



The European Elections 2024: Unleashing the Momentum for Youth Engagement

Date and Venue: European Parliament, Info Hub, Esplanade Solidarność 1980, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium; March 4-5, 2024

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform, in collaboration with the Citizen Z Project partners, Stand Up for Europe, and in partnership with the European Parliament, is organising a two-day event aimed at strengthening young people's involvement in civic and democratic life through deliberative practices while building momentum in anticipation of the upcoming European elections.

The event has a dual purpose. Firstly, it aims to share and disseminate preliminary findings and recommendations resulting from the application of deliberative practices within the EU-funded Citizen Z project, spanning Croatia, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Secondly, it strives to invigorate youth engagement in democratic processes, promoting active participation in elections and fostering meaningful discussions among policymakers, youth representatives and young activists, civil society and youth associations.

The comprehensive two-day program will feature a diverse range of activities, including panel discussions, presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities. This event is tailored for civil society organisations, practitioners, researchers, academics engaged in democratic innovations, young individuals, youth associations and representatives, teachers, youth workers, policymakers, and public authorities representatives. The event is part of the two-year EU-funded project entitled *Citizen Z: Strengthening the Participation of Young Citizens in Democratic and Civic Life*, where deliberative methods are applied to stimulate young people's interest in civic and political affairs, actively involving them in the decision-making process.

Day 1: Building bridges between young people and policymakers

Monday, March 4 | European Parliament, InfoHub, Brussels

13:00 – 13:30 Arrivals and registration | Get your badge

Welcoming and registration of the attendees

13:30 – 13:45 Opening Speech, Giulia Busolin, Project Manager at EP, Partnership Teams, Civil Society Outreach Unit | Vote informed

Introduction to key communication flagship initiatives of the European Parliament.

13:45 – 15:00 Workshop | Crafting a Youth Campaign: What would you do to get people involved?

The workshop is dedicated to collaboratively designing a campaign tailored for the upcoming European elections. The aim is to engage all participants in the event, tapping into the diverse perspectives and ideas of the audience. Together, we will create a dynamic and imaginative campaign focused on fostering the active participation of young people in the forthcoming elections and beyond. Over the course of the 2-day event, the workshop will remain dynamic and interactive. Participants will actively contribute their ideas, perspectives, and creativity towards crafting a compelling campaign. At the end of the second day, the finalised campaign will be unveiled and presented to the public. This presentation will hopefully mark the fruition of the collective work and showcase a campaign designed to resonate with and mobilise young individuals for active involvement in the upcoming EU elections and beyond.

Moderated by Silvestar Petrov, *Youth Worker and President at Udruga Prizma (Croatia)*

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break | Refresh and Network

Enjoy your coffee and meet new people!

15:30 – 16:45 Workshop | Tools and forms of citizen participation

This workshop led by *Stand Up for Europe* aims to familiarise young participants with the forms and tools of participation at the disposal of European citizens. The session begins with a dynamic 15-minute presentation, prompting participants to explore various forms of citizen engagement using an interactive flipchart. The spotlight then shifts to the introduction of innovative tools such as citizens' panels, offering a deeper understanding of how these instruments can amplify the voices of individuals in shaping policies. The informative presentation will be followed by a 10-minute segment, allowing attendees to grasp the practicalities of implementing these tools. To cap off the workshop, participants will actively contribute through a hands-on session, engaging in a simulation of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). This simulation aims to empower attendees, providing a firsthand experience of the impactful role citizens can play in shaping the democratic landscape.

Moderated by Sebastian Berchesan, *Executive Secretary at Stand Up for Europe*

16:45– 17:30 Panel discussion | FutureTalks: Youth and MEPs in Dialogue

In this insightful panel discussion, young people and Members of the European Parliament converge to engage in crucial conversations on priority issues in anticipation of the European Elections in 2024. The dialogue serves as a platform for a dynamic exchange of perspectives, ideas, and concerns, fostering a direct and meaningful connection between young people and current policymakers. Addressing a spectrum of pressing topics, from climate change and economic policies to social justice and education, the session aims to bridge the gap between the aspirations of the younger generation and the legislative agenda. This proactive interaction not only enables young individuals to voice their opinions but also allows MEPs to gain valuable insights into the priorities and expectations of the youth, fostering a more inclusive and responsive political landscape.

Moderated by Olivia Gheyselinck, *Event and Program Manager at Intercultural Dialogue Platform*

Speakers:

Gallée Malte, MEP, Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Security, Group of Greens/European Free Alliance



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Hilde Vautmans, MEP, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Renew Europe Group

17:30 – 17:45 Unpacking Day 1: Essential Takeaways

What will you remember from today's sessions ?

Day 2: Youth-led initiatives for active participation of young people in civic and democratic life

Tuesday, March 5 | European Parliament, InfoHub, Brussels

9:00 – 9:30 Arrivals | Welcome

Welcoming and registration of the attendees

09:30 – 10:45 Panel discussion | A Youth perspective on mental health and social well-being

This panel delves into a paramount issue affecting young individuals—mental health. When addressing mental health among young people, several key issues come to the forefront. Firstly, the stigma surrounding mental health remains a significant barrier to seeking help. Many young individuals may fear judgement or societal misconceptions, hindering open conversations about their struggles. Moreover, the increasing prevalence of social media and digital platforms adds a layer of complexity, contributing to issues like cyberbullying, body image concerns, and unrealistic social comparisons. Academic pressures, familial expectations, and the transitional phases of adolescence also play pivotal roles in exacerbating stress and anxiety. Access to mental health resources is another critical challenge, with long wait times for professional help and limited awareness about available support services. Additionally, the evolving technology poses both opportunities and risks, as it provides avenues for mental health education but can also contribute to information overload and digital stressors. Effectively addressing these multifaceted issues necessitates comprehensive strategies that destigmatize mental health, improve accessibility to resources, and promote holistic well-being among young



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people. Moreover, recognizing and fostering positive social connections, promoting supportive environments, and addressing social determinants of mental health are crucial aspects of enhancing both mental health and social well-being.

Moderated by Radu Toderita, *Member of the Youth Advocacy Team for the Citizen Z Project*

Speakers:

Prof. Imke Baetens, doctor in Psychology, family therapist and associated professor at the faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)

Prof. Dr. Marina Nekić, University of Zadar, psychology professor and counseling supervisor (Croatia)

Dr. Lysanne de Brinke, Assistant Professor at the Clinical Psychology section of Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands)

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break | Refresh and Network

Enjoy your coffee!

11:15 – 12:30 Panel discussion | Deliberative practices with youth – preliminary findings

The purpose of this panel discussion is to discuss the preliminary findings and recommendations resulting from the first round of local deliberations in Croatia, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, focusing on synthesising and revealing the common issues that have proved key for young people in the different EU countries (environment and climate, public transport, educational curricula, social justice, gender-based violence, etc). Furthermore, the discussion will encompass the follow-up phase, where organisers will underscore their strategy for communicating the resulting recommendations to local policymakers.

Moderated by Ludmila Malai, *EU Project Manager and Coordinator of the Citizen Z Project*

Speakers:



Dr. Cenap Mustafa Aydin, Director at Istituto Tevere (Italy)

Kamila Boukfouz, Program Manager at Platform INS (the Netherlands)

Alexandre Thiry, Communication and Project Manager at Fedactio (Belgium)

Silvestar Petrov, Chairman and President at Udruga Prizma (Croatia)

12:30 – 13:00 Concluding Remarks and Survey

