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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2022-2024)**

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Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	2
2	What is it like to be young in the European Union?.....	3
3	Legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022 .....	4
4	Progress across key areas .....	4
4.1	Engage .....	5
4.2	Connect.....	7
4.3	Empower.....	7
4.4	Youth-led actions .....	11
4.5	Beyond the EU .....	12
4.6	Insights on EU spending on youth.....	13
5	Cooperation needs at national level.....	13
6	Outlook for EU youth policy cooperation .....	14

# 1 Introduction

The importance of young people in shaping the European Union's future cannot be overstated. The political guidelines<sup>1</sup> for the 2024-2029 European Commission highlight the **critical role that young people play** in driving social change, promoting cultural diversity, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our societies. The Commission's commitment to giving young people opportunities for the future and strengthening Erasmus+ demonstrates its determination to empower young people to achieve their full potential. The creation of the President's Youth Advisory Board and the annual Youth Policy Dialogues with European Commissioners as well as the Commission youth check will put young people at the heart of the EU's policymaking and ensure their active participation in shaping its future.

The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (the EUYS)** provides the **framework for EU cooperation in the youth field**<sup>2</sup>. It promotes young people's participation in democratic life in line with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, supports their social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people can participate in society. The EUYS engages, connects and empowers young people<sup>3</sup>, and advances youth participation and youth mainstreaming<sup>4</sup>. The European Youth Goals<sup>5</sup> are part of the EUYS. They address many youth relevant policies (including education and training, employment, health, and the environment).

Every three years, the Commission reports on EUYS implementation, as required by the Council Resolution (footnote 2). **The EU Youth Report 2022-2024**, which is accompanied by two staff working documents, is the second such report under the current EUYS<sup>6</sup>. The Report highlights the progress made in implementing the EUYS, against the backdrop of the current situation of young people. It complements the interim evaluation of the EUYS<sup>7</sup> and the Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022<sup>8</sup>, which were published in 2024. The EU Youth Report provides a **starting point for further action** in the areas most relevant to young people. It aims to guide overall efforts in the last phase of the current EUYS and offers insights for the next EUYS after 2027.

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<sup>1</sup> [Political Guidelines 2024-2029 | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [EU Youth Strategy | European Youth Portal \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> Youth mainstreaming involves the integration of a youth perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes that concern and affect young people.

<sup>5</sup> [European Youth Goals | European Youth Portal.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2021\).](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, and Commission Staff Working Document Evaluation accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Year of Youth 2022.](#)

## 2 What is it like to be young in the European Union?

The EUYS needs to continue evolving in response to the situation of young people<sup>9</sup>. Data on aspects influencing their situation could identify areas for further policy development and increased activity. As the following chapters show, many policies influence the situation of young people.

A first positive finding is that young people in the EU are interested in **political and community participation**. Over 70% report that they vote in elections<sup>10</sup> and many express trust in the EU<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, the participation of young people in the 2024 European elections decreased compared to 2019<sup>12</sup>. Young people participate to a high degree in organised activities such as volunteering<sup>13</sup> and are vocal about the environment and climate change, which they see as the most urgent global threat.

However, the share of young people in the EU population has been declining over the past decade. This **demographic shift** is creating concerns about intergenerational fairness and the sustainability of social security systems. For example, a decline in the number of young people supporting a growing ageing population, could place increased strain on public services and social security systems.

**Youth unemployment** is a significant challenge. Approximately 10% of young people are unemployed and many are classified as **NEETs** (not in employment, education, or training). Low educational attainment and disabilities increase unemployment, which in turn exacerbates social exclusion and poverty. Vulnerable groups such as racial and ethnic minorities are particularly affected<sup>14</sup>. Regional disparities remain high, and the EU's outermost regions are badly affected<sup>15</sup>.

Nearly a quarter of EU's young people are at risk of **poverty and social exclusion**, including those in precarious jobs. This creates financial insecurity and affects access to quality education, housing, and healthcare. The pressures of unemployment, lower education, and social exclusion also impact **mental health**, with almost half of young people reporting emotional or psychosocial problems in the past year<sup>16</sup>.

**Education and training** are crucial for young people's prospects. 4 in 10 young people completed tertiary education in 2023<sup>17</sup>. Early leaving from education and training stood at 9.5% in 2023 and remains a concern, particularly among young men (11%). The PISA 2022

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<sup>9</sup> Definitions of young people vary but the 15-29 age range is usually used for statistical purposes at EU level.

<sup>10</sup> [EP Spring 2023 Survey: Democracy in action - One year before the European elections - June 2023 - Eurobarometer survey.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Standard Eurobarometer STD99 : Standard Eurobarometer 99 - Spring 2023.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [EU Post-electoral survey 2024 - October 2024 - Eurobarometer survey \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Youth and democracy - May 2024 - Eurobarometer survey.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Being Black in the EU. Experiences of people of African descent – EU Survey on immigrants and descendants of immigrants. FRA 2021 Roma Survey.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Inforegio - Ninth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Youth and democracy - May 2024 - Eurobarometer survey.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Educational attainment statistics - Statistics Explained, Eurostat, 2023.](#)

survey<sup>18</sup> shows that 30% of the 15-year-olds in the EU do not reach a minimum proficiency in mathematics and around 25% in reading and science.

The digital world is ingrained in young people's lives, presenting opportunities and challenges. The acquisition of **digital skills** correlates significantly with higher formal education. In 2023, 28% of young people lacked basic digital skills, rising to 38% for young people with low education<sup>19</sup>.

**Transnational mobility** is an essential element of high-quality education and training. 16% of young people have studied or trained in another Member State<sup>20</sup>, however financial and organisational barriers are still important challenges.

### 3 Legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022

The **Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022**<sup>21</sup> set out **60 actions** to give young people **a greater say** in EU policymaking and **deepen the youth dimension** in EU policies. This includes **the Commission youth check**, which aims to ensure that the main new Commission initiatives consider the impact on young people<sup>22</sup>, by fully using the Better Regulation tools, including stakeholder consultations and impact assessments.

In its 2024-2029 mandate, the Commission maintains its commitment to young people through new initiatives, such as the **President's Youth Advisory Board** and the annual **Youth Policy Dialogues** with Commissioners.<sup>23</sup>

The **EU Youth Dialogue**<sup>24</sup> is the largest EU-level youth participation mechanism. It contributes to these commitments, including by aligning the dialogue more closely with the Commission's annual work programme<sup>25</sup>. The new **EU Youth Stakeholders Group**<sup>26</sup> facilitates dialogue and consultations with European youth organisations, national youth councils, researchers, representatives of Member States and other EU institutions.

### 4 Progress across key areas

The EUYS promotes youth mainstreaming across policy areas, including through the youth check and the activities of the EU Youth Coordinator<sup>27</sup>. The present report builds on the Communication on the European Year of Youth and the interim evaluation of the EUYS. It provides updates to complete the picture and guide future actions.

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<sup>18</sup> [The twin challenge of equity and excellence in basic skills in the EU - Publications Office of the EU, 2024.](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Individuals' level of digital skills](#), Eurostat, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> [Youth and democracy - May 2024 - Eurobarometer survey.](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Year of Youth 2022.](#)

<sup>22</sup> The youth check is applied to relevant initiatives listed in Annex I (new policy and legislative initiatives) of the Commission's annual work programmes, starting from 2025.

<sup>23</sup> [Political Guidelines 2024-2029 | European Commission.](#)

<sup>24</sup> [EU Youth Dialogue | European Youth Portal.](#)

<sup>25</sup> For example, the EU Youth Conference in September 2024 included a consultation on the next generation EU youth programmes.

<sup>26</sup> [EU Youth Stakeholders Group | European Youth Portal.](#)

<sup>27</sup> [EU Youth Coordinator | European Youth Portal.](#)

## 4.1 Engage

The ‘Engage’ pillar of the EUYS encourages young people to participate in and contribute to society, democratic life and the economy.

### *Youth participation*

Youth participation is a key priority of the EUYS. The **EU Youth Dialogue** has focused on the theme ‘Engaging together for a sustainable and inclusive Europe in 2022-2024’<sup>28</sup>. It has enabled 130 000<sup>29</sup> young people to voice their opinion on policy in the past five years. **National youth councils**<sup>30</sup> played a key role in its implementation. The 10<sup>th</sup> cycle (July 2023-December 2024) focused on social inclusion<sup>31</sup>. Significant progress has been made with including young people from diverse backgrounds in the EU Youth Dialogue, but the process can evolve still further and under-represented groups can be further involved. Mechanisms for sharing and following-up on young people’s recommendations need to be strengthened.

Synergies with other initiatives to foster youth participation can also be developed further. This is particularly the case with the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the child**<sup>32</sup> which involves children and young people in decision-making through the **EU Childrens’ Participation Platform**<sup>33</sup>

**Erasmus+** and the **European Solidarity Corps** provide important support for civic participation through one of the programmes’ horizontal priorities.

Other recent initiatives to foster youth participation include the:

- **Better Internet for Kids strategy**<sup>34</sup> (BIK+)
- **European citizens’ panels**<sup>35</sup>
- **Youth4Reviving (stagnating) EU territories**<sup>36</sup>
- **Defence of Democracy’ package**<sup>37</sup>
- **EU Citizenship Package**<sup>38</sup>
- **European Youth Week 2024**<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> [Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the revision of the EU Youth Strategy Work Plan 2022-2024.](#)

<sup>29</sup> The total number of young people participating in the EU Youth Dialogue cycles 6-9 in 2018-2023 exceeded 131 000: [Review of the nine cycles of the EU Youth Dialogue, 2024.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [National Youth Councils \(September 2021\). Our Members | European Youth Forum.](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the outcomes of the 10th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue.](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Delivering on the EU strategy on the Rights of the Child, 2024.](#)

<sup>33</sup> [EU Children’s Participation Platform | European Union.](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Home | Better Internet for Kids.](#)

<sup>35</sup> [European Citizens’ Panels - European Commission.](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Inforegio - Toolkit Youth 4 Reviving \(stagnating\) EU territories.](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Protecting democracy - European Commission.](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Citizenship Package - European Commission.](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Highlights of the Week | European Youth Portal.](#)

## *Youth employment and skills*

In a rapidly evolving labour market, acquiring relevant skills and finding jobs is crucial for young people. Raising ambition and action on tackling skills and labour shortages is emphasised in the Commission's 2024-2029 political guidelines.

The **European Year of Skills** highlighted the critical role of skills in driving economic competitiveness, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The Year helped address skills gaps in the EU and promoted upskilling and reskilling<sup>40</sup>. The **Action plan on tackling skills and labour shortages in the EU**<sup>41</sup> includes initiatives to activate and upskill young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

The European Year of Skills fostered a culture of lifelong learning and skills development to unlock new opportunities and boost career prospects. Many initiatives promote youth employment and skills, such as the:

- **Youth Guarantee**<sup>42</sup>
- **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**<sup>43</sup>
- **ALMA**<sup>44</sup>
- **Individual Learning Accounts**<sup>45</sup>
- **Disability Employment Package**<sup>46</sup>
- **Talent Booster Mechanism**<sup>47</sup>
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy**<sup>48</sup>
- **Youth4Regions**<sup>49</sup>
- **Interreg Volunteer Youth**<sup>50</sup>

The 2024 **Commission proposals for quality traineeships**<sup>51</sup> set out binding measures to improve and enforce trainees' working conditions and combat abusive practices, and recommendations on fair pay, social protection and inclusive traineeships for all trainees.

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<sup>40</sup> Results of the European Year of Skills, 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Labour and skills shortages in the EU: an action plan.

<sup>42</sup> The reinforced Youth Guarantee - European Commission.

<sup>43</sup> European Alliance for Apprenticeships - European Commission

<sup>44</sup> ALMA: an active inclusion initiative for young people - European Commission.

<sup>45</sup> Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on individual learning accounts.

<sup>46</sup> Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities - European Commission.

<sup>47</sup> Inforegio - Talent Booster Mechanism.

<sup>48</sup> Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy Hub.

<sup>49</sup> Inforegio - Youth4Regions – the programme for aspiring journalists.

<sup>50</sup> Home - Interreg Volunteer Youth.

<sup>51</sup> Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving and enforcing working conditions of trainees and combating regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships ('Traineeships Directive'). Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a reinforced Quality Framework for Traineeships.

## 4.2 Connect

The Connect pillar of the EUYS promotes exchanges and joint projects, encouraging young people to study, train, or volunteer abroad.

### *Learning mobility*

Learning mobility is important for young people to develop skills, create shared experiences and gain a better understanding of each other across cultural and other divides. **Erasmus+** and **European Solidarity Corps** remain key enablers of the EUYS by supporting learning mobility, exchanges, and volunteering. In 2024, Erasmus+ reached the milestone of **15 million participants**<sup>52</sup>. The European Student Card Initiative<sup>53</sup> gathered pace and 3 000 higher education institutions have joined the Erasmus Without Paper network. The **European Solidarity Corps** expanded its scope to volunteering in the humanitarian aid field.

The 2024 **Council Recommendation ‘Europe on the Move’ – learning mobility opportunities for everyone**<sup>54</sup> set new targets for making learning abroad possible for more people.

### *Youth and the digital world*

Growing up in the digital age, young people face unique opportunities and risks (e.g. AI), which may require more attention in the next EUYS. Several initiatives address the wellbeing of young people in the digital world, including the Better Internet for Kids (BIK+) strategy.

Social media deeply affects young people, offering opportunities but also posing risks to their mental health. The Digital Services Act prioritises minors' online protection, mandating platforms to ensure privacy, safety, and security, and to assess risks to users' wellbeing. The **Artificial Intelligence Act**<sup>55</sup> will regulate or prohibit AI systems that could be harmful to children. The upcoming **action plan against cyberbullying** will combat online cyberbullying and abuse and an **EU-wide inquiry on social media’s impact on mental health and wellbeing** will show how young people can use the digital world, while reducing negative effects.

## 4.3 Empower

The Empower pillar of the EUYS encourages young people to take charge of their own lives and helps them to play an active role in society, particularly through youth work.

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<sup>52</sup> It started in 1987.

<sup>53</sup> [European Student Card Initiative - Erasmus+](#).

<sup>54</sup> [Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 ‘Europe on the Move’ — learning mobility opportunities for everyone](#).

<sup>55</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations](#).



## *Youth work*

By providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, youth work and non-formal and informal learning empower young people to become active citizens and develop the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to succeed in an uncertain future. In addition, youth workers must enhance their own skills and knowledge, so that they can have a more effective and sustainable impact on the young people they serve.

The 2024 **Council Resolution on Youth Work in an empowering Europe**<sup>56</sup> calls for the development of youth work<sup>57</sup>. The **European Training Strategy for youth work**<sup>58</sup> aims to help youth workers support young people. More than 110 000 youth workers have participated in Erasmus+<sup>59</sup>. The **EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership**<sup>60</sup> and particularly the preparation of the **4<sup>th</sup> European Youth Work Convention**<sup>61</sup> help further develop the EU youth work agenda.

## *Social inclusion*

Combating social exclusion and discrimination is crucial in unlocking the full potential of young generations. The intersectional nature of inclusion challenges (e.g. youth unemployment, poverty and social isolation) can aggravate the experiences of groups at risk of discrimination and exclusion, such as young people who have disabilities, come from racial or ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma), the LGBTIQ community, religious minorities, or live in rural areas. The EU Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025<sup>62</sup> highlights the role of young people in combatting racism and discrimination, and the importance of listening to and involving those affected in decision-making.

The 2023 **Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion**<sup>63</sup> includes recommendations to address the needs of young adults.

The 2024 **Council Conclusions on inclusive societies for young people**<sup>64</sup> called for the facilitation of participation and inclusion. The **EU Youth Dialogue** now involves more young people from minority groups and those with disabilities - efforts continue to increase the participation of NEETs and rural youth.

**Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps** provide activities like the DiscoverEU inclusion action, youth exchanges, and group volunteering, as well as special support for young people with fewer opportunities. Between January 2021 and August 2024, 32% of

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<sup>56</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on youth work policy in an empowering Europe.

<sup>57</sup> Youth work encompasses a wide range of activities to help young people grow and equips them with personal, professional and entrepreneurial competences.

<sup>58</sup> European Training Strategy for Youth Work - European Training Strategy.

<sup>59</sup> Between January 2021 and August 2024, in youth worker mobility.

<sup>60</sup> Youth Partnership - European Union and Council of Europe - Youth Partnership.

<sup>61</sup> Youth Work - Youth Partnership.

<sup>62</sup> EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025 - European Commission.

<sup>63</sup> Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion.

<sup>64</sup> Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on inclusive societies for young people.

Erasmus+ youth mobility participants and 51% of European Solidarity Corps volunteers have been young people with fewer opportunities.

The **Rural Pact**<sup>65</sup> and the **rural action plan** under the Long-Term Vision for EU's Rural Areas<sup>66</sup>, promote education, training and employment for young people in rural and remote areas.

### *Health and wellbeing*

Health and wellbeing challenges are rising among young people, making it essential to promote resilience, coping skills, and strategies to thrive. The **Commission's comprehensive approach to mental health**<sup>67</sup> set out 20 flagship initiatives, including 4 addressing the mental health of children and young people<sup>68</sup>, such as a child and youth mental health network, a prevention toolkit with UNICEF, tools for healthy lifestyles, and enhanced protection for children online. The **Child & Youth Wellbeing and Mental Health First**<sup>69</sup> under the Technical Support Instrument supports better psychosocial support services for young people.

**Sport and physical activity** are crucial for the health and wellbeing of young people. The Commission and the World Health Organization promote organised and non-organised sports<sup>70</sup> to foster a healthy lifestyle among young people. They work together to encourage effective policies in line with the **Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors**<sup>71</sup>.

The **Expert Group on Supportive Learning Environments** has developed guidelines<sup>72</sup> for wellbeing and mental health at school, including support for educators.

The 2024 **Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child**<sup>73</sup> aims to ensure that children are safe and protected from violence.

### *Education and training*

Education, training, and lifelong learning, a key principle of the European Pillar of Social rights, empower young people, fostering growth, inclusion, and prosperity. The **European Education Area (EEA)**<sup>74</sup> aims to provide the best education and training possible for all

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<sup>65</sup> [Rural Pact Platform homepage | Rural Pact Community Platform.](#)

<sup>66</sup> [The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: key achievements and ways forward - European Union.](#)

<sup>67</sup> [A comprehensive approach to mental health - European Commission.](#)

<sup>68</sup> [Tracking framework for the implementation of the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health.](#)

<sup>69</sup> [Supporting mental health and care for the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people - European Commission.](#)

<sup>70</sup> [Physical activity and health - Sport.](#)

<sup>71</sup> [Council Recommendation of 26 November 2013 on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors.](#)

<sup>72</sup> [Guidelines on wellbeing and mental health at school | European School Education Platform.](#)

<sup>73</sup> [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2024/1238 of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child.](#)

<sup>74</sup> [European Education Area explained - European Education Area.](#)

learners and therefore supports the transition of young people to adulthood, into the labour market and becoming active citizens, which are important aspects of the EUYS.

As part of the European Education Area, the Commission's 2024 **Higher Education Package**<sup>75</sup>, including a blueprint for a **European degree**, aims to give students more opportunities to study across borders and graduate with a single diploma. The EU had **65 European Universities alliances in 2024**<sup>76</sup> and continues to foster excellence and inclusion. **Centres of vocational excellence**<sup>77</sup> are being set up to provide high quality vocational skills.

The 2022 **Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success**<sup>78</sup> offers policy guidance to Member States for reducing underperformance in basic skills and early leaving from education and training, and for promoting upper secondary education completion.

The **Digital Education Action Plan**<sup>79</sup> set out a vision for digital education. The **European Cybersecurity Skills Academy**<sup>80</sup> promotes cybersecurity skills and professionals. The EU Agency for Cybersecurity runs initiatives such as the European Cybersecurity Challenge<sup>81</sup> and CyberEducation platform<sup>82</sup> to raise awareness among young people about cybersecurity education. The **Digital Europe Programme**<sup>83</sup> also supports higher education graduates in areas like AI, computing, and advanced digital technologies.

Calls under Horizon Europe and initiatives such as the **STE(A)M**<sup>84</sup> education approach, Women in Digital<sup>85</sup> and Girls Go Circular<sup>86</sup> help address the under-representation of girls and women in STEM education.

The European City of Science in 2022, Leiden, engaged young people in events like the **European Contest for Young Scientists**<sup>87</sup> and the **EU TalentOn**<sup>88</sup>. These continued in 2024 under the European City of Science umbrella in Katowice.

## *Culture*

Culture shapes young people's identity and values. The EU promotes initiatives to help young people from diverse backgrounds develop talents and enjoy cultural heritage.

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<sup>75</sup> [Commission presents a blueprint for a European degree | European Education Area.](#)

<sup>76</sup> [New funding for additional European Universities alliances will boost cooperation in higher education | European Education Area.](#)

<sup>77</sup> [Centres of Vocational Excellence - European Commission.](#)

<sup>78</sup> [Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving.](#)

<sup>79</sup> [Digital Education Action Plan \(2021-2027\) - European Education Area.](#)

<sup>80</sup> [Cyber Skills Academy | Digital Skills and Jobs Platform.](#)

<sup>81</sup> [Home - ECSC.](#)

<sup>82</sup> [ENISA CyberEducation Platform — ENISA.](#)

<sup>83</sup> [Digital Europe Programme - European Commission.](#)

<sup>84</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The STEAM approach refers to the inclusion of arts, social sciences and the humanities in STEM education.

<sup>85</sup> [Women in Digital | Shaping Europe's digital future.](#)

<sup>86</sup> [Girls Go Circular | Digital and Entrepreneurial Skills for the Circular Economy.](#)

<sup>87</sup> [EU Contest for Young Scientists \(EUCYS\).](#)

<sup>88</sup> [Home - EU TalentOn 2024.](#)

Under Creative Europe<sup>89</sup>, initiatives like **Culture Moves Europe**<sup>90</sup> supported mobility of 7 000 artists in 2023-2024.

The EU supports emerging talents through initiatives such as the **Young Talent Award** within the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture – the Mies van der Rohe Award.

The annual **Day of European Authors** in 2024 saw almost 2 000 reading events across 40 countries. **European Capitals of Culture**<sup>91</sup> engage young people. The EU promotes **multilingualism** through the Juvenes Translatores contest.

### *Environment and climate*

The EU's commitment to environmental and climate action acknowledges the critical role of young people in shaping a more sustainable and environmentally conscious EU. The **European Climate Pact**<sup>92</sup> has **young Climate Pact Ambassadors**, who engage in local initiatives and inspire their communities. **Young Energy Ambassadors**<sup>93</sup> promote sustainable and clean energy.

The **EU4Ocean coalition**<sup>94</sup> recognises young people's efforts in ocean conservation and provides training.

The **Just Transition Platform** supports young people in regions affected by the transition to climate neutrality. It includes a **Youth Task Force**.

**Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps** integrate green practices into all projects, including through financial incentives for green travel.

The **New European Bauhaus Prizes**<sup>95</sup>, and the **Rising Stars**-strand, recognise young people's creativity in promoting sustainability.

## **4.4 Youth-led actions**

Initiatives run by young people and/or youth organisations are particularly important in helping young people learn the importance of being engaged and contributing to EUYS objectives. The EU supports youth-led actions, such as **youth participation activities** in Erasmus+, boosting civic and political participation, and **solidarity projects** in the European Solidarity Corps that help young people to address challenges in their communities.

In EU external action, initiatives like the **Youth Empowerment Fund** support youth-led solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and enhance youth participation.

The **Youth4Cooperation Group** involves young people in regional development strategies. Participants in Interreg Volunteer Youth can organise community engagement activities under cohesion policy. **Youth4Outermostregions** supports youth-led projects in the outer regions. Initiatives like the **EUTEens4Green** support young entrepreneurs in developing environmental solutions.

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<sup>89</sup> [Creative Europe - Culture and Creativity.](#)

<sup>90</sup> [Culture Moves Europe - Culture and Creativity.](#)

<sup>91</sup> [European Capitals of Culture - Culture and Creativity.](#)

<sup>92</sup> [European Climate Pact - European Union.](#)

<sup>93</sup> [Young Energy Ambassadors - European Commission.](#)

<sup>94</sup> [EU4Ocean Coalition | Drive change together.](#)

<sup>95</sup> [NEB Prizes 2025 | New European Bauhaus Prizes. Past editions | New European Bauhaus Prizes.](#)

## 4.5 Beyond the EU

The EUYS also aims to inspire engagement and more resilient societies worldwide. Its international dimension was reinforced by the **Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022-2027** (the YAP)<sup>96</sup>. The YAP focuses on shaping external action in partnership with young people to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>97</sup> and other global commitments. It includes initiatives such as the **EU Youth Sounding Board for International Partnerships** and **Youth Advisory Structures in EU Delegations**.

The EU has prioritised **youth participation in high-level political dialogues and regional forums**, such as the EU-African Union, and EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States summits. Programmes like the **AU-EU Youth Lab**, **Youth Europe Sahel-Engagement de la Jeunesse au Sahel** and the **Africa-Europe Youth Academy** promote youth participation.

The EU has strengthened **cooperation with global youth stakeholders**, such as the UN Youth Office and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders. The **Women and Youth in Democratic Engagement** initiative supports young people's engagement in political processes worldwide<sup>98</sup>.

### EU enlargement

Young people benefit from the EU's enlargement process<sup>99</sup> which gained momentum in 2023-2024, as highlighted in the 2024 **Commission Communication on EU enlargement policy**<sup>100</sup> and the Commission Communication on pre-enlargement reforms and policy reviews<sup>101</sup>.

The EU has started to integrate candidate and potential candidate countries into strategic frameworks like the **European Education Area**. For example, the **European Universities initiative**<sup>102</sup> was opened in 2023 to all Western Balkans' universities, and 14 Western Balkans universities were full partners in 2024. The EU supports the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee** in the Western Balkans to address youth unemployment.

The **Erasmus+** and **European Solidarity Corps** foster cross-border cooperation, capacity-building, youth mobility and active citizenship in candidate countries.

<sup>96</sup> [Youth Action Plan - European Commission](#).

<sup>97</sup> [The 17 sustainable development goals | Sustainable Development](#).

<sup>98</sup> [WYDE Civic Engagement | European Partnership for Democracy](#).

<sup>99</sup> Open to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine. \*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC Resolution 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>100</sup> [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions 2024 Communication on EU enlargement policy](#).

<sup>101</sup> [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on pre-enlargement reforms and policy reviews](#).

<sup>102</sup> [European Universities initiative - European Education Area](#).

The **EU4Youth** programme is a cornerstone of EU cooperation with eastern partners, focusing on employability. In 2024, the **Erasmus+ youth and sport capacity building** actions were opened to participants from the Eastern Neighbourhood. In the Southern Neighbourhood, the **EU Jeel Connect network** was launched to enhance youth engagement, and the Union for the Mediterranean has adopted a Youth Strategy and Agenda for 2030. In sub-Saharan Africa, the EU promotes learning mobility through the **Youth Mobility for Africa** as part of the Global Gateway.

## 4.6 Insights on EU spending on youth

The EU offers substantial funding opportunities to support youth under the **2021-2027** multiannual financial framework.

**Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps** are key in supporting learning mobility, cooperation and solidarity. Erasmus+ is investing EUR 26 billion (and an additional EUR 2 billion from EU external cooperation funds) and the European Solidarity Corps is investing a further EUR 1 billion. Horizontal priorities include inclusion and diversity, digital, green, and democratic participation.

The **Recovery and Resilience Facility** is central to the NextGenerationEU plan. It invests EUR 66 billion to reforms and investments in key areas that benefit children and young people such as education, training, employment, and healthcare services.

The **European Social Fund Plus** invests EUR 11 billion in youth employment, education and social inclusion.

The **European Regional Development Fund** invests EUR 30 billion in digital and demographic transition, and access to services in areas such as employment, education, housing and healthcare, and tourism and culture, and EUR 93 billion in the green transition, benefiting young people.

The **Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027** invests around EUR 8.5 billion in support for young farmers.

The **Just Transition Fund** invests EUR 3.4 billion in mitigating the social impacts of the climate transition. It supports skills development, labour market assistance, and improving education quality, benefiting young people.

The **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values** programme invests EUR 200 million in addressing gender-based violence and violence against children and young people and in strengthening child protection. The programme allocates an additional EUR 34.8 million for child rights and children's participation for 2021-2025.

The **Technical Support Instrument** supported youth-related projects with a total budget of over EUR 25 million in 2022-2024.

## 5 Cooperation needs at national level

The European Year of Youth 2022 created a momentum for youth mainstreaming not only at EU level but also in the Member States. This is reflected in the topics of the Council Conclusions adopted in recent years (e.g. inclusive societies, mental health, and sustainability). Member States have also called for a youth check in EU policymaking<sup>103</sup>, which the Commission will apply to initiatives with significant youth relevance starting with its 2025 annual work programme.

25 Member States have shared information about their youth policies and cooperation needs<sup>104</sup>. In 2024, the **three main challenges identified for young people** were mental health and wellbeing, youth participation, and the cost of living. National youth policies that were highlighted in this context focused on youth participation, youth work and social inclusion.

Member States have expressed **interest in further EU cooperation** on youth participation; youth mainstreaming; digitalisation; learning mobility and recognition of youth work and non-formal and informal learning; and communication and data. **Peer learning and evidence building** were the preferred cooperation tools. Here the Youth Wiki<sup>105</sup> and research by the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership<sup>106</sup> can provide inputs.

Public authorities can apply for support under the Technical Support Instrument to design and implement youth policy reforms.

## 6 Outlook for EU youth policy cooperation

Looking at 2022-2024, the EU Youth Strategy has made a significant leap forward during the European Year of Youth 2022 in terms of youth participation and youth mainstreaming. This left a strong legacy and sense of commitment among young people and stakeholders. Going forward, the political guidelines for the 2024-2029 Commission underline the **EU's commitment to empowering young people and addressing their concerns**, with firstly the creation of the President's Youth Advisory Board to advise on issues affecting young people and to give young people a voice in shaping the EU's future, and secondly, the annual Youth Policy Dialogues with European Commissioners, starting in the first 100 days of the mandate. A forthcoming **strategy on intergenerational fairness** will promote solidarity and engagement between people of different ages.

The political guidelines point out that some areas are particularly and urgently relevant to **young people's challenges and needs** and require further attention. These include:

- **mental health and wellbeing**, including tackling the risks related to and impact of social media, excessive screen time, and cyberbullying;
- **education and skills**, including strengthening Erasmus+ and fostering a high-quality, inclusive and engaging education environment, and building a Union of Skills

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<sup>103</sup> [Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022.. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting youth mainstreaming in policy decision-making processes in the European Union.](#)

<sup>104</sup> [2024 Future National Activities Planners | European Youth Portal.](#)

<sup>105</sup> [Youth Wiki: Europe's Encyclopedia of National Youth Policies.](#)

<sup>106</sup> [Youth research - Youth Partnership.](#)

including initiatives such as an Action Plan on Basic Skills and a STEM Education Strategic Plan;

- **employment and social protection** policies, including increasing participation of young people in the labour market, based on a new Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- **housing** affordability, requiring a comprehensive approach to address structural drivers of the housing crisis.

This ties in closely with the main challenges faced by young people identified in consultations of stakeholders and young people during the interim evaluation of the EUYS. The Commission is committed to **further developing policies and initiatives** to address the pressing challenges facing young people. It will do this by working with Member States, civil society, and young people themselves, and by building on the progress achieved under the EUYS.

The wide-ranging needs and interests of young people underline the **importance of youth mainstreaming**. The **full application of the youth check in EU policymaking** (starting with the Commission's 2025 annual work programme) is a major step forward to ensure that the youth perspective and impact on young people is factored into youth-relevant EU policies and initiatives.

Common priorities within the EU Youth Strategy continue to be addressed through the open method of coordination<sup>107</sup> and have fed into the EUYS Work Plan 2025-2027<sup>108</sup>. This includes the **launch of the 11<sup>th</sup> cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue** (1 January 2025 - 30 June 2026) focusing on 'Connecting EU with youth'.

Young people and those working with and for them should be at the centre of preparations for a renewed framework for EU cooperation in the field of youth. The Commission will therefore run a **listening process in 2025-2026** to engage young people and relevant stakeholders in reflections that will **feed into the Commission's proposal for the next EU Youth Strategy post-2027**. The EU Youth Stakeholders Group and the EU Youth Dialogue will be mobilised in this process.

The **European Youth Goals**<sup>109</sup> may need a **refresh in light of** young people's **concerns**. In the 2024 Eurobarometer survey 'Youth and Democracy'<sup>110</sup>, **young people** said that they expect the EU to reinforce peace, international security and cooperation; fight poverty and inequalities; and promote human rights, democracy and common EU values.

By building further on the EUYS pillars of engaging, connecting and empowering young people, we can create a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous future for everyone in the EU.

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<sup>107</sup> The open method of coordination in the EU is a form of 'soft law'/intergovernmental policy-making that involves jointly defining objectives and guidelines and cooperating and exchanging good practices for their achievement. It does not result in binding EU legislation.

<sup>108</sup> [Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the EU Youth Strategy Work Plan 2025-2027.](#)

<sup>109</sup> [European Youth Goals | European Youth Portal.](#)

<sup>110</sup> [Youth and democracy - May 2024 - - Eurobarometer survey.](#)