



# YOUTH VOICES FOR EUROPE

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# WHAT IS THE EU?

The European Union (EU) is a concept widely recognized. It is a cooperating union of 27 countries that unites its members in political and economic fields. The members of the EU share similar views on democracy, economic benefits, and human rights. The need for a union was discovered after World War II, when Europe was shattered and divided due to the cruel doings of the Nazis and their allies. Both wars that happened in Europe in the first half of the 20th century showed the continent that establishing an institution that prefers dialogue and negotiations over reckless military actions could help Europe flourish and challenge the United States of America in economic capacity. However, the road to today's Europe was not easy at all and took tremendous amounts of willingness and time.

# WHAT IS THE EU?



As Europe celebrated its win over the Axis powers, a new danger—the Soviet Union—was waiting just around the corner. The Soviet Union, which had worked with the West to defend the continent from German occupation, now had its own ambition to conquer the world. Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt joined forces and successfully led Europe to victory. Following the victory, the Soviet Union initiated its own expansion, gaining influence and establishing satellite states in Eastern and Central Europe. It became a “superpower” country that wanted communism to spread all across the globe. In 1947, a complex and indirect military conflict known as the Cold War began. Its main opponents were the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The most fitting term that concluded Europe’s situation at the time was “Iron Curtain”. It separated countries, people, and the desire to create peace and unity. Europe finally understood the need to unite, and on May 9, 1950, the Schuman Declaration was proposed by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. He proposed an idea to integrate Europe's coal and steel industries into a single common market. Following this proposal, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed the Treaty of Paris in 1951, and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created the following year. With this union, the first institutions, such as the High Authority (now the European Commission) and the Common Assembly (now the European Parliament), were also created. The ECSC was the starting point of turning the old continent 180 degrees to create a successful and thriving environment for its people.



# WHAT IS THE EU?

In 1957, Europe's leaders wanted to deepen economic unity and signed the Treaties of Rome, which led to the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Both communities were created separately from the European Coal and Steel Community. EEC was aiming for economic integration amongst its members. Euratom was needed to integrate the sectors of nuclear energy.

Slowly but steadily, Europe started to form and widen, welcoming Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom into the European Communities in 1973. After 6 years, the first direct European Parliament elections were held, and the first female President of the European Parliament, Simone Veil, was elected. More members, such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal, joined in the eighties, and the Cold War was coming to an end. The Berlin Wall fell, Germany was reunited once again, and the Soviet Union collapsed.



Simone Veil, 1982



# WHAT IS THE EU?

In 1992, a key moment in EU history happened. The Maastricht Treaty was signed, which established the European Union. The decade brought in a lot of changes that define the EU today. In 1995, the Schengen Agreement came into force between 7 members, in which internal border checks were largely abolished. A year later, the agreement expanded to include nearly all other members. With the 20th century coming to an end, the EU introduced the euro as a currency used in Europe. In 2007, the Lisbon Treaty was signed, which amended the previous treaties.

The European Union has come a long way. It shaped a new cooperating system that allowed the continent to remain at peace. Today, the European Union is a steadily functioning organ that is based upon two complementary principles. Subsidiarity dictates that decisions should be made at the most local level possible, and solidarity values mutual support and shared responsibility amongst all members. The EU is a unit that values and respects all its members.

Creating unity between Europe, firstly in the economic field and then in political fields, shaped the true and possible perspective that an area with different disagreements and war conflicts in the past can succeed and create a union and platform for European people to live safely and freely. It helps millions and will continue to do so in the future.



# WHY IS THE EU NEEDED?

The European Union (EU) nowadays is a foundation of Europe that helps all its members to strengthen their economies, protect democracy, and promote peace. However, there are always two sides to a story. It is said that establishing unity and forming communities that were the predecessors of the EU helped to reinvent the continent. Still, from the moment that the creation of a union started, a new wave of uncertainty and scepticism shook Europe. Eurosceptic, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is “a person who is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union.” Eurosceptics tend to be far-right and validate their scepticism with migrant and economic crises and other problems in Europe. Similarly, their speculations have been driven by the fear of loss over each member's national sovereignty or the loss of power by ordinary citizens. One of the biggest setbacks that the EU had happened in 2020 when one of the core countries of the union—the United Kingdom—left the EU in the so-called Brexit. It resulted from the Euroscepticism that had risen in the UK at the time. The EU was afraid of more members following the UK's exit; however, to this day, no other member country has left the EU. Surveys showcase that citizens highly trust the EU's institutions and value the union.



# WHY IS THE EU NEEDED?

Since the establishment of the concept of a united Europe, the message has been loud and clear. A united Europe advocated for peace, democracy, and human rights. These values and aspirations followed the EU through all its decisions. There haven't been any interstate wars amongst the members of the EU since the organization's creation. That is an astonishing accomplishment, given the fact that some of the members have a potent war history against each other. Secondly, one of the EU's institutions, the European Parliament (EP), is composed of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are directly elected by EU citizens. Furthermore, the European Commission has presented the European Democracy Shield, which should "empower, protect, and promote strong and resilient democracies across the EU," states the European Commission. The shield will present action through three aspects:

1) safeguarding the integrity of the information space

2) strengthening our institutions, fair and free elections, and free and independent media

3) boosting societal resilience and citizens' engagement," the European Commission states

Another important shield for the European Union is human rights. The EU made a commitment to promoting and protecting human rights. Many treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights protect and defend civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights and freedoms. While engagement with other countries, regions, and organizations outside of the EU promotes the rights and democracy across the globe.



# WHY IS THE EU NEEDED?

All of the members of the European Union have different views, political traditions, and needs. That is why some topics bring out heated dialogues in the EP. For example, let's compare Germany and Hungary. Germany is Europe's largest economy, a major net contributor to the EU budget. Hungary has a smaller and more developing economy. Germany is aligned with NATO and EU defense and has a strong position on Russia sanctions. Hungary, on the other hand, sometimes diverges from the EU consensus (e.g., a more cautious approach toward Russia and China). This showcases visible differences between EU countries. Still, there are many fields that have a united position and a common policy. One of the best achievements is the EU single market, which focuses on four aspects:

1) Free movement of people

3) Free movement of services

2) Free movement of goods

4) Free movement of capital

To add, the EU has some of the world's strictest environmental standards and is a pioneer in fighting climate change, with policies covering air and water quality, waste management, chemical safety, and the protection of biodiversity. The EU also has a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It aims to support farmers, ensure a stable and affordable food supply, maintain rural areas, and promote sustainable farming practices.

The European Union has proven to be a complex and thought-provoking organ that has its pluses and minuses depending on the contributions of all its members. Still, the Union has showcased time and time again that its presence is a benefit to us all.



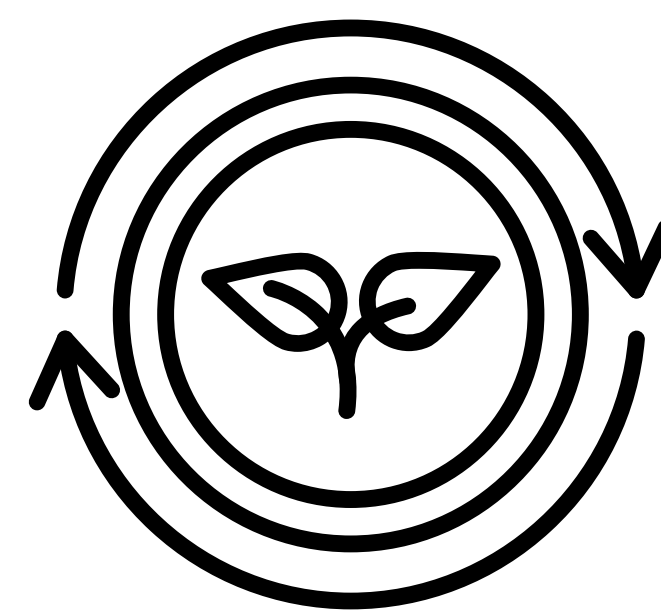
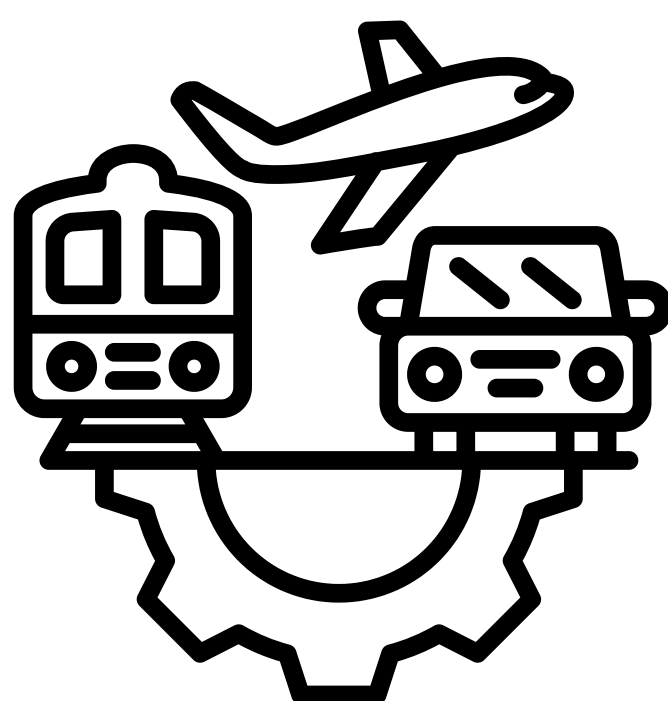
# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

The European Union represents a very special political and economic partnership in which countries from all over Europe come together to achieve common goals. The institutional framework is complex and constantly changing due to the different interests among member states and their citizens. Understanding the main institutions and how they are functioning is key in grasping the process of how decisions are taken, how policies are put into practice, and how European Union law affects everyday life across Europe. In reality, the EU's institutions together serve as pieces in a puzzle, each with an important role, as a part of a larger picture in the integration of Europe.

The European Union's institutional set-up is unique and its decision-making system is constantly evolving. The 7 European institutions, 9 EU bodies and over 30 decentralised agencies are spread across the EU. They work together to address the common interests of the EU and the European people.

In terms of administration, there are a further 20 EU agencies and organisations which carry out specific legal functions and 4 interinstitutional services which support the institutions.

All of these establishments have specific roles – from developing EU laws and policy-making to implementing policies and working on specialist areas, such as health, medicine, transport and the environment.



# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

**European  
Council**

**Council of the  
European Union**

**European  
Parliament**

**European  
Commission**

The work of these 4 main EU institutions, which covers the legislative and executive tasks of the EU, is complemented by the work of another 3 EU institutions:

**Court of Justice  
of the European  
Union**

**European Court of  
Auditors**

**European Central  
Bank**

These 3 institutions are responsible for managing the judicial, financial and external audit aspects of the European Union.

# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

## European Council

The heads of state or government of the EU countries meet, as the European Council, to define the general political direction and priorities of the European Union. The European Council is chaired by a president who is elected for a 2.5-year term, renewable once. It does not adopt laws except for possible EU Treaty amendments. It also plays a key role in responding to crises, shaping foreign policy, and influencing economic priorities across the EU. The President represents the EU externally at the highest diplomatic level.



logo of the European Council

## European Parliament

The European Parliament represents the citizens of EU countries and is directly elected by them. It takes decisions on European laws jointly with the Council of the European Union. It also approves the EU budget. It runs a network of liaison offices in EU capitals, London, Edinburgh and Washington D.C. The Parliament's committees focus on specific areas like environment, foreign affairs, or digital innovation. It has grown in power over time, gaining co-decision authority over nearly all EU legislation and the ability to approve or dismiss the European Commission.



logo of the European Parliament

# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

## The Council of the EU

Represents the governments of EU countries. The Council of the EU is where national ministers from each government meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. Ministers meet in different configurations depending on the topic to be discussed. The Council of the EU takes decisions on European laws jointly with the European Parliament. The Council's flexible configuration allows specialized ministers to focus on topics such as agriculture, finance, justice, or transport, ensuring informed decision-making.



logo of the Council of the EU

# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

## European Commission

The European Commission represents the common interests of the EU and is the EU's main executive body. It uses its 'right of initiative' to put forward proposals for new laws, which are scrutinised and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. It also manages EU policies (except for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, which is conducted by the High Representative for CFSP, Vice-President of the European Commission), and the EU's budget and ensures that countries apply EU law correctly. Representation offices act as the Commission's voice across the EU. They monitor and analyse public opinion in their host country, provide information about EU policies and the way the EU works, and facilitate the Commission's cooperation with the host member country. The Commission also supports research, innovation, and programs in areas like climate change, digitalization, public health, and regional development, ensuring policies are effectively implemented across all member states.



logo of the European Commission

# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

## Court of Justice of the European Union

The Court ensures that EU law is followed, and that the Treaties are correctly interpreted and applied: it reviews the legality of the acts of the EU institutions, ensures that EU countries comply with their obligations under the Treaties, and interprets EU law at the request of national courts. It also resolves disputes between member states, institutions, and individuals, and its rulings are binding across the EU, shaping legal precedent for decades.



logo of the Court of Justice of the European Union

## European Central Bank

The ECB and the European System of Central Banks are responsible for keeping prices stable in the euro area. They are also responsible for the monetary and exchange rate policy in the Eurozone and support EU economic policies. In addition, the ECB supervises major banks in the Eurozone, contributes to financial stability, and coordinates responses to economic crises.



logo of the European Central Bank

# MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE EU

## European Court of Auditors

The ECA contributes to improving EU financial management, and promoting accountability and transparency, and acts as the independent guardian of the financial interests of EU citizens. It checks that EU funds are correctly accounted for, that they are raised and spent in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations, and that they deliver value for money. It also provides recommendations for improving financial processes and reports directly to the European Parliament and the Council, helping maintain public trust in EU finances.

The EU institutions are part of a complex but coordinated system to achieve the three key objectives: making laws, implementing policies, and representing the interests of its citizens. From setting political direction through the European Council to controlling the finances through the European Court of Auditors, each of these institutions has a specific role to play. All these work together in enabling the EU to function properly, meet challenges, and foster integration, stability, and prosperity across the continent.

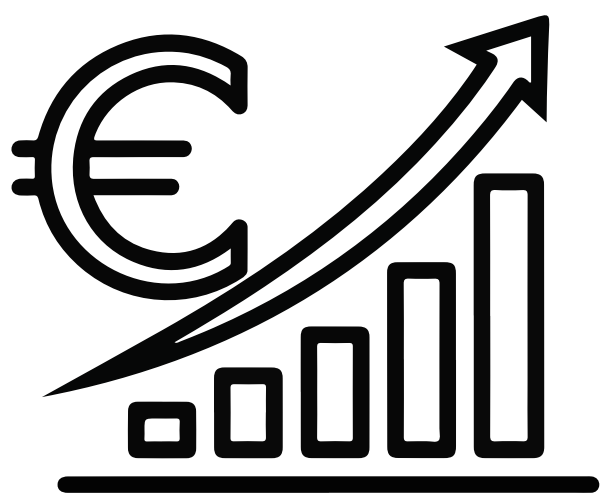


logo of the European Court of Auditors

# THE EU'S ROLE



Since its founding in 1953 as the European Economic Community, the European Union has been committed to a multitude of ideas and concepts which it holds at its core. The reach of these beliefs extends far beyond its 27 member states. This level of cooperation has set an international gold standard, shaping global commerce, environmental standards and foreign policies for decades. Compared to more “globally relevant” ideas, the ever-important world of careers within the EU often goes overlooked. For the state, the EU offers prosperity and openness. For the individual, just as much is available in the ways of interconnected labour markets and unique career paths within their institutions. A great relationship has been established between the federal entity and the people it governs. Be this through direct employment opportunities within the bodies and functions of the European Union itself, the Union’s significant impact on the mobility of labour and national employment strategies within its member states or its crucial and ever-expanding role within the global economy and international chains of governance as a model of quality, class and strength.



# THE EU'S ROLE



Employment within the **European Union's** governmental facilities offers employees vast and ever-important opportunities within the framework of their state. The diverse and specialised range of possible careers within its governmental agencies and international bureaucratic bodies. Their primary employers are:

The European Commission (the executive arm of government)

The European Parliament (the legislative body)

The Council of the European Union (international councils)

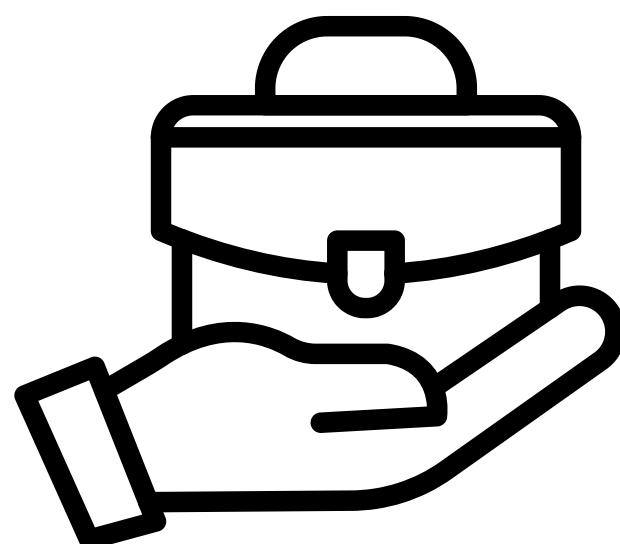
These agencies hire thousands of employees from across the European Union. Be they in administrative roles, linguistics, scientific or technical fields. The positions they offer range from policy analysts to economists, lawyers to translators and far beyond that. With EU careers, the possibilities are limitless. The career opportunities offered by the EU provide excellent opportunities for European citizens, giving them the opportunity to work at the centre of the world, changing Europe and the world at every level. The work done at the European Union is cutting-edge and world-changing. The aspect of their highly international work wonderfully promotes international cooperation as well as national strength across the EU.

# THE EU'S ROLE



Formal positions within the EU (them being permanent staff roles and higher-level work) are managed by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). They manage many of the higher aspects of European governments and direct international cooperation. The EPSO hiring process usually requires a large amount of competition due to its high level of importance within the structure of the European Union. Competitive open competitions dubbed 'concours' tend to determine who receives positions within these roles.

As an institution, the European Union holds the plight of workers at the utmost importance. The fundamental principles of labour within the European Union revolve around the workers themselves. One commitment is the idea of the Single Market. This allows for greater labour mobility (the ability for movement within work through location or field), which strengthens the EU's commitment to a strong, united Europe. The ability for a European citizen to live, work and seek further employment in any member state without the need for working papers or special permits allows for a more flexible and dynamic workforce across the labour market of the EU or its member states. Beyond the simple movement of workers within the union, the EU promotes important directives to ensure equal treatment of the qualifications of professionals across the union. For example, Directive 2005/36/EC set the foundation for the automatic recognition of professional experience and qualifications for vital jobs such as doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, architects and veterinary surgeons. This has helped overcome the barriers across borders and significantly helped professionals across the EU, and ensured that their fields remain well-equipped, well-staffed and ready for anything they may have to take on. Tools such as the European Professional Card Member State further simplify this process. It facilitates easier mobility for highly skilled labour within the EU.



# THE EU'S ROLE



Furthermore, the influence of the European Union's policies regarding employment often influences national employment strategies and workers' rights. While core employment strategies are and remain something that is mainly a goal at the national levels of member states, the EU sets the minimum for these governments, ensuring the broad protection of workers. Important initiatives, guided by the European Pillar of Social Rights (a federal mandate on provisions during working time), guarantees equal treatment in employment and health and safety provisions for workers. Directives such as mandated minimum wages and platform work demonstrate the European Union's active role in modernising labour laws across the union. These standards allow for more equality within labour markets, as well as ensuring that the competition within these markets is based on innovation and quality, rather than the lack of fundamental rights of workers.

As a federal entity, the European Union operates as a major, unified voice to the world. Thus, solidifying its position in global governance and international movements. As an entity, the EU holds observer or member status in several



the United Nations (UN)

bodies. This refers to groups such as



and the World Trade Organisation (WTO)

also the G7 and G20 summits. The EU's role as an intergovernmental powerhouse of an organisation allows it to speak for all 27 member states of the European Union with one unified and powerful voice. It solidifies commitments to issues of shared importance to Europe and the West, such as human rights and fair practices. This is in addition to its shared competence on trade and economic policy. The union holds a large amount of power within the global sphere, with its ability to command such powers with regard to other international bodies and national entities. The EU, acting through the European Commission, grants strong bargaining powers to each of its member states within the global economic sphere. Being the world's largest and most influential trading alliance, the EU has unparalleled leverage within global trade policy and standards.

# THE EU'S ROLE



In addition to being a commercial powerhouse, the EU is a leading global actor in diplomacy and foreign services. The European External Action Service (EEAS) serves as the EU's diplomatic mission to the rest of the world. The office manages many aspects of its diplomatic services, foreign delegations and overseas organisations. The EEAS is committed to promoting the values and interests of the European Union across the globe. The EU and its member states serve as the world's largest collective donors of Official Development Assistance (ODA), using foreign aid as a key figure of the group's dedication to promoting and supporting global Western-style democracy, regional stability, and sustainable development. This can be seen across the world; however, it is most prevalent in Africa. This greatly concentrated effort distinguishes the EU from individual nation-states in the region and across the world. It gives it great amounts of legitimacy and the ability to project its soft power and relative stability through its comprehensive diplomatic structures and use of international aid.

The European Union has set its role as a global base in the most important areas of modern society and policy. In recent times, this has been most notable in the EU's commitment to global climate leadership and digital regulation. The European Green Deal stands as the current flagship initiative of the EU. It commits the federal entity to several climate goals, mainly becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent by the year 2050. The EGD is an extremely ambitious, yet attainable goal backed by the "Fit for 55" legislative package. This aims to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 55% by the year 2030. Furthermore, the EU's most crucial policies, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), have great amounts of usefulness and need across the globe. It effectively exports climate costs and EU standards to trading partners, thereby pushing international companies to adhere to EU environmental regulations and norms



# THE EU'S ROLE



Similarly, in terms of the digital perspective, the European Union holds great amounts of power that extends far beyond the borders of its member states. This is often dubbed as “The Brussels Effect”. This means that EU standards are forced to become global norms and de facto standards due to companies’ desire to trade within the EU and be open to the greater European market. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), first enacted in 2018, worked to set a global base for personal privacy online and consumer rights by way of honesty and going against damaging and infringing data collection marketing practices. Regardless of where in the world a company operates, if it processes the personal data of EU residents, it must comply with the GDPR’s strict operating requirements. This forces multinational corporations to adopt high EU standards at a global scale in order to simplify their regular operations within the EU. This approach has been replicated across EU policy with new legislation such as the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA). These policies aim to curb the relatively unregulated power of large tech companies and protect the interests of EU citizens and, by association, people across the world. Through these programmes, the EU has transformed itself from a regular governing body to a technological leader and regulatory great power. This has helped change the way the internet works as well as the future of digital personal protections across the globe.



# THE EU'S ROLE



The European Union is deeply and fundamentally committed to international justice, regional integration and human rights across the globe. Organisations such as the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the European Commission work under and with the European Union in order to achieve justice and stability across the European Union and the world. This helps promote the idea of supranationalism (the idea that institutions like the aforementioned courts (along with many other groups) act independently from national governments) while still valuing intergovernmentalism (the practice of decisions within the EU requiring the agreement of member states within the Council) to ensure the power of individual states within the union and their importance. This is a delicate balance between the state and the entity that allows for shared sovereignty while also aiding national self-interests. This is what makes the EU distinctive (and occasionally difficult to manage). It allows for governments to be flexible and powerful within the unified state. May there be issues such as crises, financial instabilities, external challenges or damage to the union itself, this structure still allows for the EU to be resilient and protect itself from issues that may hinder its development and prosperity. Its ability to do so makes it especially distinct in protecting Europe and defining European mindsets and communal goals. Furthermore, this helps states integrate within the Union more as well as expand. This can be seen in its response to recent conflicts or geopolitical setbacks. For other regional organisations such as ASEAN or the African Union, the European Union serves as a complex but attainable goal for their group's prosperity and growth.



# THE EU'S ROLE



The European Union is far more than the simple economic alliance it was in 1953. It is a complex, international political entity that fundamentally shapes the professional lives of its citizens and member states. From the structure of the EPSO that offers rewarding and innovative career paths across the union to the foundational workers' protections and labour mobility present within the framework of EU labour laws, the European Union's internal policy ensures quality and fairness within European workplaces. In an external sense, mainly its approach to trade and economic policy, the organisation's global leadership in climate action and digital regulation show a great amount of power in a regulatory and diplomatic sense. It is a distinctive model of regional integration as it sets the bar across the world in leadership and modernity. It proves its role as a distinctive model in regional integration and its ability to unify the European continent. The European Union continues to prove its usefulness as an international organisation with dedication to partnerships and unity within its borders and across the globe. It has an extremely crucial role in international affairs compared to all other intergovernmental organisations, which it wields as a force for good. With this, it continues to work as a global model for equality and purpose. As time goes on, the European Union works to generate further possibilities, professional opportunities and policy innovations for years to come.



# YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Young Europeans today enjoy unprecedented opportunities because of EU programs which support their educational development and career advancement and personal growth. The EU invests in young people because they represent a future asset through programs which help them acquire practical skills and establish professional networks.

The EU provides equal access to its programs, which welcome all young Europeans regardless of their home location. The programs available to young people from rural areas match those available to residents of large cities. The EU youth policy foundation rests on its principle which guarantees equal opportunities for all European youth.

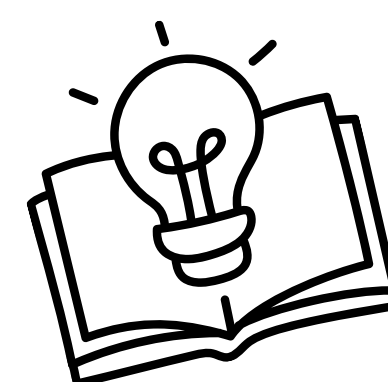


# YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

## YOUTH AS A PRIORITY IN THE EU

The EU makes youth development one of its essential policy objectives. The EU aims to develop young people into active individuals who possess skills and confidence while preparing them for the fast-paced modern world. The main focus points of the initiative consist of:

EDUCATION AND TRAINING



MOBILITY AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE



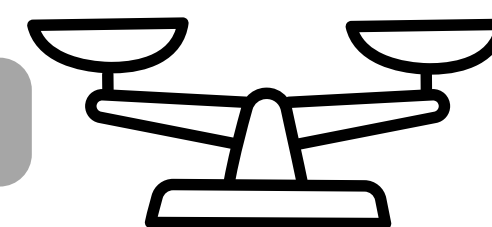
VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION



EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP




SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



The different areas of focus unite to provide support for all young people regardless of their family history or economic status.

# YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES



## ACCESS TO EU PROGRAMS

The EU provides youth opportunities through three main programs which include Erasmus+ and the to young participants who pursue different interests.

Young Europeans can access the following opportunities:

STUDENT EXCHANGES

VOLUNTEERING PLACEMENTS

LOCAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION PROGRAMS

SKILL-BUILDING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

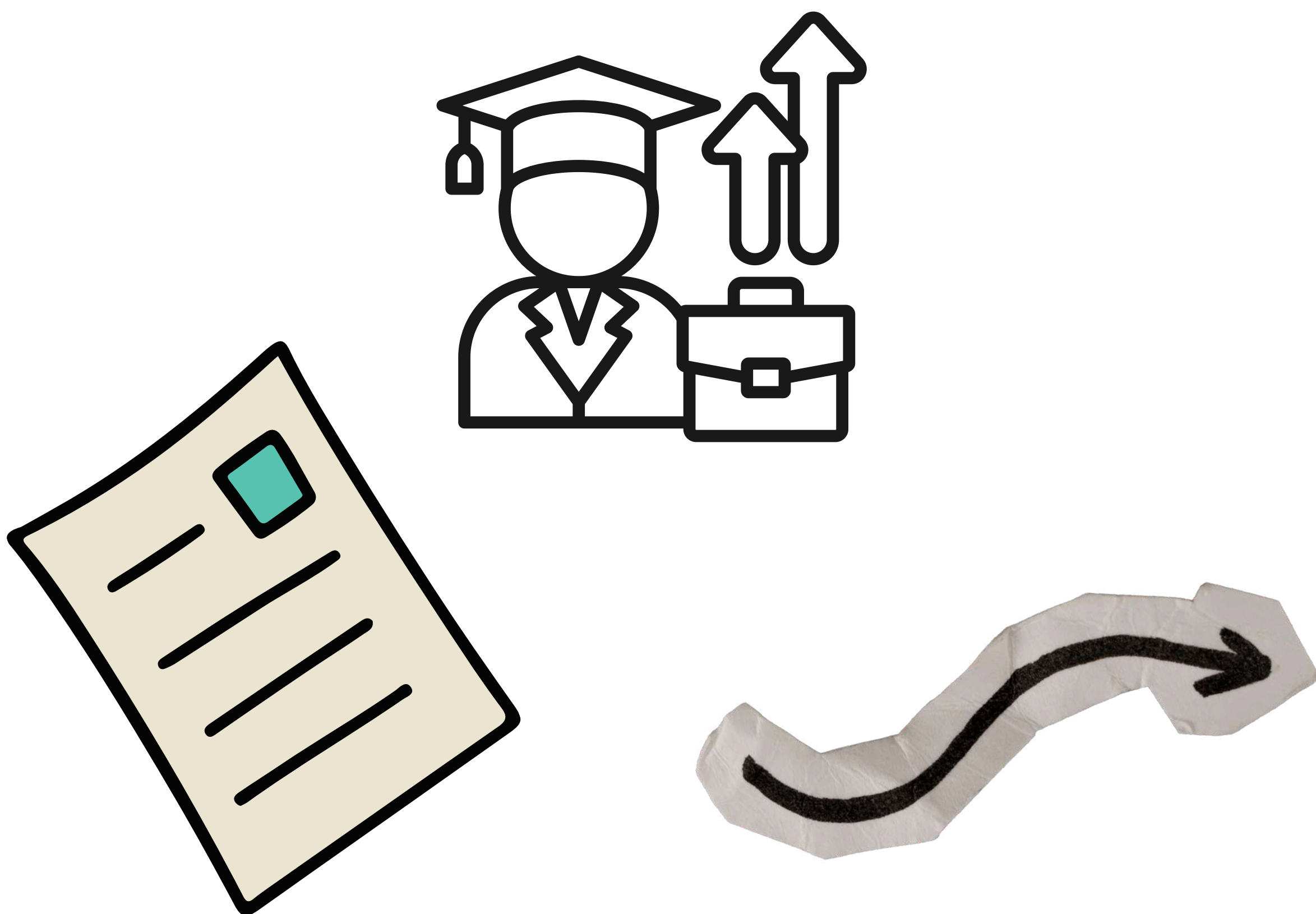
The majority of programs need participants to show basic eligibility and motivation and interest. The funding support for these opportunities makes them more accessible to participants because it decreases their financial requirements.

# TRAINEESHIPS AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

The long-term advantages of these benefits leads millions of European youth to participate in these programs annually. The EU provides traineeships and internships as hands-on career-oriented programs for young people. The programs enable students to acquire practical work experience while they learn about institutional operations and work on actual projects.

The majority of these positions offer payment along with organized structures and dedicated support which makes them appealing to students and new graduates.

Young Europeans who want to apply for EU traineeships should review the following information.



# TRAINEESHIPS AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

## Blue Book Traineeships – European Commission

The Blue Book Traineeship stands as a prominent EU program which welcomes graduate applicants. The program enables participants to work for five months across various Commission departments which handle all major policy domains.

The work responsibilities of trainees include conducting research and drafting policy documents and assisting with communication initiatives and supporting project management activities.

### Why this traineeship is valuable:

- ★ The program provides financial compensation to its participants.
- ★ The traineeship takes place at Brussels and Luxembourg and EU office locations.
- ★ The program brings together trainees from diverse international backgrounds.
- ★ The program provides participants with direct exposure to EU decision-making processes and policy creation activities.
- ★ The experience gained through this program leads many participants to secure international positions in their future careers.



# TRAINEESHIPS AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

## Schuman Traineeships – European Parliament

The European Parliament provides traineeships through its different directorates. Trainees perform tasks which support legislative work and communication efforts and research activities and administrative operations.

The program targets students who want to work in political fields or law or public relations or social science disciplines.

### Key features:

5-month placements

The program provides students with direct involvement in parliamentary work activities.

The program provides students with direct experience of how laws are created through the legislative system.

The program delivers extensive training in research methods and communication techniques.

### The program provides students with EU Agency internship opportunities

The EU operates more than 40 agencies which focus on environmental protection and justice and cybersecurity and health and transportation services. The agencies operate with regular internship programs.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) and European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and European Medicines Agency (EMA) operate as examples of agencies that welcome trainees.

Students and graduates who participate in these placements work on specific projects which align with their academic work and professional goals.

# TRAINEESHIPS AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

## Schuman Traineeships – European Parliament

### Research and Project-Based Internships

Young people who want to work in science and technology fields can find EU-funded research projects through Horizon Europe and other similar programs offer placement opportunities.

The available positions welcome young researchers and innovators and students who want to use research findings for practical applications. The work assignments for trainees depend on their project but usually involve data gathering and research assistance and communication tasks and laboratory or field support.

### The EU traineeship program enables young people to develop their professional skills.

Young people who join EU traineeships develop their CVs while learning to work effectively in international settings and understanding institutional operations and creating professional connections for future career opportunities and identifying their most suitable career path.

The experience marks a crucial moment when participants discover their professional path and establish their career foundation.



# EU PROGRAMS PROMOTING YOUTH SKILLS

Youth skills and mobility refers to EU initiatives helping young people (usually ages 13–30) gain competencies, work experience, and cultural understanding through learning or working abroad. These programs strengthen employability, digital and green skills, and support transitions to education or work.

## Erasmus+ Youth Mobility



Erasmus+

### What it offers:

- Youth exchanges
- Internships/work placements
- Training for youth workers
- Non-formal learning projects

### Age eligibility

Youth exchanges: usually 13–30  
Volunteering/placements: usually 18–30

### Duration:

Youth exchanges: 5–21 days

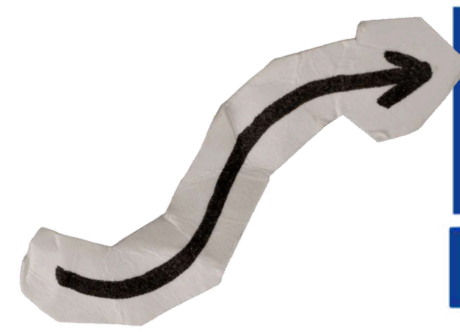
### Where you can go:

EU Member States + program countries (e.g., Norway, Turkey, Western Balkans).

### How and when to apply:

- Apply through a school, university, or youth organization participating in Erasmus+
- Calls for proposals are usually announced yearly, but organizations recruit participants all year through local campaigns
- Individuals cannot apply alone; they must join a sending organization

# EU PROGRAMS PROMOTING YOUTH SKILLS



**EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS**

## European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

### What it offers:

- Long-term or short-term volunteering
- Paid internships or jobs in solidarity-related fields
- Local youth-led solidarity projects

### Age eligibility:

Volunteers: 18–30  
Solidarity projects: 18–30

### Where you can go:

All EU countries + partner regions  
(Eastern Partnership, Mediterranean,  
Western Balkans).

### Duration:

Short-term volunteering: 2 weeks – 2 months  
Long-term volunteering: 2–12 months  
Solidarity projects: 2–12 months

### How and when to apply:

Apply individually through the ESC portal  
Opportunities are posted continuously throughout the year  
No need to be part of an organization to join (except for group projects)

# EU PROGRAMS PROMOTING YOUTH SKILLS

## Youth Guarantee



### What it offers:

A commitment that young people will receive:

- A job offer
- Education
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship

within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

### Age eligibility:

Generally 15–29 (varies by country).

### Where it applies:

All EU Member States.

### Duration:

Depends on the offer—traineeships often 3–12 months, apprenticeships 6–36 months.

### How and when to apply:

- Apply through your national employment service
  - Enrollment is possible year-round
- Requirements differ by country (proof of unemployment, residence status, etc.)

# EU PROGRAMS PROMOTING YOUTH SKILLS

## Funding and Grants for Youth Projects



### What it supports:

- Youth-led community projects
- Social innovation
- Local development initiatives
- Skills workshops and entrepreneurship labs

### Age eligibility:

Usually 13–30 (leaders often must be 18+).

### Where:

In local communities across the EU; some involve cross-border cooperation.

### Duration:

Projects typically run 3–12 months.

### How and when to apply:

- Applications submitted by youth groups, NGOs, or local organizations to Erasmus+ or ESC
  - Calls are usually published annually or twice per year
- Young people can form an informal group and apply (Erasmus+ Youth Participation Projects or ESC Solidarity Projects)

# EU PROGRAMS PROMOTING YOUTH SKILLS

EU programs promoting youth skills and mobility play a crucial role in supporting young people's personal and professional development.

Through opportunities such as

Erasmus+

Youth Guarantee

European Solidarity Corps

targeted funding schemes

young people can gain valuable experience, improve their employability, and actively contribute to their communities. These initiatives not only strengthen individual skills but also encourage cultural understanding, social inclusion, and engagement in Europe's future.



# LOCAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Being part of local and civic activities is a great way for young people to make real changes in their community. When we get involved, we can share our ideas, speak up about things that matter to us, and actually help improve the place where we live or study. It also helps us grow as people — we learn how to work with others, organise things, and feel more confident about ourselves.



## Why is it important?

We, young people, notice problems and needs that adults sometimes don't.

By participating, we can make our voices heard and show that we care about our community.

It helps us build experience that will be useful for our future studies and career.

# LOCAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION



## How can young people get involved?

### Youth councils:

A place where young people can talk to local leaders, suggest ideas, and help improve youth activities.

### Volunteering:

Helping in events, organisations, or clubs that do good things for others.

### School councils or student clubs:

A fun way to plan projects, make changes in school, and express our opinions.

### Public discussions:

Joining meetings where we can share what we think about decisions in our town.

### Campaigns:

Getting involved in projects about the environment, equality, mental health, or anything we care about.

## What do we gain?

- ★ New skills and experiences that look good on our CV later.
- ★ The feeling that our voice matters and that we can actually make a difference.
- ★ A better understanding of how our community and democracy work.
- ★ Becoming more active, responsible, and confident young citizens.

# CAREER PATHWAYS

Thinking about a future career can feel a bit stressful, especially because the world is changing so fast. There are so many options, and sometimes it's hard to know which path is right. Luckily, in Europe there are many opportunities that help young people learn, travel, and try different things before choosing their career.

## What opportunities do young people have?

### Education and courses

We can study in schools, colleges, or vocational programs, and we can also join extra courses that teach useful skills like languages, IT, design, or communication. Youth organisations also help us grow by teaching teamwork and leadership.

### Mobility programs

Thanks to Erasmus+ and other programs, young people can travel, study, or take part in projects in other European countries. It helps us become more independent, open-minded, and confident.

### Career guidance

Schools and local centres offer career advice, tests, and counselling to help us understand what we're good at and what jobs might fit us. Youth Guarantee programs also help young people find work or training.

### Internships and practice

Trying out a job in real life helps us understand what we like or don't like. Internships in companies or organisations give us experience that makes it easier to choose a future profession.

### Starting our own ideas

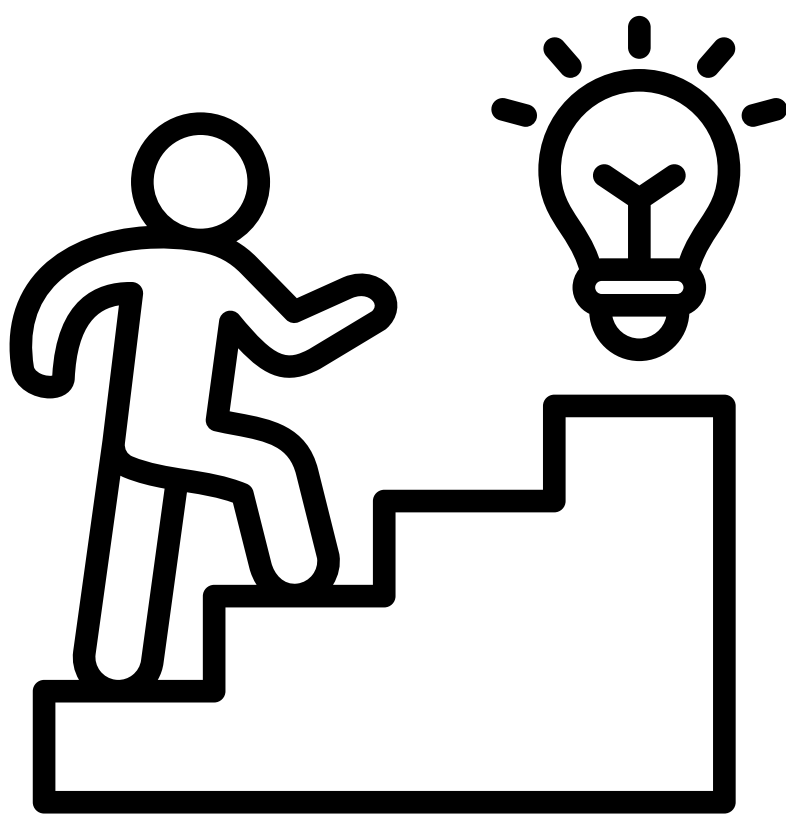
Europe supports young people who want to start their own projects or even small businesses. There are mentors and programs that help develop creative ideas.

## Why does this matter?

Our future depends on the choices we make now.  
The job market is always changing, so it's important to be flexible and learn new things.  
Skills like creativity, communication, and digital knowledge are becoming more important every year.

## What do we get from all this?

- ★ A clearer idea of what we want to do in life.
- ★ More confidence in our decisions.
- ★ Better chances to find a job we enjoy in Europe.
- ★ Motivation to plan for the next 5–10 years.

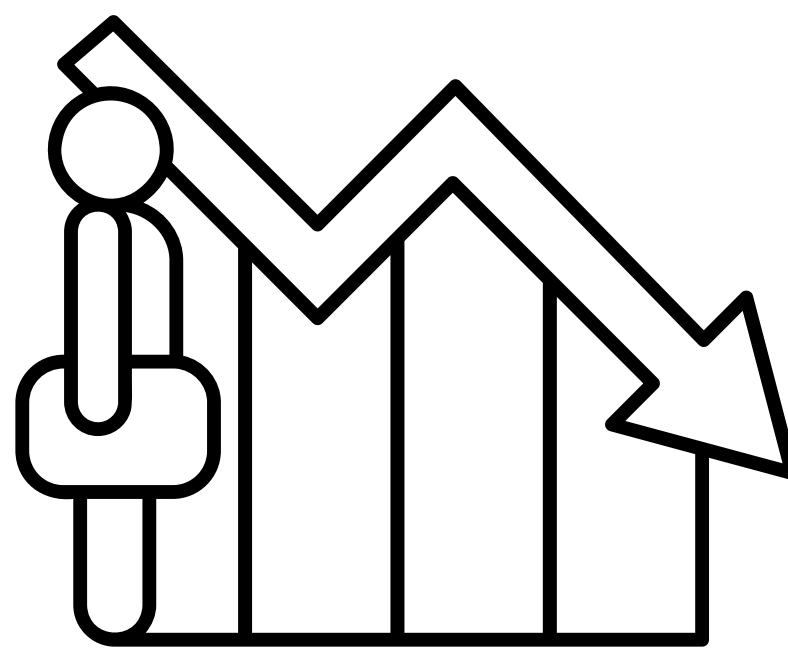


# UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS

Youth participation in Europe, whether in day to day life, political decision making, volunteering or employment is essential for democratic legitimacy, society, and the development of the EU's future. Despite that though, a lot of young people still face barriers to engaging meaningfully.

## 1.1 Economic and social constraints:

One of the biggest obstacles is economic exclusion. Many young Europeans struggle with unstable employment and limited access to decent jobs. According to Eurostat data, 11.2% of young people aged 15 to 29 in the EU were either unemployed, not pursuing education or any training in 2023. This rate has declined over the last decade: in 2013, the percentage for this age group was 16.1%, compared to 11.2% in recent years. It's no wonder that when our youth is burdened by rent, tuition and basic living needs, their energy and time for participation is just not enough. Additionally, young people from marginalized backgrounds such as ethnic minorities, low income families, or socially excluded communities face compounded difficulties due to lack of networks, fewer role models and discrimination. Some young people have reported that these youth structures often don't make space for them, they also experience lack of trust in institutions, negative social attitudes, limited resources, and very little real power to change something.



# UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS

## 1.2 Institutional and policy challenges:

Another obstacle is the inaccessibility of information. The Eurodesk Youth Info Survey 2025, which collected data from 7144 young people across 36 European countries, found that lack of accessible information was one of the key obstacles to participating in youth programs.

According to the same survey, financial difficulties are also major barriers, especially for

minority groups and the economically disadvantaged youth. These issues (no outreach, unclear eligibility) can limit access to EU programs and engagement. Stereotyping and not understanding the youth is another barrier. Young people are sometimes perceived as naive, too radical or not serious contributors. Such beliefs can undermine their credibility and discourage meaningful engagement.

## 1.3 Unawareness and informational barriers:

According to Eurodesk's 2025 Youth Info Survey, a sizeable amount of young respondents cited "lack of information" as a major reason for not participating in mobility opportunities: 24% said they were simply not informed about it, and others didn't know how to go about it. The same survey showed that 75% of young people consider it "useful or very useful" to have a youth information centre nearby that offers personalized guidance. These answers show that limited awareness and poor access to reliable information are real problems to youth participation. Even when opportunities exist, there is often a lack of awareness. Many young people don't know much about EU youth programs or what to do with them.

# ACCESSING INFORMATION



Given these issues, understanding how the youth actually accesses information and opportunities is crucial and by understanding and strengthening these pathways more young people can get themselves involved.

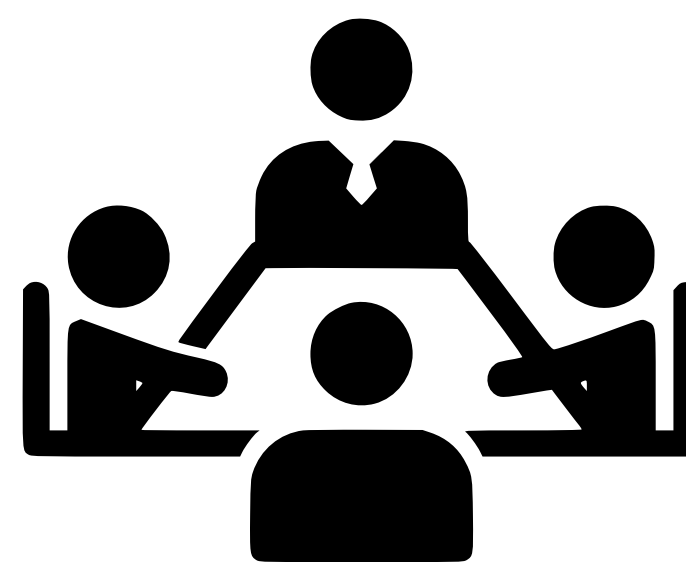
## 2.1 EU level portals and programs:

Programs like Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps have made progress in inclusion:

Eurodesk reports that the share of Erasmus+ participants with fewer opportunities rose from around 10% (2014-2020) to 15% in 2023. The increase in participation of underrepresented young people in these programs shows that financial support and inclusion schemes are working, though a lot more outreach is still needed.

## 2.2 Local NGOs, youth councils, and info centers:

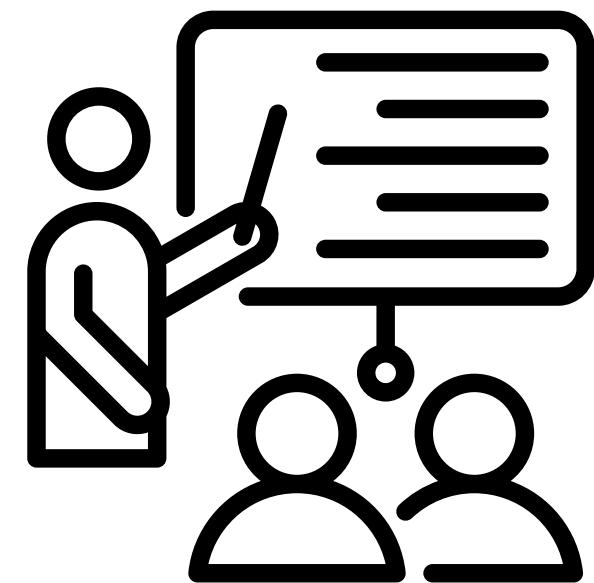
As I said, 75% of young people want a nearby info centre to get personalized help. During its 35th anniversary in 2025, Eurodesk emphasized that local youth organizations, schools, Community centres are essential to reach the underrepresented youth.



# ACCESSING INFORMATION

## 2.3 Online platforms and social media:

Digital tools are essential for reaching the youth today. Many youth organizations and NGOs use social media to broadcast opportunities, run campaigns, and engage with young people. Different platforms are used by different groups: Instagram and YouTube are universally used, LinkedIn more by higher educated young people, Facebook by the older youth, and TikTok by those aged 23 and under. Given that young people are more likely to consume and act on information via these digital channels, this is a very important access route.



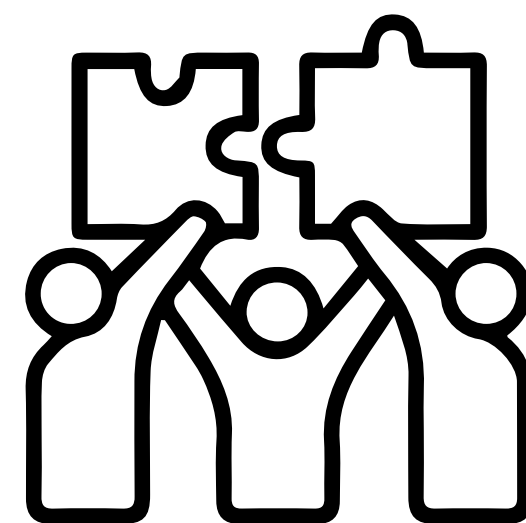
## 2.4 Workshops and info sessions:

In-person engagement to this day remains vital. Universities and local authorities host events to raise awareness about youth programs and rights. These can simplify application procedures and help build peer networks. Additionally, policy dialogues bring more young people into direct conversation with decision makers. For example, EU Youth Policy Dialogues have identified financial and social barriers such as visa issues and travel costs, and have started work on the simplification of application procedures and increasing more support for the youth.

# SKILLS, EXPERIENCES

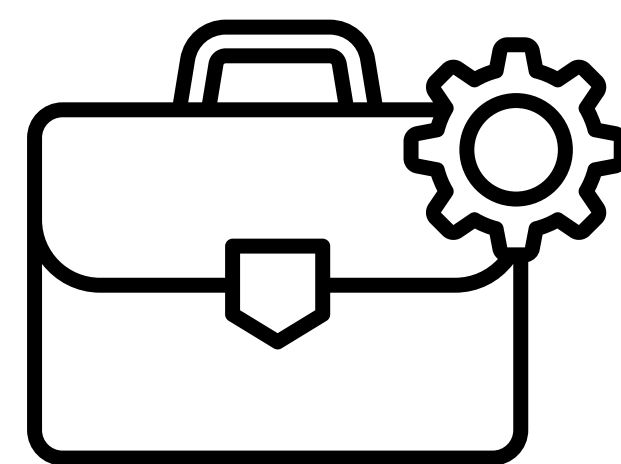
It's important to deepen your knowledge both inside and outside of school, that's where non-formal education comes into play. Volunteering programs, youth exchanges, and other forms of non-formal education are great ways to deepen your knowledge and gain new skills and experiences.

## Non-Formal Learning:



Non-formal learning is a structured learning program outside of the regular learning settings. Workshops, volunteering, and online courses allow people to explore their interests and gain real-life expertise. These activities help to develop technical skills while also building soft skills like teamwork, communication, adaptability, and problem-solving. Participants not only learn to take initiative, collaborate with diverse groups but also apply the gained knowledge in real situations.

## Gaining Practical Experience:



Internships, traineeships, and local projects create a professional setting where young people can learn by taking on real responsibilities. They build experience confidence and competence by managing tasks, meeting deadlines, and solving problems. These experiences help to strengthen their skills and open up new professional opportunities.

# SKILLS, EXPERIENCES

## Cross-Cultural and Peer Learning:

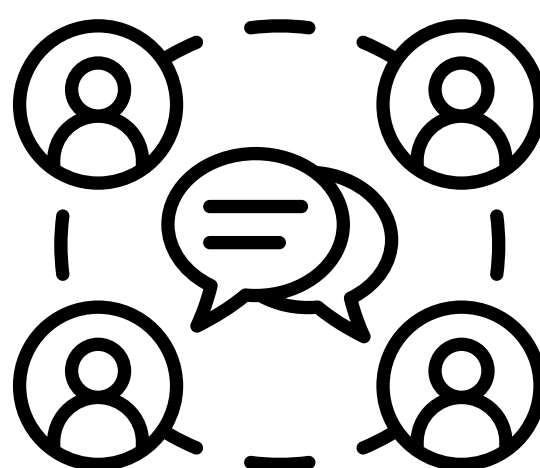


EU mobility programs and exchange projects expose young people to different people, cultures, and languages. These experiences expand their worldview and encourage acceptance, understanding, and openness. By sharing experiences and learning from new perspectives, young people gain social awareness and acceptance. The whole experience teaches young people tolerance, understanding, and adaptability.

## Digital and Civic Skills:



Today for young people it's a must to have strong teamwork, project management, and advocacy skills. These abilities are critical because they help to communicate effectively, influence decisions, and contribute to an effective outcome.



# ROLE OF MENTORSHIP AND GROWTH

## Mentorship Programs:

To achieve your goals and build a meaningful career is extremely helpful to have some to mentor you. A mentor can offer practical advice, share knowledge, and guide you to the right path. Guidance from experienced professionals or peers helps to avoid common mistakes and make better decisions.

## Coaching and Support Networks:

Local or EU-backed programs are a great way to grow both personally and professionally. These initiatives help individuals to set goals, track progress, and help to stay motivated. Coaching and supporting networks make it easier to overcome challenges, stay focused, and develop new skills.

## Youth Leadership Development:

Youth leadership programs help young people to strengthen critical thinking, decision-making, and public speaking. While participating in interactive activities, participants learn how to take responsibility, learn from mistakes, and approach challenges with confidence. These programs encourage initiative-taking and creativity and help them to become more engaged members of society.

## Sustainable Engagement:

Mentorship and structured support help to integrate and motivate young people to be active members of society. These initiatives motivate them to stay active in the community long term. This greatly impacts civil life by contributing to community development and supporting local initiatives.

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