Youth delegate programme and Rejuvenating Politics initiative.

4) An online format materially widens access, and the subject matter justified it. Holding the event online allowed a panel drawn from three countries and an audience from several more to take part at no cost and with no travel and allowed the project to demonstrate its own argument. For a project about digital platforms and democratic access, the medium reinforced the message. The timing made this clearer still: the event was held in mid-August, when a significant part of the intended audience would ordinarily be away, yet the online format allowed participants to join from wherever they happened to be and produced a strong turnout in a period when an in-person event would almost certainly have struggled to attract one. Demand for practical skills was stronger than anticipated. The most sustained engagement followed the practical production workshop segment and the questions that came out of it, and the presentation was requested repeatedly. Young people who are already motivated to communicate about democracy are looking for method rather than encouragement, and future activities should be weighted accordingly. A written moderator pack is what allows a panel to absorb disruption. One speaker was unable to join on the day owing to unforeseen circumstances. Because the moderator pack I designed for myself contained a full run of show, speaker-specific question sets and reserve questions, the session was rebalanced by the moderator (myself) across the remaining speakers without visible interruption. The pack is worth treating as a standard deliverable for events of this kind. An open chat is a great channel of participation. Keeping the chat open for the full hour produced the strong questions, allowed speakers to answer in writing in parallel with the spoken discussion, and let participants contribute substance to one another. It requires active moderation, but it lowers the threshold for participation for those who would not speak aloud. Distributing materials afterwards extends the value of a single hour. The requests for the presentation showed that participants intended to work from the content later. Preparing a participant-facing version of the materials in advance, for release immediately after the event, is a low-cost way to increase the practical effect of the activity.

Promotion of Congress Youth delegates Initiative among young people
Ana-Maria Botnarescu
MOLDOVA, Chisinau

1) To promote youth participation and awareness of European youth opportunities among young people in Moldova. Objectives: Promote the Congress Youth delegates Programme and Council of Europe Youth Charter. Encourage young people to engage in democratic and civic processes. Share practical experience and information on international youth opportunities.

2) 2 conferences where I participated as a panellist and shared about the initiatives.

3) 170 young people learned about the initiative and some of them even saying they will apply.

4) Young people are highly interested in accessible international participation opportunities. Personal experiences and direct engagement make such opportunities easier to understand and promote. Youth forums are effective spaces for reaching diverse young audiences and encouraging participation.

Empowered for Tomorrow, the Right to Support (Podcast)
Nađa Stojanović
MONTENEGRO, Podgorica, Montenegro, with national reach and accessibility across Montenegro

1) The overall aim of the project “Osnaženi za sjutra, pravo na podršku” (“Empowered for Tomorrow, the Right to Support”) was to promote social inclusion and raise public awareness of the importance of accessible social protection and support systems for children and young people at risk, as well as children without parental care in Montenegro. Objectives:

- To raise awareness of the challenges faced by children and young people at risk and children without parental care, and to promote a better understanding of their right to support and social inclusion.
- To create a public dialogue on social protection and support services by bringing together perspectives from relevant institutions, local authorities and civil society organisations.
- To use podcast and television formats as accessible communication tools to bring these topics closer to the wider public and increase their visibility at national level.
- To highlight the importance of cooperation between national institutions, local authorities, civil society organisations and young people in strengthening social inclusion and support systems.
- To encourage the active participation of young people and volunteers in initiatives addressing social inclusion and the rights and needs of vulnerable groups.

2) The project was implemented through a series of interconnected activities, starting with a planning and coordination meeting with the Network for European Policies (MAE), where the concept, objectives and format of the podcast were discussed and agreed. Following this initial coordination, I developed the content and structure of the three podcast episodes, identified and contacted relevant guests, prepared the interview questions and coordinated the logistics and communication with the participants. I subsequently recorded three podcast episodes, each focusing on different aspects of social inclusion and support for children and young people at risk and children without parental care, bringing together perspectives from public institutions, civil society and local government. After the recording, I independently worked on the editing and preparation of the episodes for publication and created short promotional reels based on the podcast content, which were shared online to increase the visibility and reach of the project. In parallel, I promoted the project and the upcoming podcast through several television appearances and other media formats in Montenegro, where I presented the purpose of the initiative and raised awareness of the topics that would be addressed through the episodes (links to the relevant media appearances are provided below). Following the production and promotion phase, arrangements were made for the podcast episodes to be broadcast on national television, allowing the content to reach a wider audience across Montenegro. As an additional dissemination and networking activity, I also arranged for the podcast episodes to be presented at the final conference of a related NGO project focused on empowering children without parental care. The episodes were presented at the conference, providing an opportunity to introduce the project directly to relevant stakeholders and professionals working in the field and to further promote discussion and awareness of social inclusion and the right to support. Through these activities, the project combined partnership building, stakeholder engagement, content production, media outreach, digital communication, youth participation and public awareness-raising.

3) The main result of the project was raising public awareness and increasing knowledge about social inclusion, social protection and the challenges faced by children and young people at risk, particularly

children without parental care. Through the three podcast episodes, the project provided young people and the wider public with accessible information about these issues and about the support available to vulnerable groups. It also created an opportunity to learn more about the situation of children without parental care in Montenegro and the challenges they face in our society. By involving representatives from institutions, civil society and local government, the project encouraged informed discussion and contributed to educating young people and the wider public about social inclusion and the importance of support for vulnerable children and young people.

4) One of the main lessons I learned through the implementation of the project is that complex social issues can be made more accessible to young people and the wider public through simple and engaging communication formats such as podcasts. I also learned the importance of bringing together different stakeholders, as each of them can provide a different perspective and contribute to a better understanding of the issue. The project showed me that there is a strong need to raise awareness and knowledge about children without parental care and other vulnerable groups, particularly among young people. Another important lesson was the value of using different communication channels, from social media to television and public events, in order to reach a wider audience. Finally, the project strengthened my skills in planning, stakeholder communication, media production and public advocacy, and showed me that youth-led initiatives can create meaningful discussions around important social issues.

JIL – Youth, Innovation & Leadership
Mohammed Amine El Guermat
MOROCCO, Salé, Rabat-Salé-Kénitra

1) The JIL project aims to strengthen youth participation in local governance by raising young people's awareness of the importance of Local Youth Councils (LYCs) and encouraging their participation in these structures. In Salé, the project focused on understanding young people's awareness and expectations, engaging with youth associations, and establishing dialogue with the municipality around the creation, strengthening or development of a Local Youth Council.

2) Conference on Youth Leadership and Local Youth Councils: A conference was organised in cooperation with the administrators of the Municipality of Salé, bringing together young people and local stakeholders to discuss youth leadership, civic participation, local governance and the role of Local Youth Councils.

Youth consultation: A questionnaire was developed and disseminated among young people to assess their knowledge, perceptions and expectations regarding Local Youth Councils and youth participation in local governance.

Engagement with youth associations and community members: The project worked with youth associations, civil society actors and members of the local community to raise awareness about youth participation and encourage young people to become involved in Local Youth Councils.

Municipal consultation: A questionnaire was shared with municipal representatives to gather information about existing youth participation mechanisms and the situation of the Local Youth Council in Salé.

Institutional dialogue: Exchanges were held with representatives and administrators of the Municipality of Salé to discuss youth participation, youth leadership and possible ways to strengthen the Local Youth Council.

Awareness-raising and outreach: The project was promoted through social media, youth networks and community contacts to reach a wider audience and encourage discussion around youth participation in local governance.

Data collection and analysis: Information collected through questionnaires, discussions and community engagement was analysed to identify challenges, needs and opportunities for strengthening youth participation and Local Youth Councils.

3) The main result of the project was the establishment of the Local Youth Council (LYC) in Salé, which subsequently developed and adopted its own action plan. The project also helped create a direct and lasting bridge between young people and elected local representatives, providing a space for dialogue, exchange and cooperation on issues affecting young people and the local community.

The project further contributed to:

- Strengthening young people's awareness and involvement in local governance;
- Bringing together young people, youth associations, community members and local elected representatives;
- Creating a structured space for young people to express their priorities and proposals;
- Supporting the LYC in defining its priorities and developing its action plan;
- Establishing a basis for continued cooperation between the LYC and the Municipality of Salé.

4) The implementation of the JIL project showed that meaningful youth participation requires both youth mobilisation and strong cooperation with local authorities. One of the main lessons learned was the importance of creating a direct bridge between young people and elected representatives. When young people have a structured space to communicate their priorities and proposals, dialogue with local authorities becomes more concrete and constructive. The project also showed that Local Youth Councils can provide an effective framework for this dialogue, particularly when young people are actively involved in defining their priorities and developing their own action plan. Another important lesson was the role of youth associations and community networks in reaching and mobilising young people. Their involvement helped create broader awareness and encouraged young people to engage in the process. Finally, the experience in Salé demonstrated that establishing a Youth Council is only the first step. Its sustainability depends on continued dialogue with the municipality, regular activities, clear priorities and meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to local governance.

From Ideas to Action: Youth Participation in Gostivar
Leutrim Bilali
NORTH MACEDONIA, Gostivar / Region of Pollog

1) The project aimed to help young people understand democratic institutions and use that knowledge to influence decisions in their community. Following a change in scope, the implemented action focused on introducing high school students to the Council of Europe, bringing students from Gostivar's four high schools together, and supporting them to develop campaign proposals that could be considered during municipal planning.

2) I held one in-person workshop at the iCan Youth Centre in Gostivar. The first session introduced the Council of Europe and its work. In the second part, participants worked in groups to develop their own campaign proposals without a prescribed template. Volunteers from Environmental Youth Organisation helped with logistics and group work. The proposals were subsequently brought together in a document for planned presentation to the City Council.

3) Around 30 young people took part in the workshop. Their group work produced approximately four to five campaign proposals addressing youth participation, mental health, and environmental issues. A document containing the proposals is ready. It has not yet been presented to the City Council; the plan is to do so during its November–December discussions on activities for the following year.

4) I learned that young people engage more deeply when they are trusted to define the problem themselves. Instead of giving the students a campaign template, I asked them to work in groups and decide what they wanted to bring before their city. They produced four to five proposals on youth participation, mental health, and the environment. The workshop also reminded me that collecting ideas is only the beginning: the real test is whether we bring them to the City Council during its November–December planning process and tell the students what happens next. Finally, adapting an ambitious digital project into one focused workshop taught me to match the scope of an action to the time and resources available.

Cafe concert
Sigrun Myrvang
NORWAY, Stor-Elvdal, Innlandet

1) Raise awareness of local history through a creative and immersive café concert. Encourage reflection on the relevance of local history today, particularly in relation to ageing, human dignity, care and the roots of the welfare state. Advocate for the reinstatement of the annual school visit to Nystu-Trønnes as part of local history education. Generate wider visibility for the importance of local history education through local media and social media.

2) Café concert, tour of the site (museum), formal letter to local politicians, coverage in local newspaper.

3) The project created an accessible and engaging setting in which local history could be experienced through several different forms of cultural expression. By combining music, food, storytelling and the physical surroundings of Nystu-Trønnes, the project demonstrated how local history can be made relevant to people across generations. The project also created a basis for civic engagement by connecting the event to the proposal to reinstate the annual school visits to Nystu-Trønnes. In this way, the project went beyond cultural preservation and linked local history to questions of education, democratic participation, human dignity, ageing and the development of the welfare state.

4) One important lesson was that local history can be communicated effectively through creative and accessible methods rather than only through traditional educational formats. The project also demonstrated the value of connecting cultural activities with civic participation. A local cultural event can serve as a starting point for broader discussions about education, community development and political priorities. Another lesson was the importance of involving local organisations and community actors. Cooperation with Folkeakademiet, the local museum alliance and other local contributors helped connect the project to existing local networks and gave the initiative a stronger community basis.

Inclusion in Diversity Initiative
Franciszek Dobronski
POLAND, County Carlow and Dublin City, Province of Leinster

1) The primary aim of the project is to develop a multifaceted educational platform that creates informative and educational content around inclusion, diversity, migrant experiences, and the importance of inclusion in society. Additionally, it is open to addressing not only inclusion of people from mixed backgrounds, but likewise the broader idea of inclusion. For example, meaningful inclusion of young people in decision making spaces or making sure older people aren't forgotten in decision making spaces. On a wider level, the Initiative serves as a platform for promoting what inclusion means to people. In itself it has many definitions and individuals feel different levels of inclusion and understanding of the term, as a whole it is also very much individualistic. This isn't just a project that I want to promote in my local area to address the issues I see there, but on a wider national and European level, as inclusion is something that is often being undermined, especially with the growing rise of radical groups and the far-right.

2) In order to work towards outlined aims, I decided to set up a social media platform on Instagram and LinkedIn for the initiative as a majority of not only young people get their educational and informative content online, but likewise older people from 30+ years onwards. So far as of writing this report, I made 3 posts on the page with many more in the coming months. The posts on the page are planned to be informative around inclusion from various perspectives and ongoing events. Additionally, in order to have a wider impact on inclusion and develop a greater platform for the initiative, I engaged with various community, national and international organisations from across Ireland on this. I also worked on a Erasmus+ Project with Eurobug Ltd. (a community organisation dedicated to the social inclusion and empowerment of ethnic minority youth through non-formal education) in Calabria in Italy where I ran workshops focused on the inclusion of young people in Ireland in politics, as well as people from various diasporas. I continued working as a facilitator, helping run workshops within my own community and in Tallaght, Dublin, after returning from Italy. Over the course of the summer months, I ran an interview series where I interviewed seven people all from different backgrounds who have either lived experience of migration and inclusion, both from a personal and professional level across Ireland. They ranged from my friend from high school who is Bengali/Irish, the Inclusion and Diversity Officer in my University's Student's Union (Dublin City University), the CEO of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Head of the Inclusion and Diversity of Ireland's national news broadcast (RTÉ), Activists and people working in Refugee Inclusion Centres. I managed to interview Patricia Stephenson, Irish Senator for the Social Democrats Political Party and Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I also took part in a campaign titled #BeyondBorders with Forum Polonia, a cooperative platform advocating for the interests of the Polish Diaspora in Ireland and promoting and supporting its engagement in Irish Society. Ten Polish people from across Ireland were selected, and I was fortunate enough to be one of them. We filmed ten videos with each participant talking about how they are connected to Ireland and their story growing up as a migrant or living in Ireland since moving there. I spoke about how youth workspaces and my advocacy work on a National level in Ireland and on a European level with the EU-Youth Dialogue and the Council of Europe have helped me find a space where I'm not judged for where I come from, but rather for the person I am. Some organisations that I collaborated throughout the project was the the Irish branch of European Movement International (European Movement Ireland), where I was a guest speaker on their 'Stories from Europe' Event in Dublin, where I gave a talk about how youth work can have a powerful impact in bringing diverse people together and fostering a sense of Inclusion. I was invited to speak on a panel discussion, from STAND (an organisation, mobilising third-level

students to stand up for global justice, equality and sustainability) on their Diversity Panel in Maynooth University, Ireland.

3) Firstly, looking at the positive side of my progress, I believe that I did a good job really using this initiative as a multifaceted platform for educating people (regarding, the usage of social media, collaborations, facilitating workshops, outreach, Interviewing etc.). I plan to continue to work on this initiative even after my mandate as this is an issue / area that I'm really passionate about and have personal first-hand experience with. I also believe I've developed so many skills in areas and ways I've never done before, for example, I never utilised editorial software such as Canva or Capcut, but now I feel more competent with them. I learned so much along the way from the interactions I had with people and meeting them where they are at. This project being circled around the themes of inclusion and diversity, meant that I was learning so much more from how other people viewed these words.

4) On one hand I'm very proud of what I managed to achieve in just a span of just over half a year, from the educational impact in my local community and on a wider level, however, when looking at what I was lacking / could have done differently, I would say it's more centred around the local level. These issues are absolutely affecting people nationally and internationally; however, I have faced a few challenges when trying to centre the project more locally. Mainly the local county council had a summer recess and reduced council meetings during the summer months meaning that I wasn't able to have any proper contact with local politicians. I also feel like I was too focused on spanning the project on a wider national level too quickly rather than keeping it more focused initially on the local level, but then again there were challenges that sort of prevented that from happening.

WeThink Project: Agreeing to Disagree
Isabel Rocha
PORTUGAL, Arouca

1) The objective is to promote mechanisms for a more open and constructive approach to disagreement among young people by raising awareness to four principles to achieve political and social depolarisation.

1. The Genetic and Social Lottery
To help young people recognise how factors they do not choose – including their social environment, upbringing and genetic predispositions – can influence their beliefs and political views, encouraging greater empathy towards people who think differently.
2. Politics Is Not Football
To challenge the tendency to treat political identities as fixed group identities, encouraging young people to think independently and recognise that agreeing with different political positions on different issues is part of democratic life.
3. Intuition vs Reason
To raise awareness of how emotions, intuition and cognitive shortcuts can influence opinions and decisions, and to encourage young people to slow down, question their assumptions and engage in more deliberate thinking when considering complex issues.
4. Cosmic and Temporal Insignificance
To encourage young people to put disagreements and conflicts into a broader perspective, recognising the limited significance of individual disputes and using this perspective as a way to manage ego and reduce unnecessary polarisation.
Lastly, presenting the Rejuvenating Politics Initiative and the role of Youth delegates as an opportunity for meaningful youth participation.

2) Activities were:

- Interactive workshop on political participation and democratic engagement
- Participatory presentation with games and interactive exercises
- Critical-thinking and reflection activities
- Group discussions and peer debate
- Real-life examples and relatable political scenarios
- Collective reflection on young people's role in democracy
- Awareness-raising activities aimed at reducing barriers to political participation

3) The project created a space for students to discuss politics, democratic participation and their role as young citizens in an accessible and non-partisan way, through an interactive format, encouraging students to engage with concepts that can otherwise feel distant or abstract. The session also provided an opportunity to identify issues that students themselves consider relevant to their lives in Arouca. The

questionnaire completed after the activity showed a moderate perceived connection between politics and students' everyday lives (average: 3.2/5), while their self-reported interest in politics was lower (average: 2.5/5). Nevertheless, 12 out of 13 respondents indicated that they would like to have more opportunities to express their opinions on decisions affecting young people, either answering "yes" or "maybe". The issues most frequently identified as affecting students included education, employment and salaries, housing, transport, and culture/leisure. Several students specifically highlighted the need for more activities and opportunities for young people in Arouca, as well as improved transport and access to opportunities. Beyond the questionnaire results, the activity created a space for dialogue and tolerance within a class with different levels of engagement and comprehension. This reinforced the importance of making democratic participation accessible to all young people, including those who may not initially identify as interested in politics.

4) One of the main lessons from the implementation was the importance of adapting the level and format of communication to the specific group. Although the concepts presented had already been simplified through games, drawings, analogies and everyday examples, some students still experienced difficulties in understanding certain ideas. This showed that accessibility also requires being prepared to adapt explanations, pacing and activities further according to the participants' different learning needs. At the same time, the experience demonstrated the value of addressing democratic participation and tolerance even when students do not initially show a strong interest in politics. The activity provided an opportunity to discuss how politics and democratic values relate to everyday experiences, relationships and the community, rather than presenting politics only through institutions or elections. The experience also reinforced the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment for participation. This was mostly relevant given the social dynamics within the class and the importance of promoting tolerance and respect between students. Overall, the questionnaire showed that students may have a relatively low level of interest in politics while still recognising that political decisions affect their lives and expressing a desire for more opportunities to have their voices heard. This suggests that a lack of political engagement should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of interest in having a say in issues that affect young people. Creating accessible and concrete opportunities for participation may therefore be an important first step towards greater engagement.

Planning a Youth Council Initiative in Monaco (CJAM)
Amelie Augustin
MONACO, Monaco

1) This Youth Council gives young Monegasque nationals and children of the country (18–30) an independent, consultative channel to take part in decisions affecting their daily lives — implementing the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)3 at a local level.

2) Objectives: Represent the 18–30 age group, currently uncovered by Monaco's other youth bodies Advise on and propose concrete solutions on housing, employment, mental health, environment, education, and social/cultural life. Enable participation on an individual basis, with a collective dimension (Rec. §29). Work transversally with the Townhall, National Council, and government departments, rather than sitting under just one.

3) Benchmarking: mapped and compared Monaco's existing youth structures to identify the gap CJAM fills and ensure no duplication. Peer consultation: informal discussions with young Monegasques to gather their views and identify priority themes (housing, employment, mental health, etc.). Institutional engagement: a meeting with the Townhall and the National Council officials to present the finalised project and secure institutional support. Legal structuring: formal incorporation of an association, giving CJAM a legal existence and operational framework.

4) The Townhall and the National Council officials have expressed strong interest in the project and a willingness to involve the CJAM in their decision-making consultations going forward.

„Stop Violenței împotriva Femeilor” / “Stop Violence against Women”
Lavinia Teodorescu
ROMANIA, Bucharest, Argeș, Bacău, Botoșani, Giurgiu, Iași, Maramureș, Olt, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Teleorman, Vâlcea, Vrancea

1) The project aims to bring information closer to the victims of domestic violence – many of whom are young and even underage women. The purpose of that is two-fold: on the one hand, to raise awareness levels on the resources available to them, ranging from relocation, legal, and psychological help to police intervention, and on the second, to reduce the stigma of asking for help when faced with the risk of domestic violence.

2) As part of my project, I had three kinds of activities: A launching event on 17 Sep 2026 at the Romanian Parliament, in collaboration with the Romanian joint chamber of the senate and the parliament, that brought together state secretaries, local and regional authorities from Romania, the private and public sectors, victims of domestic violence, and the press. The event served as a means to introduce the community of interest.

The central part of the event entails distributing posters with resources (photo attached) into bathrooms in public/state institutions. I have done so in 12 counties to date.

My project also included several smaller events, including holding a session at the meeting of local and regional authorities in Brussels in June, discussing the project on a podcast in Bucharest, and organizing small group discussions with local authorities and centres for social assistance and childcare.

3) Since June 2026, over 75 public announcement posters have been adopted in 12 local/regional areas of Romania, and the effort is still ongoing. The project initiated a discussion in the Parliament, at the highest levels of Romanian decision-making, bringing mayors and directors of social assistance and childcare services into conversation in order to bridge the gap between national regulation and local action.

4) This project helped me realize the extent to which domestic violence is a problem for very young women and mothers in Romania. When discussing with doctors, the most common age of mothers subjected to violence that they mentioned from hospital interactions was 16-19 years old. The international signal for violence is not well-known. In a quick show of hands, only 1 out of 9 representatives of local authorities was familiar with the sign. I chose to include it on the poster to increase awareness and provide a subtle way for people in need, including people who might not be able to read or write, to ask for help. The processes of local and regional authorities are very long, and it was essential to start early (I started in May). Looking back, I would have sent the follow-ups even earlier, as people seem to forget over the summer break. Persistence is key – meeting people in person and having them publish the poster the same day worked much better than one email.

Iza reflektora: Mladi u kulturi (Behind the Spotlight: Youth in Culture)
Tijana Mirić
SERBIA, Stari grad, Belgrade

1) The aim of the project was to create a space for young amateur actors to share their personal experiences of being involved in theatre alongside their studies, work and other responsibilities, and to open a broader conversation about the role and importance of amateur theatre in young people’s lives in Serbia. Objectives: To explore the reasons why young people, choose to engage in theatre alongside their education, work and other commitments. To discuss the challenges and rewards of being part of an amateur theatre ensemble. To give visibility to the experiences of young amateur actors and their involvement in cultural life. To encourage an open exchange of experiences between young people involved in amateur theatre and the wider audience. To emphasise that participation in culture can be an important part of young people’s lives, even when it is not pursued as a profession.

2) The main activity developed to achieve the project objectives was a panel discussion entitled “Iza reflektora: Mladi u kulturi” (Behind the Spotlight: Youth in Culture). The panel brought together young amateur actresses from the same student theatre ensemble I am part of. The discussion focused on their personal experiences of being involved in amateur theatre, their motivations for acting, the challenges of balancing theatre with university, work and other responsibilities, as well as the role that theatre and culture play in their lives. I participated as the moderator, preparing the discussion topics and questions, guiding the conversation and encouraging the panellists to share their experiences and perspectives. My colleagues from the ensemble participated as panellists, sharing their personal experiences and engaging in discussion with the audience. The activity was designed as an open and interactive conversation rather than a formal presentation, allowing the audience to hear first-hand experiences and participate in the discussion. Methods and activities: Panel discussion with young amateur actresses. Moderated conversation and experience-sharing. Audience interaction and open discussion. Informal exchange and networking among participants.

3) The main result of the project was creating an opportunity for the audience to get a closer look at the experience of young people involved in amateur theatre and at the community that can develop around it. The discussion encouraged active engagement from the audience, who followed the conversation closely and also had the opportunity to participate. One of the most meaningful reactions was that several audience members expressed that they felt inspired to come on stage themselves and take part in a similar discussion as panellists in the future. The personal stories shared by the panellists made the

discussion emotional and engaging for the audience. It also helped to show that amateur theatre is about performing, creating a community, developing relationships and giving young people a space to express themselves. Another important result was the idea to continue organising similar events in the future and broaden the conversation beyond theatre, by giving visibility to young people involved in other forms of amateur art and cultural activities. For me personally, one of the biggest successes of the project was seeing how engaged the audience was throughout the discussion. The fact that people were listening attentively, connecting emotionally with the stories and wanting to be part of the experience showed me that the conversation had genuinely resonated with them.

4) One of the main things I learned through the project was that even when you work closely with people, there are still many parts of their experiences that you do not know until you create the space to ask about them. Preparing and asking questions for the panel allowed me to learn more about my colleagues as actresses, but also about their personal motivations, challenges and the meaning theatre has in their lives. For example, through the discussion about balancing theatre with university, work and other responsibilities, I realised how differently each of us experiences the same commitment. Questions about what theatre gives us that we cannot find elsewhere also opened up more personal parts of the conversation that we do not usually discuss during rehearsals. I also learned that the idea of “amateur” does not necessarily say much about the quality, dedication or seriousness of someone's work. Talking about where the line between amateur and professional lies, whether formal education defines an actor, and whether not being paid makes artistic work more genuine made me reflect on how we understand amateur art more generally. Another lesson was that some of the most interesting parts of the discussion came from the things happening behind the scenes, finding costumes, scenography, spaces and other creative solutions with limited resources. These are things the audience normally does not see, but they are a big part of what makes an amateur theatre function. Finally, I learned that as a moderator, my role is not simply to ask prepared questions. The questions are a starting point, but listening carefully and following the answers can lead the conversation somewhere more meaningful and reveal stories that could not have been planned in advance.

Youth Participation explained
Tinkara Kranjčevič
SLOVENIA, Novo mesto, Dolenjska

1) To strengthen young people's (mainly high school pupils) capacity and opportunities to take part in decision-making processes and engage in youth (volunteer) organisations. Objectives: 1. Understand the concept and different levels of youth participation. 2. Identify difficulties which young people may face when aiming to engage, such as lack of information, social inequalities etc. 3. Explore good practices in their own (local) area or organisations. 4. Develop critical thinking skills. 5. Identify organisations that would enable them to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.

2) A workshop.

3) Outcomes: participants have an increased knowledge of youth participation and existing mechanisms. They have improved skills in advocacy and critical thinking as well as greater confidence and motivation to take part in local or regional organisations.

Long-term: hopefully, they will take concrete actions following the workshop and possibly engage in constructive dialogues with each other or institutions.

4) Those who were already involved in organisations, were more interested and engaged, they also took more initiative. Interactive methods, such as group work were more effective than the initial 'lecturing' part as participants could share ideas with each other. However, participants had different levels of knowledge, so it is uncertain to say how much each individual took from the workshop.

Youth Platform of the Community of Madrid
Carla Alvarez Gonzalez
SPAIN, Madrid

1) To rebuild a plural, independent and youth-led space for participation and cooperation among youth organisations in the Community of Madrid, after the regional government abolished the Madrid Regional Youth Council (CJCM) in December 2024. Objectives: 1. Reconnect youth organisations left without a common space and reach new ones that were never part of the former Council. 2. Create a truly diverse youth participation space, that includes members from different sectors, activities and ideologies. 3. Build trust, shared values and a common purpose before creating formal structures. 4. Identify the common needs of youth organisations and respond to them collectively. 5. Prepare the Platform’s legal

basis (statutes, internal rules, governance) through a participatory process. 6. Open channels of dialogue with the regional youth administration and the Spanish Youth Council (CJE).

2) Activities included:

- Core group meetings: a group of 6 young people from different organisations coordinates the process. It met regularly with minutes in 2025 and monthly in 2026.
- Open assemblies: four meetings with participating organisations (May, July, October and December 2025), online and at the CJE headquarters. They produced a Document of Agreements on the Platform's aims, functions, membership and governance.
- Recruitment and networking: 48 organisations contacted, one-to-one meetings with every organisation we could reach, and an engagement tracking sheet.
- I Participation Days (15 February 2026): a full-day participatory workshop to diagnose problems. Methods: participation passport, barometer, problem tree, backwards storyboard, values workshop and a short training on youth participation spaces.
- II Participation Days (12 April 2026): a workshop with an external facilitator to define the Platform's purpose and objectives, including prioritisation voting and a commitment dynamic.
- Collaboration with the CJE's "Democrazia con Z" project: Regular coordination meetings with the CJE's project officer for Madrid; Support for her stakeholder map and Agenda of Common Priorities, based on 14 interviews; Co-organisation of the closing event, "El Encuentro" (Fuenlabrada, 18 June 2026).
- Promotional stand at El Encuentro: a card game on forms of youth participation, a "What does participation mean to you?" board, an individual participation passport, a "draw our logo" sheet and merchandise.
- Continuous work: a WhatsApp community, draft statutes, and three working groups (communication, informal activities, statutes).
- Expert advice: a meeting with Enrique Hernández Díez (University of Extremadura), an expert in youth participation.
- Institutional dialogue: a meeting with the two Deputy Directors for Youth of the Community of Madrid (1 October 2026).
- Planned: a funding training for organisation boards (18 October 2026) and the III Participation Days (November 2026) to choose joint projects.

3) Results included:

- A growing network of 24 organisations that have taken part in at least one activity, out of 48 contacted, with 22 in the coordination group.
- A shared foundation built by the organisations themselves: a Document of Agreements on aims, functions and membership; 10 shared values (education, unity, inclusion, participation, commitment, collaboration, organisation, humanisation, diversity, dialogue); 4 purpose areas with agreed priorities.
- A more diverse membership than the former Council, including social, inclusion and leisure-time organisations that felt excluded before.
- About 10 new organisations interested in joining after El Encuentro.
- Reusable participation materials: the card game, the participation passport and the event reports.
- Draft statutes, a clear legal route (registration as a federation of associations) and a roadmap.
- An open line of collaboration with the regional Directorate General for Youth and with the CJE.

4) Lessons included:

- Trust before structure: organisations disengaged when the process felt technical and came back when it became relational. Participation days and shared meals worked better than formal assemblies.
- Make formal work more human: volunteers have little time. Rather than adding social meetings on top of technical ones, we combined them.
- Neutrality has to be earned: after a polarised closure, a neutral venue, transparent minutes and a core group that does not speak for its organisations were key.
- Pluralism takes active work: conservative organisations remain the hardest to engage.
- Keeping people engaged is hard: registrations do not always turn into attendance (42 registered and 25 attended in February). Offering useful content such as funding training helps.
- Bring proposals, not only problems: both the administration and the organisations value concrete solutions.
- Accessibility needs resources: without a budget we could not provide sign language interpretation, which limits the participation of organisations of deaf young people.

AI Riviera: Using AI to Make Local Democracy More Accessible
Yann Boulben Meyer
SWITZERLAND, La Tour-de-Peilz and the Riviera vaudoise, Canton of Vaud, Switzerland

1) AI Riviera aims to make local public information easier to find, understand and use. The project seeks to support informed participation by helping residents and elected representatives explore municipal issues without needing prior knowledge of municipal terminology or the organisation of official archives. The platform enables users to ask questions in everyday language and receive answers linked to official municipal sources, while also providing a manual document browser. Its objectives are to simplify access to municipal information, help residents follow issues over time, enable users to verify information against original publications, and reduce the initial learning curve for newly elected representatives.

3) A website: https://airiviera.org/. I developed a functional public prototype of AI Riviera using a retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) approach. The work included collecting and preparing official municipal documents, developing the document retrieval system and user interface, integrating AI-assisted answers linked to official sources, and creating a manual document browser. I also published the source code and technical documentation on GitHub to support transparency and future collaboration. In parallel, I presented the project online through LinkedIn, prepared a project description and detailed budget, and contacted the Cultural Commission of La Tour-de-Peilz to explore potential financial and institutional support. Before developing the project, I also discussed digital democratic participation with academics and practitioners working in the field, including people involved in public-sector digitalisation in the Canton of Vaud.

3) The main result is a functional and publicly accessible prototype of AI Riviera. Users can search municipal information through natural-language questions, verify AI-generated answers against official publications and browse documents manually. The initial LinkedIn communication reached 1,145 people and generated 15 clicks to the website. Google Analytics recorded 12 users during the initial observation period. Uptake was therefore lower than I had hoped, but the project produced a working prototype and provided useful initial evidence about the challenges of moving from technical development to adoption by residents and institutions.

4) One of my main lessons is that developing a functional digital tool is only one part of the challenge. I initially focused heavily on building the platform, but in retrospect I should have involved potential users earlier and organised more workshops and practical demonstrations. Initial uptake suggests that awareness, perceived usefulness, ease of use and trust all need to be explored further. I also learned that public institutions may require time to evaluate rapidly evolving AI technologies, build internal expertise and establish appropriate governance frameworks before adopting them. A future phase should therefore combine technical development with targeted outreach, demonstrations and structured user feedback. This would make it possible to better understand user needs and distinguish between problems of awareness, usability, trust and actual demand.

Opinion Formation on Gendered Democratic Backsliding
Rebecka Bjuremalm
SWEDEN, Stockholm

1) This project responds to a growing concern around gendered democratic backsliding among young people in Sweden: a widening gender divide in how young people relate to democracy, political participation, and their own ability to influence society. Recent studies show that only 23 percent of young people feel they have real opportunities to influence society, compared to 52 percent in 2019. At the same time, one in five young men no longer see democracy as self-evidently the best form of government. These developments point not only to a broader erosion of democratic confidence, but to an increasingly gendered pattern in young people's political attitudes and relationship with democratic institutions. The need is therefore not only for more information about democracy, but for a deeper understanding of how gender polarization shapes young people's political participation, representation, and attitudes towards democracy, and how these divisions may contribute to, or signal, broader processes of democratic backsliding. The project explores democracy as something that is not only institutional, but lived, experienced, and shared differently across gendered lines.

2) To achieve the project's objectives, I developed a combination of knowledge-sharing, public debate, and youth-focused analysis, all centred on gendered democratic backsliding and the growing gender divide in young people's relationship with democracy. The main activities and methods were:

Public debate and media engagement: I wrote a series of debate articles on gender polarization, democratic backsliding, and its implications for young people. The articles were published both in a youth-driven independent online magazine, where I am a regular contributor, and in national Swedish media. The aim was to bring the issue into the wider public debate and highlight the democratic consequences of increasing gender polarization among young people.

Briefing session on gendered democratic backsliding: I delivered a dedicated briefing session examining the current state of gendered democratic backsliding among young people in Sweden. The session combined recent developments and evidence with a youth perspective, with a particular focus on how growing gender differences in political attitudes and democratic engagement can affect social cohesion and democratic participation. I prepared and delivered a keynote on gender polarization from a youth perspective, situating developments around Sweden's local and regional elections within the broader political trends shaping young people's relationship with democracy. The presentation focused on three interconnected dimensions: representation, participation, and political attitudes.

Youth-focused political analysis: Across the activities, I used gender and generational perspectives to analyse democratic developments, with particular attention to how political polarization may affect young women and young men differently. This approach was intended to move beyond general measures of democratic engagement and identify emerging gendered patterns that may serve as early indicators of democratic backsliding.

Knowledge-sharing and networking: Through the briefing, keynote, media contributions, and related discussions, I created opportunities to share insights with other young people, democratic actors, and stakeholders working on political participation and democratic resilience. These activities have also helped connect the Swedish experience to the broader European discussion on democratic backsliding and the role of young people in identifying and responding to emerging risks.

Taken together, these activities have allowed me to combine research and analysis, public communication, political education, and networking around a specific emerging democratic challenge. They also provide a foundation for my continued contribution to the New Democratic Pact and work on early warning systems against democratic backsliding, particularly by bringing a youth and gender perspective into discussions of democratic resilience.

3) The main results of the project have been increased public visibility, expert engagement, and knowledge-sharing on gendered democratic backsliding among young people.

Public reach: Published debate articles on gender polarization in national Swedish media and a youth-driven independent magazine reaching 500,000+ readers annually.

Expert engagement: Delivered a briefing and keynote on gender polarization, focusing on youth representation, participation, and political attitudes.

Election observation: Contributed to an election observation mission, with my input and supporting document shared with the mission's expert. The Head of Delegation specifically highlighted the value of my contribution.

Continued engagement: Built a foundation for further work on gendered democratic backsliding through the New Democratic Pact and early warning systems.

4) One of the main lessons learned was the importance of long-term planning and flexibility. My initial project ideas could not be implemented as planned, partly because I was unable to secure the expected funding. This highlighted the need to develop a clear Plan B from the outset, with activities that can be adapted to changing circumstances and available resources.

At the same time, the experience showed that a project can remain impactful when its core objective is maintained while the methods and activities are adjusted. By building on existing opportunities, such as media engagement, election-related activities, and knowledge-sharing, I was able to continue advancing the project's focus on gendered democratic backsliding despite the changes to the original plan.

Going forward, I will therefore place greater emphasis on earlier planning, diversified funding opportunities, realistic timelines, and alternative implementation scenarios.

Workshop: Interested in Politics? Now What?
Isabel Laning
THE NETHERLANDS, Paris

1) To help young people who are interested in politics and societal issues turn that interest into active participation in democratic and civic life. Objectives: Raise awareness of formal and informal ways of participating in civic and democratic life. Help young people recognise the value of their existing experiences, skills and initiatives. Provide a practical resource for finding opportunities in youth participation, volunteering, internships, delegations, training and civic engagement. Build participants' confidence in identifying opportunities and understanding how to apply for them or find support for their own ideas.

2) I hosted an interactive workshop exploring why youth participation matters, discussing formal and informal forms of civic engagement, and inviting participants to reflect on their own experiences through group brainstorming and discussion. I also shared practical advice on finding and applying for opportunities, using my own experience as a Youth delegate to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe as a case study. I also developed a practical resource list specifically for the project, bringing together opportunities and useful starting points for youth participation, volunteering, internships, delegations, training, civic engagement and international engagement. The resource list was shared with participants as a tool they could continue using after the workshop.

3) The workshop gave participants a structured opportunity to consider how they could become more involved in issues they care about. It connected the idea of youth participation with concrete next steps, from volunteering and joining initiatives to exploring formal programmes, delegations and internships. Participants were also encouraged to identify skills and experience they already possess and consider how these could be relevant to future opportunities. The resource list provided a practical starting point for further exploration, including links to relevant institutions, youth networks and application resources. Beyond simply presenting opportunities, the project aimed to make them feel more accessible by showing participants where to look and how to begin.

4) One of the main lessons was that a lack of participation does not necessarily mean a lack of interest. Through conversations with students before designing the workshop, I realised that many were interested in political and societal issues and willing to contribute but genuinely did not know where or how to start. Others had already volunteered or initiated projects but were unsure how to find support, access resources or develop their ideas further. This highlighted the importance of making opportunities easier to navigate. Information about participation can be overwhelming when it is spread across different institutions, programmes and organisations. Bringing relevant resources together in one practical list was therefore an important part of the project. I also recognised how easily young people can underestimate their own experience. Civic engagement does not always begin with a formal position or an established organisation; smaller initiatives and everyday commitments can also build relevant skills and contribute to a community. The project reinforced for me that helping young people take the first step can be just as important as encouraging them to participate.

Youth Projects for Atakum Municipality
İrem Bilir
TÜRKIYE, Atakum Municipality

1) To support Atakum Municipality in strengthening youth participation in local decision-making through practical youth projects and expert guidance. Provide the municipality with youth participation projects ready for implementation. Offer guidance on embedding young people's and future generations' perspectives in local governance. Build tools that help the municipality track intergenerational balance in its decisions.

2) Design of youth participation projects for the municipality, including:

- A youth delegate seat at the municipal council, similar to the model in Rejuvenating Politics.
- Youth Advisory Council to the Mayor
- Monthly Teatime with Mayor (open call sign-ups by young people)
- Intergenerational Dialogue on Atakum History (1 young person is matched to one old person to document their knowledge of how Atakum changed in their lifetimes)
- 3 sessions with the Mayor's Office, Mayor and the Deputy Mayor. Guidance and co-design sessions are continuing with the municipality.

3) Implementation is still in progress.

4) It has been extremely difficult to work with municipalities due to the current political dynamics, especially in Istanbul. This is why I chose to work with municipalities in my hometown, Samsun. If not for personal connections, it would be almost impossible to engage with municipalities currently. However, our work with the Atakum Municipality also had a long pause because of a crisis they had to go through. Municipalities have to be careful when engaging with public because of the current political dynamics which constraints their capacity for participatory governance mechanisms. Municipalities were more inclined to accept projects that had low cost but high value of public exposure. As Atakum Mayor is young and new in the mayor role, he was open to engage with young people in a two-directional way. Türkiye ve Marmara Municipalities Unions were not accepting of a young person to be in a role that is beyond “participant”.

"Your voice - your impact: how young people can change politics"
Viktoria Kravets
UKRAINE, Lviv

1) To inform active youth from various Ukrainian regions about practical mechanisms for political influence and to promote the opportunities provided by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The main objectives of this project were to raise awareness about the Youth delegates - Rejuvenating Politics initiative among local youth leaders and to empower young people to actively engage in democratic processes by outlining practical entry points into politics. Additionally, the project aimed to motivate participants — representing various regions of Ukraine — to apply for international civic opportunities, effectively bridging the information gap between local youth councils and European decision-making platforms.

2) The activities included a moderated interview-style chat and the preparation of a national media publication. Specifically, I participated in a session titled "Your voice - your impact: how young people can change politics" during "THE YOUTH" one-day forum in Lviv on September 18. Structured as a conversational interview, the session allowed me to answer questions regarding various civic opportunities for young people, focusing primarily on the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. I thoroughly explained the Youth delegates - Rejuvenating Politics program, detailing the structure, registration mechanisms, and practical steps on how to become a youth delegate, while sharing my firsthand experience to demonstrate real trajectories of impact. Additionally, I authored an article detailing insights and key takeaways from the Congress, which is scheduled for publication in October on the national media platform Hromadske Radio to ensure broader public outreach.

3) Successfully informed youth council representatives and civic activists from regions including Lviv, Khmelnytskyi, Odesa, Rivne, Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Kharkiv about the Council of Europe and the Congress. Reached 70 active participants during the session, significantly raising awareness about the Youth delegates - Rejuvenating Politics program, which was previously unknown to the vast majority of them. Bridged the information gap regarding international youth platforms and provided concrete steps for registration and involvement.

4) There is a significant information gap regarding international youth platforms among active regional youth representatives in Ukraine. A conversational, interview-style format (with a moderator) is highly effective in building trust and interest. Personal experiences and practical steps resonate much more than formal presentations, effectively encouraging youth to move from observation to active civic participation.

Youth Guide to UK Politics
Gabriella Elin Blomber McCormack
UNITED KINGDOM, Scotland

1) To help young people, especially young people in Scotland, understand how politics works and find ways to get involved in democracy. Objectives: Create a simple and accessible Youth Guide to Scottish Politics. Explain how the UK and Scottish political systems work in a way that is easy for young people to understand. Share information about young people’s rights, opportunities and ways to have their voices heard. Highlight opportunities for young people to get involved in politics and youth participation. Encourage more young people to feel confident taking part in democracy.

2) Created the Youth Guide to UK Politics: youthguideukpolitics.org. Developed and shared accessible blog posts about Scottish politics, democracy and youth opportunities. Promoted the blog online via LinkedIn and Instagram to reach and engage young people.

3) Members of ESN UK (Erasmus Student Network UK) thoroughly enjoyed the website and found the information useful. Young people showed interest in learning more about the Congress' initiative and how they could get involved in 2027.

4) I learned that sharing information through social media, especially short videos, seems to engage young people most directly. Clear and simple content makes political information easier to understand and encourages young people to find out more.