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APATHY OR ACTION: YOUNG EUROPEANS TAKE A STAND

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About Volonteurope

Volonteurope is an international network promoting volunteering, active citizenship and social justice in Europe and beyond.

Volonteurope works at all levels, from the local to the international, and across the public, private and third sectors. We facilitate exchange, foster collaboration and carry out research and advocacy.

Volonteurope currently has over 60 members in more than 20 countries across Europe.

Established in the Netherlands in 1981, is registered as an ASBL in Belgium, while its Secretariat is hosted by Volunteering Matters, leading UK volunteering in policy and practice.

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Sole responsibility for this report and its contents lies with Volonteurope.

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Contents

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Foreword

Oonagh Aitken
President of Volonteurope

In June 2016, 52% of the voting public in the United Kingdom cast their vote for Brexit and decided that the UK, where the Volonteurope Secretariat is located, is to leave the European Union. Migration was by far the biggest issue driving the EU Referendum campaign, which was often unpleasant and deliberately misguided. Big cities, such as London, Liverpool and Manchester, as well as the whole of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, voted to remain, but other parts of the UK decided to leave. Young voters were overwhelmingly pro staying in the European Union, hence it was not surprising to see tens of thousands of young people protesting on the streets of the UK following the announcement of the result. They felt betrayed by the older generation leaving them with an unwanted legacy.
In parallel with Brexit, we have seen a rise in populism and extreme right wing parties across Europe – in Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, France and other European countries. 2017 will see general elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany, and with it increasing political tensions across the continent that could pose further threats to the fabric of European society.

In this climate, civil society organisations must take a stand and do what they can to confront governments that are trying to restrict access to media and information, restrict free association of people and to restrict the role of organised civil society. Now it is down to everyone to halt the rise of populism, extremism and xenophobia and to prevent political parties which promote such policies from having political legitimacy.

Accordingly, it is crucially important that studies such as this take place and civil society organisations engage as many young people as possible, from different walks of life.

It is often suggested that young people care little about society, are self-obsessed or so depressed by the social and economic climate that they are apathetic. That is certainly not our experience. More young people than ever are volunteering.

Several of our member organisations have seen a huge increase in young people volunteering, especially in activities focusing on making community changes through social action and engagement. But we need diversity; we need to focus on young people from challenging

backgrounds and with fewer opportunities, and make sure that they have the opportunity to volunteer, to be involved in social action and to play a part in their own communities.

Through this report, we want to make the case for why youth engagement is important. In this study we state that "engagement is unique in that it results in dual benefits to youth and communities. Through citizen engagement, strong communities emerge, which are characterised by the ability of local communities to manage the resources available to them in meeting local needs. This capacity also allows for increased quality of life, community attractiveness and a wider level of interdependence among local citizens. Through engagement by all citizens, but especially where a clear role is defined for youth, an environment is created where youth may be more likely to become/remain civically engaged."

We need this youth engagement because if ever we need community cohesion and community capacity, which encourages people to look out for each other, it is now. From communities divided by the referendum vote in the UK, to communities divided along political lines by far right parties in other EU Member States, we need to see volunteering and social action as a way to bring people together. We believe that volunteering and social action contributes to community cohesion, and that some of the community and generational divisions can be healed by the power of volunteering and social action.

Youth engagement is in itself very empowering, as we all know from the work that our member organisations and volunteers do across Europe. Youth civic engagement activity has the potential to contribute to personal development of young people, to promote their welfare and to challenge injustice in society. Political change happens when people support their shared interests and work together on common goals and objectives. Such participation, however, must be meaningful, so that young people have the real possibility of influencing institutions and decisions – something that still needs work, both in our countries and at European level.

Youth engagement, for a network such as Volonteurope, effectively underlines what we mean by the notion of citizenship. The social element of citizenship is necessary to the exercise of civil and political rights by those who are socially marginalised and disadvantaged in terms of power and resources. For this reason, the participation of citizens, and indeed young citizens, is crucial for the functioning of a healthy democracy.

We, in Volonteurope, believe that volunteering is an expression of active citizenship and contributes to the democratic fabric of our society.

The next few years of the European project will not be easy. But Volonteurope stands firm as a key partner for volunteers and social activists of all ages.

Key Terms

Agency
The confidence in one's capacity to develop and achieve a personal, political or collective goal. It is both a necessary condition and a result of social citizenship (Watts and Flanagan 2007).
See ***empowerment***

Adultism
The attitudes and patterns of behaviour which position the "adult", as defined by a given community, above "youth" in the social hierarchy.

At risk of poverty and social exclusion (AROPE)
A European Union institutional and Europe 2020 Strategy definition referring to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, or severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity (Eurostat 2014).

Citizenship
The status of belonging fully to a particular community, comprised three dimensions: civil, relating to the rule of law and freedoms; political, meaning participation in the formal structures to contest power; and social, including "the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (Marshall 1950).

Civil society
A public space, outside government and outside the private sector, in which individuals and groups of actors, both formal and informal, can contest ideas.

Community
A public space offering opportunities to development and apply social, civil and political values, attitudes, roles, activities and attributes (Camino and Zeldin 2002).

Dignity
Being treated in ways that recognise the importance of a person's autonomy in their life.

Empowerment
A process and result of becoming aware of one's own agency and of one's ability to challenge and change the systems regulating one's life through collective action (Chandhoke 2002).
See ***agency***

Engagement
The process by which citizens meaningfully participate in the social, communal realm of citizenship, exerting their agency in collective action.

EU
The European Union.

EU-27
All European Union member states, except Croatia.

EU-28
All European Union member states, including Croatia.

Euro area 19
The nineteen EU member states which use the euro as their currency.

Intersectionality
The way in which multiple forms of discrimination, based on different identities and statuses, interact and compound one another (Crenshaw 1989).

Power
The application of norms through programmes, discourses or strategies which regulate the actions and beliefs of others. It can be divided into three "faces": decision-making, agenda-setting and the manipulation of another actor's wants in such a way that the actor does not realise that outside forces are shaping their desires (Lukes 1974).

Social exclusion
" …a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often [feel] powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day[-]to[-]day lives" (Eurostat 2010).

Young people / Youth
An umbrella term to describe a diverse segment of people between 15 and 30 years of age of varied sexes, genders, sexualities, abilities, races, ethnicities, origins, religions, economic backgrounds and other overlapping and discrete statuses.

Executive Summary

An engaged, empowered citizenry is of vital importance for the strength of democracy in Europe. A healthy democracy is one in which all citizens are treated in a dignified way—one which respects their agency over their own lives—and are empowered to meaningfully participate in the debates and decisions about the norms and value systems which regulate their lives and that of their society.

The 2008 financial and economic crisis, and policy responses to it, have had profound, far-reaching effects on European society as a whole and created an exceptionally difficult and demoralising situation for young people especially. An environment such as this raises serious challenges for meaningful participation in a democracy: material and psychological impoverishment diminishes people's sense of self-worth and limits their belief that their actions can change the world around them.

Current rates of youth participation in activities traditionally considered to demonstrate citizenship, such as group membership and group attendance, the ability to access information, interaction with politics through formal means and trust in other people, are far lower than in past decades. It appears that young people today are increasingly disengaged from community life. But is this really the case?

This report invites readers to consider their own assumptions about young people and youth engagement and to reframe it as a means to empower young citizens.

What is youth engagement?

Engagement has its roots in the idea of what it is to *be* a citizen and thus who is included in and benefits from the full life of a society, and how. It is in the social realm of citizenship that people learn what it means to be a"citizen"; engagement, therefore, is the process by which citizens meaningfully participate in the social, community sphere. To engage is to be empowered to create and identify opportunities to take action in the social arena—one which has impacts that extend beyond the individual self.

Why is youth engagement important?

Including citizens in the life of their society is a fundamental measure of the health of a democracy and greater inclusiveness generates mutually-reinforcing benefits from the individual to the societal level. Engaging young people is a means for personal development, sets a precedent for long-term involvement and facilitates identity formation; that is, it builds a sense of agency and facilitates the living of a dignified life. From a broader level, engagement creates and recreates what is meant by "citizen" and "citizenship": who is included, who is not and in what ways. It therefore has important implications for democratic practice.

Policy background

Youth engagement is important to the EU institutions: it is explicitly included as a fundamental right in Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty. Various policy initiatives, such as the EU Youth Strategy and the Structured Dialogue, have sought to bring youth voices into EU policy development processes. And youth engagement is manifest across Member States as well. However, a common limitation of all these

frameworks is that they privilege access for certain groups of young people while neglecting the special needs required for the involvement of those who are more marginalised.

What is the state of youth engagement in Europe?

Looking at formal, traditional measures of active citizenship (volunteering, belonging to a group, attending a religious service, being a union member, reading newspapers weekly, voting, being contacted by a political party, working on a community project, attending club meetings and believing people are trustworthy), it appears that young Europeans are not engaged. This paints a picture of young people as apathetic, lazy, distracted or self-centred. Looking at other forms of engagement, such as grassroots networks, social movements and online communities, however, it becomes clear that this picture is limited at best. Young people are actively engaging in communal life, but the modes of doing so are shifting. This is not being captured by current concepts of engagement.

What are the main barriers to youth engagement?

Challenges to youth participation fall in three broad areas: negative narratives about and representations of young people; material and psychosocial poverty; and normative assumptions about what constitutes legitimate social engagement. Widely-accepted negative perceptions and representations of young people as a problem to be solved is a form of social control. The pervasiveness of this disempowering image means it is internalised by many young people and limits their perception of their own ability—and right—to participate meaningfully in society; that is, to exercise their citizenship. This perceived lack of agency is compounded by material poverty: youth who have access to supportive networks and role models are more likely to engage, while those who do not tend to remain marginalised. This lack of access to human and economic resources means they are less likely be able to challenge—let alone participate in—prescriptive notions of what constitutes engagement, and any alternative modes of participation are more likely to go unrecognised.

Recommendations

1. Recognise young people as a heterogeneous group with different needs, resources, abilities and interests, both across Europe and within countries.

2. Sensitise NGO staff, civil servants and politicians to concepts such as empowerment, agency and social justice, to enable them to understand their role in facilitating young people's ability to become full citizens.

3. Undertake a contextual analysis of the drivers of the state of engagement among the target group, community or area.

4. Ensure policies and programmes address these underlying drivers of exclusion, rather than only the symptoms, and focus on structural factors, in addition to individual beneficiaries.

5. Ensure policies, programmes and communications represent and approach young people positively and in an empowering way, rather than as a problem requiring intervention.

6. Interrogate current approaches to engagement (such as the Structured Dialogue at EU level) and ensure young stakeholders—especially the most marginalised and hardest to reach—are consulted on and included in decisions around policy and programmatic design. This may uncover new routes to participation which are more appealing to and authentic for young people.

7. Include monitoring of policies and programmes against meaningful change indicators from the beginning and apply lessons learned to future endeavours. Quality is not the scope of a project, but rather its effect on desired outcomes.

8. Ensure data collection includes measurements of alternative forms of engagement.

9. Identify and incorporate more pathways to include the voice of young people in the policy making process, with particular emphasis on marginalised groups.

10. Lower the EU and national voting age to 16.

11. Allocate more resources for grassroots organisations, neighbourhood groups and other civil society organisations.

12. Fund citizenship education at school level as well as in informal settings.

13. Increase the provision of Erasmus+ funding for fostering youth participation and mobility, with particular attention on reaching marginalised groups.

14. Acknowledge that some youth may not want to engage, and that this is an acceptable expression of agency as well.

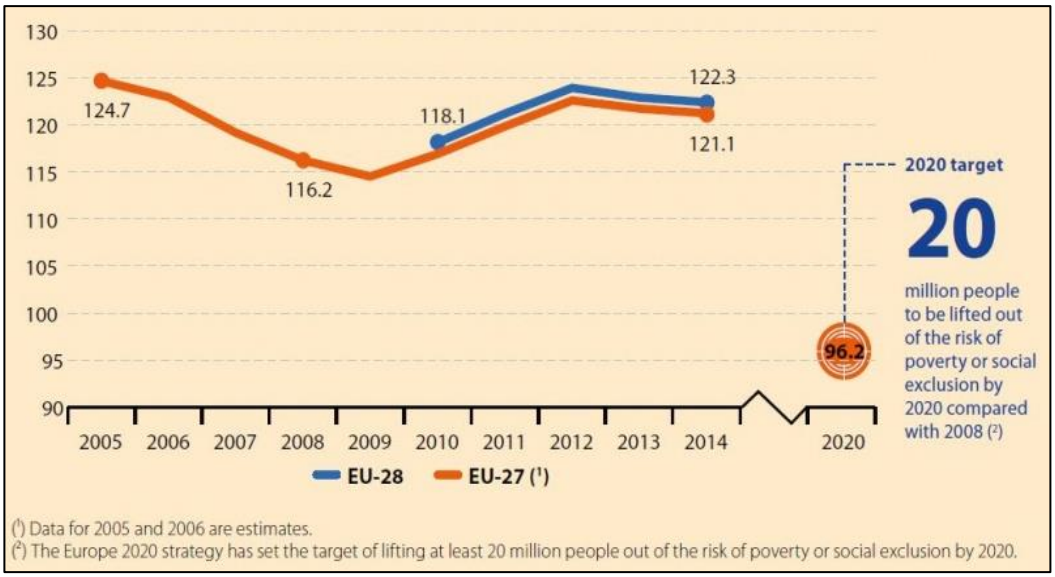
Introduction

Context

The financial and economic crisis of 2008 was a watershed moment for Europe. The effects of this crisis and the policies implemented in response to it have had profound implications for all Europeans, and for the most vulnerable segments of European society, such as young people, in particular. As its effects continue to unfold, this crisis context remains highly relevant for civil society organisations, practitioners and policymakers concerned with youth and with their social inclusion today.

The crisis period has been one characterised by economic instability, stagnation and growing inequality (Duiella and Turrini 2014), and by the introduction of a series of austerity[1] policies at national level. A significant consequence of these policies has been what Romano and Punziano (2016) identify as the "disruption" of the European social welfare model: a shifting of the burden of costs from national welfare systems onto local communities, families and individuals, which has caused the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion to increase and put those who are already vulnerable at greater risk (Eurostat 2016b; Romano and Punziano 2016). As Figure 1 shows, before the crisis, this number was in decline across the EU-27 countries (i.e., excluding Croatia) decreasing from 124.7 to 114.5 million between 2005 and 2009. Following the onset of the crisis, however, the total had climbed back to 122.5 million by 2012. As of 2014, the year of the most recent available data, the number of Europeans living at risk of poverty or social exclusion remained at 121.1 million in the EU-27 and 122.3 million in the EU-28 (Eurostat 2016b).

Figure 1 - Number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, EU-28 and EU-27 countries, 2005-2014



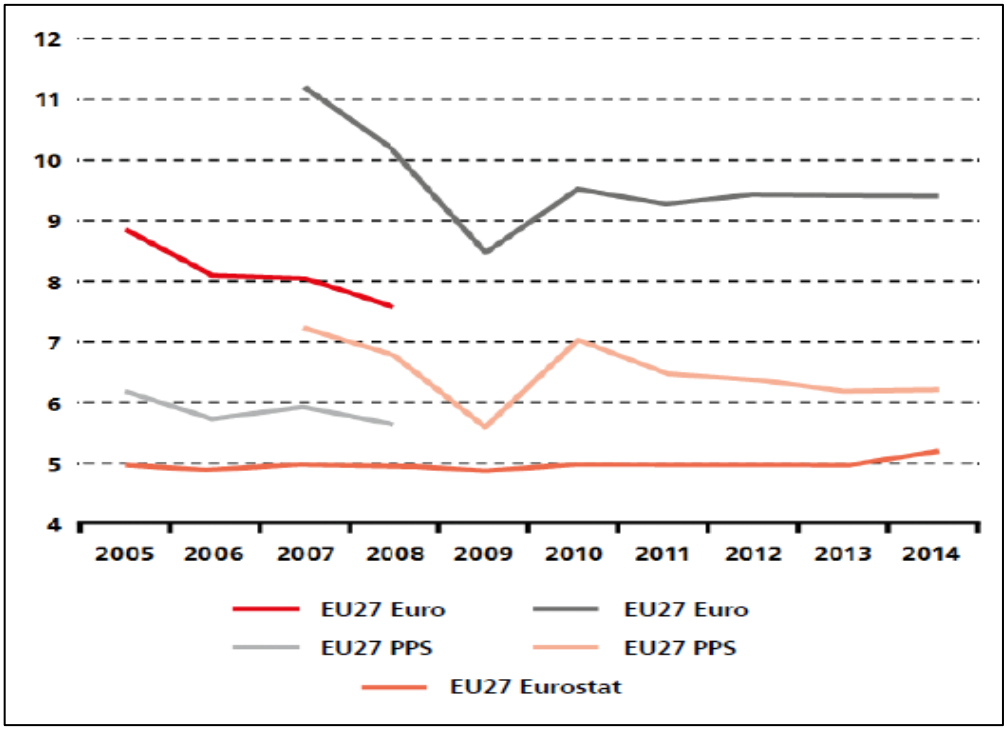
Source: Eurostat 2016b

[1] For more information on austerity, see http://www.economist.com/blogs/buttonwood/2015/05/fiscal-policy.

While poverty has intensified, high levels of inequality between countries and groups of people have continued as well. As evidenced by the euro (grey) and purchasing power standard (yellow) lines in Figure 2, the gap between the incomes of the richest and poorest fifths of Europeans has remained consistent since 2010—at a much higher level that for the official EU average (the orange line) (Dauderstadt and Keltek 2016).

This is partly due to the fact that the incomes of the poorest 20 per cent of Europeans are growing more slowly than those of the richest 20 per cent (Dauderstadt and Keltek 2016; Eurostat 2016a).[2] All of this is significant because those in disadvantageous positions in terms of income are at even greater risk during times of poor economic performance and cuts in state services, and it demonstrates that the benefits of economic recovery are not equitably shared.

Figure 2 - Trends in income inequality, ratio between lowest to highest income quintiles, in euros and by purchasing power standard (PPS), EU as a whole, 2005-2014

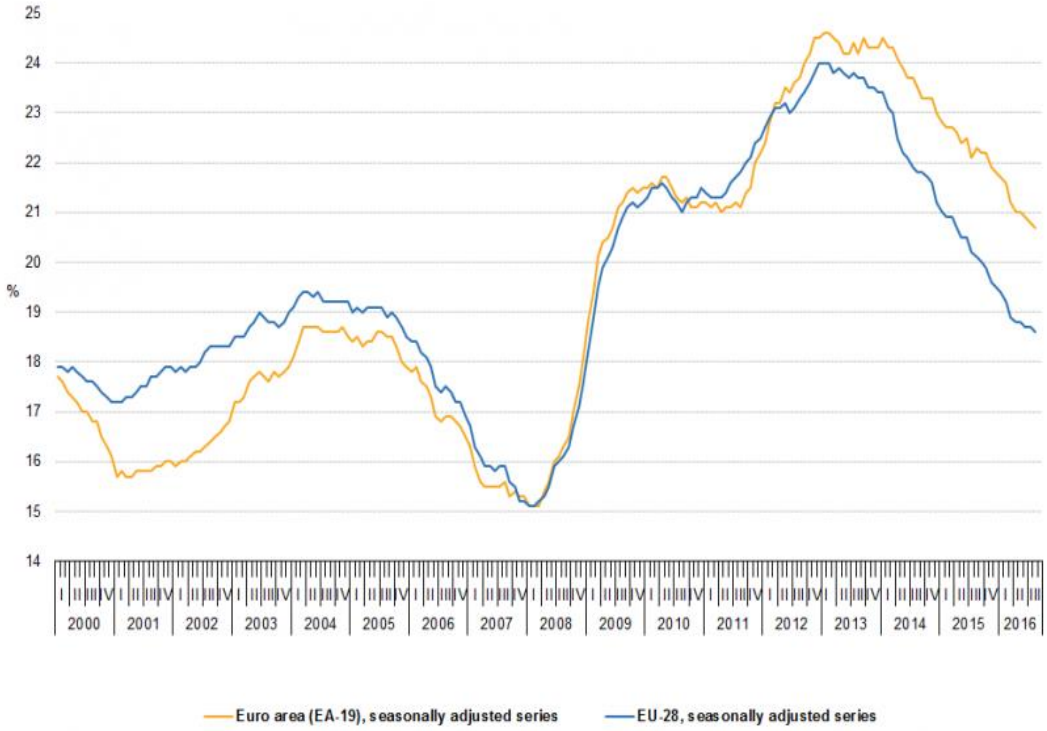


Source: Dauderstadt and Keltek 2016

[2] Refer to Annexe A for more detailed data.

The economic crisis has had a disproportionate effect on young people. Within the abovementioned at-risk grouping, Europeans 18 to 24 years old are the most likely be at risk of poverty or social exclusion: in 2014, one-third of women and nearly one-third of men in this age bracket faced this risk, higher than the EU average of one-quarter of people (Eurostat 2016b). A further indicator of their particular vulnerability is the trend in employment rates; as shown in the following graph, unemployment in the EU-28 among youth active in the economy peaked at nearly 24 per cent in 2013, more than twice the average for the total population (Eurostat 2016c). The EU-wide average obscures vast disparities between countries: 60 per cent of young people in Greece and 56 per cent in Spain were unemployed at the 2013 peak, while concurrently only 9.2 per cent in Austria and 7.7 per cent were out of work in Germany.[3] Countries where the crisis has been more severe have seen worse outcomes across all age groups in comparison to their peers in places where it has been less damaging, meaning the burden has been unequally shared.

Figure 3 - Seasonally-adjusted youth* unemployment rates by quarter, EU-28 and Euro-19 countries, 2000-2016



*Note: Youth here refers to those aged 15 to 24, inclusive, as per Eurostat's parameters.
Source: Eurostat 2016c

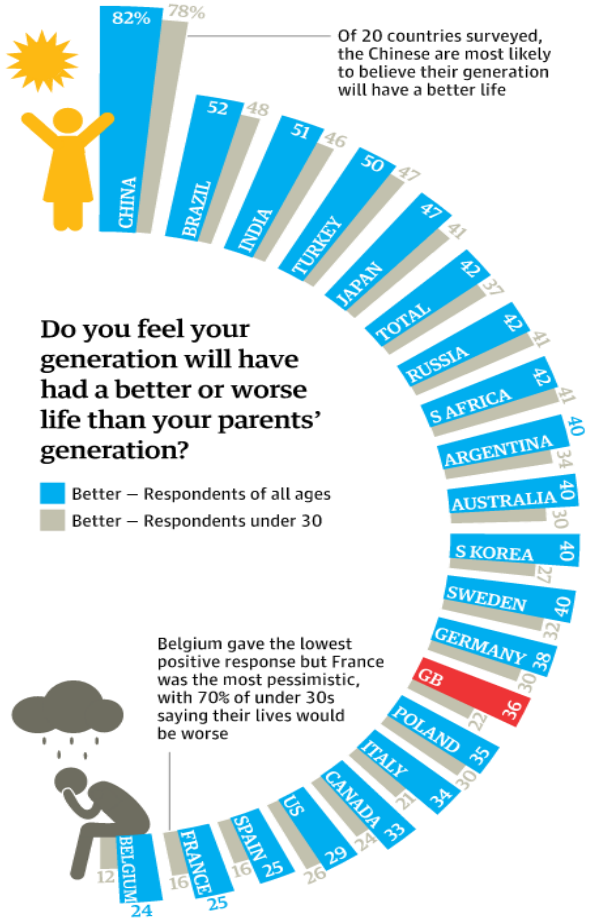
[3] Refer to Annexe B for a breakdown by country.

This economic and political context has shaped young people's perceptions about their futures and about representatives in positions of power in formal democratic institutions. A 2014 Ipsos MORI survey of 16,000 adults in 20 countries paints a startlingly pessimistic picture: when asked "To what extent, if at all, do you feel that your generation will have had a better or worse life than your parents' generation, or will it be about the same?", young people were less likely to think their lives would be better than their parents' across all countries (cited in Sedghi and Arnett 2014). In Europe, only 32 per cent of Swedes under 30 years of age thought their lives would be better than those of the preceding generation—eight points less than in the total population—while, in Belgium, a meagre 12 per cent thought so—half that of the total, which itself was only one-quarter of respondents in that country (Sedghi and Arnett 2014).

With regard to political elites, focus group interviews with young people in Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Spain and the UK, representing different groups ranging from actively engaged to marginalised, as well as "reference" groups of students, uncovered extremely negative perceptions.[4] 95 per cent of participants expressed what the authors describe as ". . . overwhelming levels of perceived betrayal, distrust, scepticism and/or anger" concerning politicians (LSE 2013). As Stiglitz (2016) concludes, young people are attuned to obvious, widening social inequalities and perceive that those in power—who are usually older and generally benefitted from more favourable economic climes—are not doing enough about it; this foments a strong sense of intergenerational injustice.

Figure 4

Will your life be better than your parents'?



Source: Sedghi and Arnett 2014

Overall, these prevailing economic and psychosocial conditions provide a challenging environment for civil society organisations and policymakers focused on youth and on their engagement. It should also serve as an urgent call for greater, sustained and meaningful action for the benefit of young people, their communities and, ultimately, the health of Europe's democracies.

[4] See Appendix 2, p. 9-11, of LSE (2013) for more information on the methodology.

Structure of the report

This report is a call to action on youth engagement. The introduction has set the economic and social scene in Europe. The first section will provide a working definition of this concept which is rooted in notions of citizenship. The following section asks the question why youth engagement is important and makes the case for focusing on young people's engagement as a policy and programmatic priority, as benefits at the micro, individual level up through to the macro, European level are not only mutually reinforcing but essential for an empowered citizenry and a robust democracy.

The third section provides an overview of the policy environment, with regard to the inclusion of youth engagement within EU Treaty documents as well as various mechanisms for engaging youth at both EU and national levels. It concludes that these means are insufficient for including the voices of youth from marginalised groups in particular.

The next section will explore the state of youth engagement in Europe and explore the idea that, while youth participation and engagement is declining by traditional measures, young people are not apathetic or indolent. Rather, today's young people are more likely to search for alternative means to engage outside formal institutional structures, which they perceive to have less relevance than informal pathways. This has implications for bridging the gap between young people's strong belief in democracy as a concept but disillusionment with its practice.

The penultimate section will examine in more depth the barriers to youth engagement. Keeping the psychosocial effects of the economic context in mind, this section will use the typology put forward in Shaw et al. (2014), to discuss the drivers of exclusion in three spheres: negative discourses relating to young people, material and psychosocial poverty and normative assumptions about what is considered "real" participation and engagement.

In the final section, the report will provide policy recommendations for civil society organisations and policymakers to consider and implement in order to empower Europe's youth and thereby strengthen European democracies.

Youth engagement: a definition

Youth engagement is rooted in the idea of who has the right to participate meaningfully in a given society, and how—that is, who is a citizen and in what ways they are allowed to be involved in collective life. Marshall (1950) provides a useful framework for understanding citizenship, defining it as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community". He suggests three areas in which citizenship operates: the civil, with regard to the rule of law and freedoms; the political, covering participation in the formal institutions and structures through which power is contested; and the social, which includes "the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live a life of a civilised being in accordance to the standards prevailing in the society" (Marshall 1950).[5] Engagement, therefore, is the process by which citizens meaningfully participate in the abovementioned social realm of citizenship. To engage is to take action collectively to create, identify and participate in legitimate opportunities for interrogating, challenging and influencing the debates and decisions about the rules which regulate and resources which support wider social life (Amna 2012, cited in Shaw et al. 2014; Camino and Zeldin 2002; Checkoway and Gutierrez 2006; National Commission on Resources for Youth 1975, cited in Camino and Zeldin 2002; Pleyers and Karbach 2014).

Traditional indicators of youth engagement in citizenship activities focus on group membership and attendance, the ability to access information, interaction with politics through formal channels and trust in other people (Flanagan and Levine 2010, cited in Shaw et al. 2014). As this report will discuss, however, these measurements of the activeness of citizenship are of decreasing relevance with regard to youth, because they fail to capture shifts to alternative modes of engagement, such as to informal networks, civil society organisations, grassroots social movements and online communities (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016; Cammaerts et al. 2014; Sherrod et al, 2002, in Shaw et al. 2014).

[5] While a drawback of this definition of citizenship is that it may be interpreted in ways which restrict understandings of who the "right to share to the full" includes and what the "life of a civilised being" encompasses, it nonetheless simultaneously creates the space for those definitions to be contested; that is, it creates space for a debate, one of the fundamental characteristics of healthy democratic life.

The importance of youth engagement

Including citizens in the life of their society is of utmost importance for a healthy democracy. Greater inclusiveness generates benefits at multiple levels, which reinforce each other (Camino and Zeldin 2002; Shaw et al. 2014). At a micro level, engaging young people is a means for personal development, sets a precedent for long-term involvement in citizenship activities and facilitates identity formation. In other words, it builds a sense of agency and empowerment, essential to living a dignified life. From a broader, societal level, engagement produces and reproduces what is meant by "citizen" and "citizenship": that is, who is included, who is not and in what ways. It therefore has important implications for democratic practice.

Youth engagement, empowerment and the creation of the "citizen"

Engagement in the social realm is a necessary condition for the exercise of citizenship; as Roche (1999) points out, the political and civil elements are dependent on it. This is because, through engagement in the social sphere, the "citizen" is created. In this communal arena, people—especially young people—learn what it is to *be* a citizen: the values, attitudes, roles, activities and attributes of a "good citizen"; the rights of citizenship; and the means to engage with the institutions of power. Those, then, who are excluded from or insufficiently included in this social arena—those who are "socially marginal and disadvantaged in terms of power and resources", as Roche (1999) puts it—must overcome enormous normative, knowledge and resource barriers in order to engage with ideas about their rights, their relationship in the civil realm with institutions of the state like the police or the formal structures and processes in the political sphere which allocate power.

In other words, the ability to engage in the social sphere of citizenship is a prerequisite for the empowerment of individual citizens and of the communities to which they belong. To be empowered is to have awareness of one's own agency—the confidence in one's capacity to develop and achieve a personal, political or collective goal (Watts and Flanagan 2007)—and of one's ability to challenge and change the systems regulating one's life by collective means (Chandhoke 2002; Shaw et al. 2014; Watts and Flanagan 2007). Empowered citizens taking communal action produce and reproduce what it means to be a "citizen" through the very exercise of their agency. Upholding the rights and dignity of all citizens lies at the heart of a healthy democracy, so the empowerment of all citizens must rest at the core of both policy and programmes related to youth engagement in public life.

Benefits for the individual...

On an individual level, youth engagement in social life provides numerous developmental benefits. It facilitates positive psychosocial development, particularly with regard to the formation of young people's identity (Youniss and Yates 1997, cited in Watts and Flanagan 2007). In the process of seeking validation of the views and values they will internalise and ascribe to, young people explore those of other individuals, groups and organisations, building the skills to relate positively with other people, encouraging critical thinking, reinforcing interest in civil and political

participation, lowering the risk of harmful behaviours, enabling new opportunities to be aspired to and fostering self-confidence and self-esteem (Shaw et al. 2014; Watts and Flanagan 2007). In other words, rather than merely being "citizens in waiting" (Shaw et al. 2014), engagement in public life enables youth to become social actors aware of what dignity, the belief that they are entitled to be treated in a way that recognises agency in their own lives, feels like.

...lead to benefits for democratic society

The benefits of engaging youth extend beyond individual young people, to their local communities and their societies at large. Communities with empowered citizens are better able to manage common resources to meet local needs (Shaw et al. 2014) and to hold those to whom they have delegated their power to account for their commitments. As Chandhoke (2002) insightfully analyses, empowerment means that "people who have been constituted as subjects and not as citizens by the policies of the state can rise to demand justice, equality and freedom; to demand that the state delivers what it has promised in theory". Empowered young people and therefore empowered communities—those with a clear sense of the rights and entitlements of citizenship—are more able to set and achieve their own social, civil and political goals and seek the best means to live their lives in dignity. This is important with regard to institutions, like schools, through which "social power" operates and which shape young people's ideas of what is attainable and appropriate and for whom (Watts and Flanagan 2007). It is especially relevant in this context because the structure of the institutions through which citizens interact with their state can serve to privilege certain groups and discriminate against, marginalise or oppress others (Watts and Flanagan 2007). Empowerment means individuals and groups who are denied full citizenship are able to interrogate and challenge prevailing ideas and hold those in power to account.

Full citizenship implies knowledge of and access to the rights and entitlements of a given society. The social realm of citizenship, as the one where one learns to become "citizen", is a prerequisite for the ability to participate in political and civil modes of citizenship, where citizenship is defined and access to those rights and entitlements is determined. For youth engagement to be meaningful, then, policies and programmes aimed at building youth as social actors must be about inclusion and empowerment, or "the real influence of young people in institutions and decisions" (Checkoway and Gutierrez 2006). To do otherwise risks treating young people as passive "human subjects or service recipients" (Checkoway and Gutierrez 2006), reproducing a very limited notion of citizenship and a weaker democracy.

Policy background

In the EU, the overall responsibility for youth policy falls under the competencies of Member States, but participation in democratic life is considered a fundamental right recognised in Article 10.3 of the Lisbon Treaty (2009), which states that "every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union", and is an inherent part of the European citizenship provisions. Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty focuses more specifically on young Europeans, stating that one of the aims of EU action should be "encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe".

It is important to stress that improving the situation of young people is present in the core European policy documents and youth participation is recognised as one of the top priorities of the European youth policy ("An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering" 2009). The EU Youth Strategy, a framework for cooperation covering the period of 2010-2018, aims to foster youth engagement, employment and participation in the democratic process and in society. This strategy calls for greater cooperation between youth policy and other relevant policy areas, and promotes fostering personal fulfilment, social cohesion and active citizenship of young people as essential components for reaching the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and jobs. To achieve these objectives, the European Commission has placed the involvement of young people within the EU youth policymaking process, with particular focus on the Structured Dialogue and the Erasmus+ programme, which supports projects providing opportunities for young people to participate in cross-border projects and events, among others. Though fundamental for the engagement of young people, these measures are proving to be insufficient: they are generally accessible by specific groups of young people and exclude or provide very limited access for youth from marginalised communities such as minority groups, lower socioeconomic backgrounds or those from isolated rural areas.

Structured Dialogue

The EU Youth Strategy is not the first framework put in place by European institutions for fostering youth participation and involving young people in policymaking. Since 1988, the EU has focused explicitly on youth programmes; the 2001 white paper "A New Impetus for European Youth", which outlined the importance of consulting young people on policy fields that affect them directly, provided a frame of reference to formalise and embed the participation of young people in EU policymaking through the Structured Dialogue in particular. The document identified youth participation as one of the areas where EU Member States were invited to coordinate their policies in the youth field.

In 2005, an EU Council Resolution invited the European Commission and Member States to develop a Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations, experts on youth issues and public decision-makers. The biggest step forward for its implementation has been made with the abovementioned EU Youth Strategy, which renewed the framework for European cooperation in the field of youth, adopted

in 2009 through the Council Resolution which recognised young people as key actors in society who should be considered an important resource. The Structured Dialogue is a means of mutual communication between young people and decision-makers in order to implement the priorities of European youth policy cooperation and to make young people's voices heard in the European policy-shaping process. A consultative process, it is implemented by the European Commission within a framework agreed with the European Youth Forum, and serves to increase cooperation with civil society and to get first-hand input from young people.

Nonetheless, this setting has its limitations, as it tends to engage only a specific group of young people and leaves out more marginal groups. The Structured Dialogue is an example of the divide that exists between national and European youth organisations as well as informal grassroots and community-based youth organisations.

National context

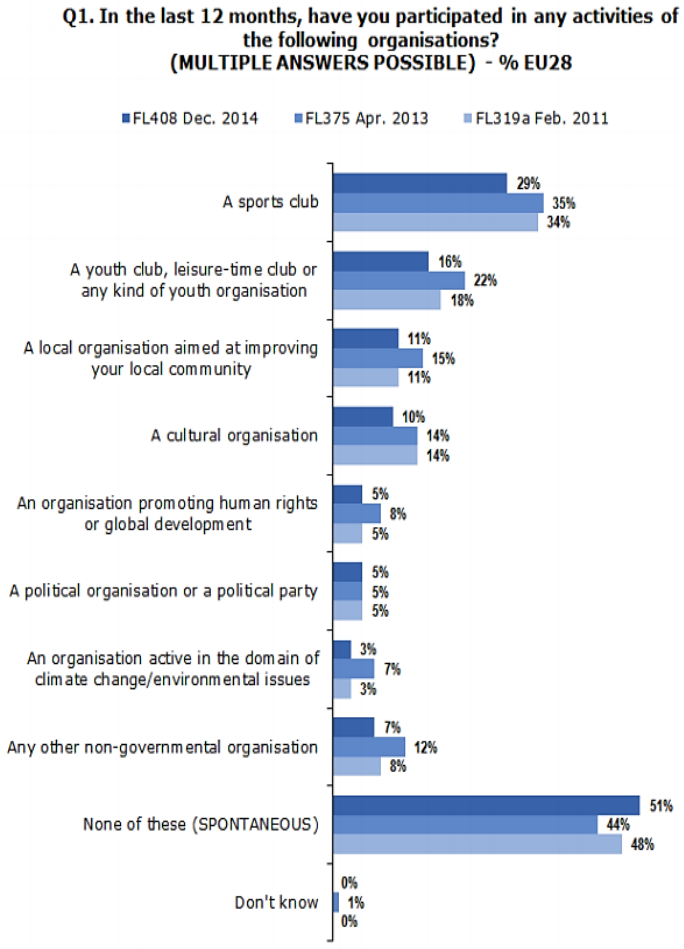
The national policy context relating to youth participation in democratic life is highly diverse across the Member States. A study conducted by the LSE (2013) identified broad trends across Northern, Southern, Eastern, Central and Western European nations with regard to specific ways in which young people's inclusion is approached. For example, countries in Northern Europe have adopted more proactive welfare strategies while, in post-Socialist countries, the responsibility for youth participation is delegated to the school and families; in Southern Member States it is often delegated to religious institutions (LSE 2013). And the national level is a critical context within which youth engagement is regulated: Austria, for example, lowered the voting age to 16 in 2008, a sweeping, inclusive change which would not have been possible at other levels.

Youth participation takes place at many levels of democratic life on a spectrum from the traditional and conventional to the innovative and creative. This is why formal and informal civil society—and the volunteering sector in particular—is essential for fostering participation and promoting the engagement of young people from a young age. Moreover, volunteering and social action can also be seen as pathways to further youth engagement. Several studies have demonstrated that both the volunteers and the beneficiaries feel part of the community and are incentivised to become engaged in other aspects of democratic life.

The state of youth engagement

Looking at traditional indicators of engagement—"full" citizenship—youth participation appears to be in crisis. In their study of American young people, Flanagan and Levine (2010, cited in Shaw et al. 2014) have observed that, while young people today are more likely to volunteer than people of the same age in the 1970s, they are less likely to engage in nine out of ten other indicators of citizenship: belonging to a group, attending a religious service, being a union member, reading newspapers weekly, voting, being contacted by a political party, working on a community project, attending club meetings and believing people are trustworthy. A Flash Eurobarometer poll of 15-to-30-year-old Europeans noted decreases in participation in organisations and in cultural activities over earlier years (see Figure 5), while volunteering remained steady at one-quarter of respondents (European Commission 2015). A survey by Ipsos MORI (2013?) of Britons from four generations found that the inclination to trust other people is lower among young people than in the three preceding generations. Additionally, young Europeans' engagement with formal political processes is torpid: political party affiliation is declining and youth voter turnout is consistently low in many Member States (LSE 2013; Stolle and Hooghe 2004). On the surface, then, it appears that youth are apathetic and disinterested in civil and political engagement, which is perhaps unsurprising given the economic climate and pessimistic outlook for the future discussed earlier in this report, and which prompts questions around the state of democracy in Europe. A further look, however, reveals a more complex picture.

Figure 5



Source: European Commission 2015

Rather than being disenchanted with democracy, young people in Europe strongly support it. Surveys, interviews and focus groups with thousands young people in Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom show a keen interest in social engagement and in democracy: young Europeans' responses demonstrated they consistently and "wholeheartedly believe in democracy, in democratic values, and in democracy as a principle" (Cammaerts et al. 2014). If it is

not disenchantment with democracy as an idea that is driving low youth engagement, it must therefore be democracy as practised. The issue, then, is that young people perceive the formal institutions to be lacking, unrepresentative of them and of their needs. As Cammaerts et al. (2014) succinctly conclude in their study, most young people are "unhappy with the political offer" rather than disinterested in politics in general.

If young citizens are engaging in the social life of their democracies, but not in ways that align with traditional notions of citizen behaviour or through formal institutions, they must therefore be doing so through means that are not captured in official measurements or data. Research with young people has found that they are engaging in informal, "non-conventional" (Pleyers and Karbach 2014) networks, civil society organisations, grassroots social movements and online communities (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016; Cammaerts et al. 2014; Sherrod et al. 2002, cited in Shaw et al. 2014). Examples of this can be seen all over Europe. The *indignados* movement in Spain, which began as a spontaneous protest by a youth network, grew into a series of decentralised large- and small-scale actions by millions of people aimed at challenging the policies of the Spanish government and state during the worst point in the economic crisis. Much of the related debate and organising happened online; as several sources consulted for this report reflect, social media is becoming a critical channel for youth engagement (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016; Xenos et al. 2014). Clearly, the decline in or low levels of engagement across various traditional indicators does not reflect youth apathy. Rather, the measures do not capture changing modes of active citizenship among young people. It is therefore imperative to identify the barriers preventing young people from participating meaningfully, in order to be able to develop appropriate, empowering policy responses which can close this gap and reinforce European democracy.

The barriers to youth engagement

Given the importance of youth engagement to robust democratic life, it is essential to examine the barriers and their underlying drivers more deeply. Through reviewing the existing literature on the subject, obstacles can be grouped into three principal areas, as per Shaw et al.'s (2014) typology: prejudicial narratives about and representations of youth, material and psychosocial poverty and normative assumptions around what constitutes legitimate social participation.

Negative narratives around and representations of young people

Adult perceptions and representations of young people and their place in society as citizens have a fundamental influence on youth engagement. Negative stereotypes are widespread: in a 2006 Ipsos MORI poll exploring attitudes towards youth and crime in the United Kingdom, respondents thought nearly half (47 per cent) of all crimes in England and Wales were committed by "young offenders", i.e. those between 10 and 17 years of age; in reality, only 11.8 per cent of crimes were carried out by people in this age group. A more prosaic example of this pervasive discriminatory attitude can be found when beginning a search on Google.co.uk using the words "young people today": five of the top eight suggested autocompletes reveal negative prejudices about young people's character and behaviour (". . .are lazy and irresponsible", ". . .do not lead a healthy lifestyle", ". . .have it too easy", ". . .have become obsessed with social networking sites", ". . .waste too much time watching [TV]"). As Griffin (1993, in Roche 1999) summarises, youth in general are considered in through a lens of "dysfunction, deficit and deviance". What is clear is there is an entrenched, intensely negative perception of young people as a group, an attitude which considers young people to be problematic. This reinforces a narrative of difference which serves to marginalise them as social actors and, because they are marginalised by being portrayed as 'the other', they continue to be othered by being marginalised (Camino and Zeldin 2002; Roche 1999).

This discrimination is rooted in what the literature refers to as "adultism". In the context of this report, this refers to "the tendency of adults to control the nature and content of 'safe' notions of civic engagement" (Shaw et al. 2014). That is, narratives around and representations of youth in a particular way are a means for adults to exert power over young people, which determines who is a full citizen, who can accesses the benefits of citizenship and through what means. As such, using Marshall's (1950) concept of citizenship as a status bestowed on full members of a community, the status of "adult" is synonymous to that of "citizen". This is significant on all levels because adult assumptions about and attitudes towards young people inform everything from policy formation to young people's self-perception to laws which restrict youth participation and opportunities to realise their agency (Camino and Zeldin 2002). And such control allows hierarchies of power and other inequalities within adult society to be transmitted to young people. Age-based inequalities intersect and are compounded with other discriminated-against statuses such as gender, race or socioeconomic background—as will be discussed in detail

in the following subsection, those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and therefore less likely to participate from a young age, tend to remain disengaged.

This control, in the form of pervasive, pernicious negative stereotypes about young people, affects their self-perception. It creates an internalised barrier: being socialised to believe that autonomy and agency come with adult status one's entire life means young people adopt an inferior status. It is disempowering because they do not perceive themselves to be "agents of change", as an empowered citizen is (Checkoway and Gutierrez 2006). And believing that they are less capable obscures the impact of structural factors on their lives, as youth and as people with other discriminated against statuses (Parry 2006). Thus, there is an entire class of disempowered "good citizens of tomorrow in training" not exercising their right to participate meaningfully or reaching their full potential today (Pleyers and Karbach 2014).

Material and psychosocial poverty

Socioeconomic resources matter for youth engagement, both in the immediate and long term. A result of the lottery of one's birth, poorer people and those who are unemployed are less likely to participate because meeting more immediate needs, such as housing, energy and food, is the priority (Cammaerts et al. 2014; Ipsos MORI 2006). The impact of poverty on the ability to participate is compounded when combined with a person's age: as mentioned earlier, social and class disparities in engagement levels begin during the teenage years; those who have more opportunities to do so while young are more likely to continue to exhibit such behaviours later in life (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016; Cammaerts et al. 2014; Center for the Study of Social Policy 2011; Shaw et al. 2014). The socialising power of the formal educational institutional environment plays an important role in this. Unequal resource allocations to different schools and a lack of emphasis on citizenship education reinforce differentiated outcomes across socioeconomic groups. Young people with access to greater means—better education, higher income, more educated parents, more connections—are more likely to be exposed to positive participatory behaviours and are more likely to have access to relevant information and opportunities (Center for the Study of Social Policy 2011; Watts and Flanagan 2007). The socioeconomic context within which a young person resides—the home and school environments, in particular—then, is a causal driver of future engagement (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016). Behaviour modelled and experienced in youth is behaviour which will persist.

Worryingly, it is young Europeans 18 to 24 years old who are the most likely be at risk of poverty or social exclusion: in 2014, 33 per cent of women and nearly 31 per cent of men in this age bracket faced this risk, above the EU average of 25 per cent (Eurostat 2016b). And lack of employment increases this risk as well: two-thirds of people out of work were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2016b). This sort of disadvantage limits young people's opportunities, affects their confidence and increases their perception that engagement, such as in politics, is "difficult" or requires "specialist knowledge" that they lack (Cammaerts et al. 2014).

Material and psychosocial depravations thus limit the agency, empowerment and enjoyment of full citizenship to shape one's life in ways one sees fit. It also distorts society: young people from more socially advantaged groups are more likely to participate, be represented and have their views heard (Pleyers and Karbach 2014). It therefore reinforces particular ideas of who is a citizen, how they can participate in social life and how common resources and entitlements are allocated and used. The status quo remains: the marginalised tend to remain so and those in more privileged positions do so as well. If policymakers and civil society organisations aim to increase youth participation, a deep look at the drivers of poverty and attempts to reach those who are most vulnerable are essential.

Normative assumptions around what constitutes legitimate social participation

A final type of barrier to youth engagement is that of particular notions about what is considered to be legitimate engagement. As discussed previously, nearly all traditional modes of youth engagement that are measured are low or in decline; engagement with formal institutions is thought to lack real impact because of their perceived unresponsiveness to and unrepresentativeness of young people (Brandtzaeg et al. 2016; Cammaerts et al. 2014; Pleyers and Karbach 2014). Prescriptive notions that appropriate engagement serves to alienate young people and, because the measurements focus on a certain set of formal citizenship activities, the shape of youth engagement is not a accurately reflected in the data; this feeds into the perception that young people are apathetic and "problems" in need of intervention. However, as explored earlier, young people are active and interested, and alternative modes of engagement to top-down approaches—such as horizontal, experience-based, online or grassroots participation—provide more attractive and relevant options. Thus, it is rather a disjuncture between what the formal institutional offer in terms of engagement is and young people's preferences for participating in that process are.

Inflexible ideas of what is appropriate engagement is also rooted in adultism—the belief that youth, in Checkoway and Gutierrez's (2006) words, are "victims of society" rather than citizens with agency—and, as such, formal modes of engagement are generally designed by adults with the goal of reproducing existing institutions (LSE 2013; Shaw et al. 2014). What this then does is fail to recognise the possibilities of multiple, different pathways to engagement that reflect young people's own interests, view and desires. As Watts and Flanagan (2007) observe, the practices of community-based organisations "may actually marginalise some young people by insisting that they assimilate to a majority culture" and thereby serve as a barrier which excludes certain groups of young people. This is especially true of those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may engage in the life of their communities regularly, such as by providing care for children or the elderly, or in their own ways, but who remain unrecognised and effectively silenced by prevailing ideas of what constitutes a legitimate engagement activity.

Conclusion

Young people in Europe face daunting challenges: the 2008 global economic crisis and subsequent policy responses have had severe and disproportionate impacts on the opportunities available for young Europeans and on their hopes for the future (Sedghi and Arnett 2014; Stiglitz 2016). This evolving economic and psychosocial context has important implications for the health of Europe's democracies and, therefore, for those people and organisations who are involved in the development and implementation of social policy related to youth and youth engagement.

A healthy democracy is one in which all citizens are treated with dignity—in a way that recognises their agency in their own lives—and are empowered to and meaningfully included in robust debates about and decisions on the norms and values which regulate their lives. The evidence suggests that, while young Europeans strongly ascribe to the ideals of democracy, there is a perceived gap between democracy in theory and democracy as practiced (Cammaerts et al. 2014; LSE 2013). Addressing these imperfections and ensuring young people are treated as though they have the agency to and are provided the space within which to contribute to the social life of their democracies—as Marshall (1950) writes, "the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live a life of a civilised being in accordance to the standards prevailing in the society"—is essential, for individual young people, their communities and society at large.

Looking at traditional indicators of active citizenship (belonging to a group, attending a religious service, union membership, reading newspapers weekly, voting, being contacted by a political party, working on a community project, attending club meetings and believing people are trustworthy (Flanagan and Levine 2010, cited in Shaw et al. 2014)), it appears that young Europeans are not engaging in society. As has been argued, however, rather than being apathetic, indolent, self-centred or distracted, young people not only believe in democratic society but are also very active in it; what is obscured is that the means to and preferences for engaging are shifting. In order to better inform policy and practice to influence youth participation and engagement, it is therefore essential to recognise these changes and respond to them appropriately. With this in mind, there are three salient areas of challenge for facilitating young people's participation that must be considered: negative narratives and representations of young people; material and psychosocial poverty; and normative assumptions about what constitutes legitimate social engagement.

Social discourses around young people as a "group" are intensely negative; young people are routinely framed as either dysfunctional, deficient or deviant (Griffin 1993, in Roche 1999), attitudes which are reflected in surveys of the general population and which are internalised by young people themselves (Ipsos MORI 2006; Parry 2006). Problematising youth marginalises them and denies their agency: someone who is perceived to be unable or unwilling to conform to certain norms is therefore not to be trusted to adequately understand their society or be able to act

appropriately to engage in it. While young people do benefit from environments with role modelling of positive social engagement (Center for the Study of Social Policy 2011; Watts and Flanagan 2007), such support and access is neither equally available nor necessarily done in ways that are empowering. To empower others is to assist in facilitating the realisation of their own agency; in this context, it is not simply demonstrating what constitutes appropriate social engagement behaviours—a privilege which is anyway more likely for economically and socially advantaged youth. Those who are confronted with economic and psychosocial deprivations are at a clear disadvantage; in addition to lacking these supportive networks, their time can be focused on fulfilling more immediate needs and their modes of social engagement are likely to not even be recognised as such (Cammaerts et al. 2014).

A final point, then, is that what is considered to *be* social engagement needs to be re-examined. Youth who are poor are doubly disadvantaged and the fact that formal institutions generally represent those in a position of privilege perpetuates that disadvantage. Exclusion breeds exclusion. It is therefore incumbent upon policymakers and practitioners focused on youth engagement to recognise this and to seek to include and empower youth, so they may define and make the changes they seek through social engagement in meaningful, impactful ways. Empowerment is essential to Marshall's ideal of full citizenship, and is an attribute without which democratic life cannot truly flourish.

Volunteers from Volunteering Matters, GLL, PRCBC during Volonteurope's 25th Annual Conference.

Recommendations

1. Recognise young people as a heterogeneous group with different needs, resources, abilities and interests, both across Europe and within countries.

2. Sensitise NGO staff, civil servants and politicians to concepts such as empowerment, agency and social justice, to enable them to understand their role in facilitating young people's ability to become full citizens.

3. Undertake a contextual analysis of the drivers of the state of engagement among the target group, community or area.

4. Ensure policies and programmes address these underlying drivers of exclusion, rather than only the symptoms, and focus on structural factors, in addition to individual beneficiaries.

5. Ensure policies, programmes and communications represent and approach young people positively and in an empowering way, rather than as a problem requiring intervention.

6. Interrogate current approaches to engagement (such as the Structured Dialogue at EU level) and ensure young stakeholders—especially the most marginalised and hardest to reach—are consulted on and included in decisions around policy and programmatic design. This may uncover new routes to participation which are more appealing to and authentic for young people.

7. Include monitoring of policies and programmes against meaningful change indicators from the beginning and apply lessons learned to future endeavours. Quality is not the scope of a project, but rather its effect on desired outcomes.

8. Ensure data collection includes measurements of alternative forms of engagement.

9. Identify and incorporate more pathways to include the voice of young people in the policy making process, with particular emphasis on marginalised groups.

10. Lower the EU and national voting age to 16.

11. Allocate more resources for grassroots organisations, neighbourhood groups and other civil society organisations.

12. Fund citizenship education at school level as well as in informal settings.

13. Increase the provision of Erasmus+ funding for fostering youth participation and mobility, with particular attention on reaching marginalised groups.

14. Acknowledge that some youth may not want to engage, and that this is an acceptable expression of agency as well.

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Volunteers from Générations Cobayes, Volunteering Matters, Young Volunteers in Action and Imago Mundi during Volonteurope's 25th Conference.

Annexes

Annexe A:
Income growth (in euros) by quintile, EU-28 countries, 2013-2014

Member state	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Bulgaria	7.3	12.3	12.8	11.6	11.0
Romania	–4.5	3.5	6.1	5.4	4.6
Latvia	8.8	9.4	10.7	9.5	11.1
Lithuania	6.1	4.9	3.9	5.7	6.8
Poland	2.7	3.0	2.8	3.3	3.4
Estonia	0.2	5.0	9.9	13.6	17.2
Hungary	–2.0	–1.7	–0.6	0.1	1.1
Slovakia	–1.0	0.6	0.6	0.4	8.3
Czech Republic	–2.8	–1.5	–1.2	–1.9	0.1
Portugal	–3.6	–2.1	0.6	0.3	–0.3
Greece	–1.7	–4.6	–7.0	–5.5	–3.4
Malta	8.3	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.5
Spain	–7.8	–4.0	–2.2	–0.2	–0.2
Slovenia	–0.6	0.0	0.5	1.3	2.3
Italy	–1.2	1.0	0.4	1.1	–0.2
Cyprus	–9.0	–9.8	–8.5	–7.6	–0.4
Germany	–9.6	0.6	1.4	2.3	0.7
France	1.8	0.4	0.6	0.2	–2.6
Belgium	0.4	–0.1	0.8	1.5	0.4
United Kingdom	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Austria	9.1	5.1	5.1	4.9	9.6
Finland	0.3	0.0	1.2	1.1	1.1
Netherlands	–4.7	–0.9	0.0	0.9	1.9
Sweden	0.6	2.2	2.4	3.4	3.8
Ireland	–1.4	1.9	2.0	1.1	4.1
Denmark	10.4	3.9	3.7	4.0	7.3
Luxembourg	–0.4	5.1	3.4	3.4	–4.4
Poorer countries (unweighted average)	**0.0**	**1.4**	**2.2**	**2.7**	**4.3**
EU (unweighted average)	**0.2**	**1.6**	**2.1**	**2.5**	**3.5**

Source: Dauderstadt and Keltek (2016), p. 4.

Annexe B:
Annual seasonally-adjusted youth unemployment rates at first quarter (active population), EU-28** countries, 2007-2016*

Member state	**2007 (Q1)**	**2008 (Q1)**	**2009 (Q1)**	**2010 (Q1)**	**2011 (Q1)**	**2012 (Q1)**	**2013 (Q1)**	**2014 (Q1)**	**2015 (Q1)**	**2016 (Q1)**
Austria	9.2	8.5	9.8	10.0	9.4	9.4	9.2	10.9	9.2	11.4
Belgium	19.2	16.9	20.8	24.9	19.1	18.8	23.1	26.0	20.7	20.5
Bulgaria	14.8	13.1	12.8	20.4	25.1	28.8	27.6	25.1	21.9	17.4
Croatia	25.1	25.4	26.4	25.1	36.4	39.8	54.1	46.7	44.3	31.1
Cyprus	10.1	10.3	9.6	18.8	19.2	25.3	36.0	37.9	35.3	29.2
Czech Republic	12.1	10.3	13.1	19.8	17.4	19.3	19.3	16.9	14.3	10.1
Denmark	7.2	7.5	10.2	14.0	13.9	14.8	13.1	13.7	10.7	11.2
Estonia	10.9	8.2	22.8	38.1	20.5	22.0	20.4	17.9	13.4	14.6
EU-28**	16.4	15.1	18.9	21.4	21.3	22.9	23.9	23.2	20.9	19.2
Finland	17.3	15.9	18.3	21.7	20.4	19.5	19.6	20.2	21.8	21.4
France	21.0	17.7	22.8	23.3	23.3	23.0	25.7	23.8	24.8	24.7
Germany	12.3	10.9	10.9	10.7	8.9	8.1	7.7	8.0	7.2	7.2
Greece	24.9	22.7	25.2	30.2	40.0	52.7	59.9	56.6	51.6	50.5
Hungary	18.0	19.1	24.0	27.2	25.7	28.3	28.4	21.5	19.0	14.1
Ireland	8.8	10.2	20.2	26.7	28.7	30.8	27.7	26.2	22.2	17.3
Italy	19.2	20.2	24.0	27.3	27.6	34.0	39.3	43.3	41.6	38.1
Latvia	11.2	10.2	28.6	40.2	31.8	30.0	23.8	19.5	16.3	16.5
Lithuania	9.1	9.1	23.7	36.0	33.3	29.8	21.7	20.5	18.4	13.9
Luxembourg	15.8	15.5	18.4	16.2	14.6	18.3	18.5	18.1	18.4	17.6
Malta	15.6	12.3	13.1	13.4	14.6	14.0	12.1	14.0	10.2	9.7

Netherlands	9.5	8.5	9.1	11.4	9.9	11.5	12.5	13.6	11.2	11.3
Poland	24.4	17.6	17.9	23.1	25.1	26.2	27.7	25.6	21.7	18.6
Portugal	22.2	20.7	24.4	27.4	27.2	35.0	40.6	36.0	33.0	30.0
Slovakia	21.1	19.4	22.7	33.9	33.6	33.4	34.0	31.9	26.3	24.0
Slovenia	10.2	11.4	12.9	13.3	16.9	17.1	21.3	21.8	17.3	16.0
Spain	17.4	20.6	34.5	40.0	44.5	50.9	55.9	54.8	50.6	46.1
Sweden	19.8	18.9	22.4	26.1	22.8	22.6	24.2	23.3	21.2	19.5
United Kingdom	14.5	13.8	18.0	20.2	20.2	22.1	20.7	18.8	15.5	13.3

*Note 1: Youth refers to those aged 15 to 24, inclusive, as per Eurostat's parameters.

**Note 2: Data for Romania was not available.

Source: Eurostat Data Explorer

Case Studies and tools

Case Study: Générations Cobayes

Générations Cobayes is a French organisation which seeks to educate 18-to-35-year-olds about the links between chemicals in the environment and their health.

Générations Cobayes' fight began in 2008, following the deeply shocking death of 19-year-old student from cancer. Interviewing a number of scientists in an attempt to understand how it is possible to die so young from this disease, the student's friends found that we are constantly exposed—from before birth, even—to harmful chemicals found in the day-to-day objects around us in our environment, such as food, clothes and cosmetics.

This group of friends realised that many people were unaware of the effects of their daily consumption of various chemical pollutants on their health and the consequent increased likelihood of developing a chronic disease. In order to take action, they founded an organisation to sensitise young people around them about endocrine disruptors and other hidden pollutants; in 2013, this became Générations Cobayes. At this point, the organisation adopted a new, inclusive governance structure. Young people are able to volunteer flexibly, depending on the project and on their availability; they also contribute to project design and to Générations Cobayes' strategic direction. They are at the heart of these processes because their role is to be community spokespeople.

Générations Cobayes has also adapted its communications style, turning this sad subject into an opportunity to promote solutions adapted to young people's habits, especially via online communities. They used the power of the internet to broadcast campaigns such as an online quiz called "*Protège tes hormones*" ("Protect Your Hormones"). It was a real success: they expected 10,000 participants and they had 40,000. At the end of this online event, they asked people to provide their email addresses, in order to receive information about their consumption and improve their quiz score. They collected 40,000 emails and started creating, little by little, a real community.

Générations Cobayes subsequently conducted a "Tour de France" in order to meet this community, spending a week in each of France's 15 main cities, organising conferences, workshops, meetings and short trainings on how to talk about this subject and raise awareness. They managed to engage 1000 young people all over the country. The key to our success has been enabling young people to sensitise other young people.

Today, thanks to the involvement of all their volunteers, they have created a community of more than 50,000 young people. They have piloted more than 20 projects and taken more than 100 different actions in the 10 biggest cities in France, and through this have shared solutions for improving young people's health.

Case Study: Emfasis

Emfasis Foundation is a Greek civil society organisation established in Athens in 2013. In recent years, with the economic and refugee crisis in Europe the number of vulnerable groups who seek support has increased dramatically - particularly in Greece. Despite this growing crisis, governmental monetary support is very limited and is currently shrinking.

On June of 2013 the founders of Emfasis Foundation, motivated by the impact of the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Greece, took the initiative to assemble a team of volunteers willing to assist those living on the streets, using any means they could afford. Step by step, this team gradually grew, and was staffed with professional and experienced volunteers and through many adventures, today it boasts a team of 140 volunteers and supporters. Since its beginning Emfasis has completed nine special projects, which have had a direct positive impact on humans in need. After three years of activities the volunteers have completed 76,100 hours in total of daily support and relief towards the less privileged in the streets, and around 3,500 fellow humans have benefited from Emphasis's efforts – with these numbers increasing day by day.

Emfasis Foundation uses the street work methodology in order to approach people living in the streets or in street situation.

The engagement of young people in these activities fosters further social engagement in their lives making them more empathetic and more active citizens.

An interesting case study is the case of T., a young man with no family support, who was in prison for years and was addicted to drugs. He joined a detoxification program with an organisation called KETHEA, and with the support of both Emfasis and another organisation called PRAXIS he managed to quit drugs. Before going to prison he used to sell pens for a living. After a short period following the rehabilitation he was offered accommodation in a temporary housing for homeless youth run by KETHEA and wanted to find a job. T. was really young and it was easy for the volunteers to connect and build a relationship based on trust as they were of a similar age and they were able to share communication on common ground.

The first approach to T. happened in May, 2016, on a small street near the centre of

Athens during a street work shift. He was half-asleep when two young Emfasis street workers approached him. He talked to the volunteers about his life and he asked for some socks and underwear, which were given to him the next day during a Mobile Support Unit shift.
T. mentioned that he needed to talk to people who were clean from drugs (as he used to interact with young drug users and he wanted to now avoid them) and he mentioned that it gave him hope seeing that young people were interested in him, because he felt alone there.

The goal of Emfasis street workers – and of Emfasis – is to help people believe in themselves and take action towards a better life-style. That is not always easy, but the fact that most of our street workers are young and full of energy is helpful. The benefits are not only for the beneficiaries, but also for the volunteers, as taking part in this work will lead to more involvement in further social actions and feeling part of their community while helping others developing solidarity.

Case Study: Ufolep

The Union Française des Oeuvres Laïques d'Education Physique, UFOLEP, was founded in 1928 as part of the French organisation La Ligue de l'enseignement. UFOLEP promotes sport and physical activity also as a vehicle to address social issues in French society. In 2013 it launched a programme to address the structural inequality that prevents young girls accessing sport and physical activities, in particular reaching girls from migrant communities. Studies have demonstrated that the absence of girls from the practice of sport is one factor leading to their invisibility in the life of their community and neighbourhood.

The actions taken were guided by a qualitative study based on interviews and participatory observation conducted by UFOLEP in collaboration with the sociologist Haïfa Tlili from Paris Descartes University.

The study explored the perception of young women from migrant communities living in the outskirt of six French cities: the area of Marrais in Calais, the area of des Pyramides in Evry, Lile, the 3ème

arrondissement of Marseille and the area of Petit Bard in Montepellier. While in St Ouen the study was conducted with girls from the Llycée Auguste Blanqui.

The study focused on understanding the ways in which involvement in sporting activities reflects active citizenship as well as identifying the barriers encountered by those wishing to participate in sports – especially for girls. The methodology used in the study put the young girls at the centre of the research, empowering them. The methodology included listening directly to their opinions and needs and allowing them to identify solutions. It was identified that the barriers were mainly structural, and that once they were removed and girls' access to sport was fostered, the girls felt more engaged with their society and were seen as more visible in their neighbourhood.

Case Study: Volunteering Matters, WASSUP

Women Against Sexual Exploitation and Violence Speak UP (WASSUP) is a peer-led support group for women in Ipswich who have experienced gender-based violence. The project was set up in 2012 by a small group of young black or minority ethnic (BME) women with the support of the UK charity Volunteering Matters.

The project offers vulnerable young women at risk of, or affected by, sexual exploitation with the support they need to access safe pathways and recover from their experiences. The project delivers workshops in schools and other settings to raise awareness of the early warning signs of exploitation. WASSUP is multi-cultural and aims to be accessible for young people who speak English as a second language.

The WASSUP group now consists of 17 young women who pioneer their concept. Six members of the group have been trained to deliver the 'Escape the Trap' course that has been used already to reach 70 young BME women. It aims to give these women the tools they need to lead safer lives and develop their confidence. In 2015-16, the WASSUP women delivered

five professional workshops. These workshops focused on changing professional responses to young BME female victims, and explored their communities' reluctance to report domestic or sexual exploitation.

As a result of their group work, they have developed a workshop and training package which is designed to be delivered in schools and to professionals to raise awareness of the issues of domestic abuse, trafficking and sexual violence within communities and to help to create safer pathways of reporting these crimes and improving professional's practice.

Case Study: LGL

LGBT* people in Lithuania continue to face discrimination and live in an unfriendly environment. The Fundamental Rights Agency's LGBT Survey of 2012 shows that 61% of LGBT people in Lithuania feel discriminated or harassed in their everyday life. Discrimination and openly homophobic law amendments - for example the "gay propaganda" law that prevents the organisation from talking about sexuality to minors - affect LGBT youth by fostering a hostile social climate.

The national LGBT* Rights Organisation LGL, Lithuanian Gay League, is a national non-governmental organisation working in the field of LGBT* human rights. In addition to carrying out advocacy and lobbying for better conditions and laws for the Lithuanian LGBT* community, the organisation puts community building activities at the centre of its activities. Firstly, LGL seeks to support a network of LGBT* youth and secondly it empowers them to act and to stand up for their rights.

The International LGBT* festival Baltic Pride 2016, held in Vilnius from 13th to 19th June 2016, organised by LGL, was a great success in a number of ways. Not only did the event gather together more than fifty volunteers from all over the world, it hosted for the first time a volunteer-led community project - Pride House.

The Pride House was inspired and fully implemented by young people, and during the days of Baltic Pride it became the place in Vilnius where culture, art and entertainment came together, with a wide variety of events.

During the Baltic Pride week the volunteers created a Rainbow InfoPoint in the cosy jazz bar that had agreed to host the Pride House. Each day they welcomed visitors, provided them with information about the festival and fundraised by selling festival merchandise to support the activities of LGL for the promotion of LGBT* rights in Lithuania.

During the Pride week the young people involved, in cooperation with LGL's local and international partners, organised seven workshops on LGBTQI issues. The workshops were completely youth-led as they were in charge of everything from generating ideas to organising the logistics.

Some of the workshops were led by volunteers and gave them an opportunity to present their work to the wider international audience that attended the Baltic Pride events.

The workshop "Beyond gender binarism: between he and she" is a good example: during the event two of LGL's volunteers introduced concept of neutral pronouns and presented their project around the creation of a neutral pronoun in the Lithuanian language. The event was packed, and after the workshop several interested people joined the Committee for Neutral Forms in Lithuanian Language and continued working on the proposal for the Lithuanian language committee.

Another event that attracted many attendees was the "Bisex speed-dating", a meeting organised by a group of bisexual activists. People had a chance to meet, talk and also listen to testimonies of Lithuanian bisexual youth. The interest in the event inspired the young people to go further and in September they organised another event called "Queer speed-dating".
The Pride House also hosted a photo exhibition called "Five years of struggle," showing the effects of homophobia on modern Russian society.

All in all, this project not only helped to create a sense of community and togetherness, but also raised awareness of LGBT* issues and attracted allies. The young activists had a unique opportunity to engage in the LGBT* rights movement, and, with the support of LGL's volunteer coordinator, practise their skills and implement different ideas. According to them– this was a very inspiring and empowering experience.

British Red Cross Case Study:

The British Red Cross Society's Generation Digital project builds older volunteers' skills using digital technology. Many of our older volunteers find keeping on top of the rapid technological shifts daunting and feel overwhelmed when it comes to using technology in an appropriate, safe and secure way.

The Generation Digital project recruits young volunteers, aged 15 to 25, who have grown up using digital technology and engages them to help bridge the digital divide by sharing their skills and expertise with volunteers over 50 years old. We also hope that, by bridging this gap, our younger and older volunteers will be better able to communicate and overcome some of the challenges that prevent the young and the old from finding common ground.

"It feels good to be able to help. Sometimes I find it hard talking to old people but doing this made it easy as we had something to talk about."
– Sue, age 17

The project is based in Newcastle and London, UK, and will soon roll out in Scotland. The project, which is ongoing until July 2017, aims to work with 12 young volunteers who will also cascade and train others to deliver the support to 200 older volunteers throughout the time of the programme. One-to-one and group training takes place on the side in meetings, at events or in more formal sessions, but access to project-related resource will increase through the development of simple instruction videos and digital voice-only recordings. We plan to run "tea parties" over the next few months, where we will offer the opportunity for older volunteers to come along and ask questions and access support; our young volunteers thought that in a more informal environment older people may feel more comfortable asking questions that may normally have made them feel embarrassed.

"It was so simple to upload that picture, I had no idea and had been really scared to do it in case I did something wrong. However, John talked me through it and let me practise lots without getting frustrated, making it so much easier."
– Jane, age 63

Young people have been involved through all stages of the project, designing and developing the activities. They are also the sole deliverers of this programme, with support from adults if required, which has ensured a clear understanding of how to progress it. As this programme is aimed at and utilising skills that young people already possess, engagement has been positive, mainly due to their confidence in this subject area.

Significant as well is that that the young people involved have taken ownership of the programme from its early stages, which has ensured that they felt confident in the support they were able to offer. The programme involves many different levels of engagement, which allows variety and flexibility and ensures that young people

can give as much time to the programme as is relevant to them.
This project has helped identify some key aspects when engaging with young people:

1. Being flexible around hours ensures young people can fit a programme into their busy and active lives.

2. Allowing young people the chance to use skills that they feel confident with ensures that the topic is not too challenging to participate in.

3. Supporting young people to take ownership of the programme and offering a safe and secure environment in which to undertake a programme allows young people to gain invaluable life skills

Tool:

Edugame, the Multilayered Democracy Game

The International Academy for Education and Democracy, IAED and Association for World Education, AWE, have developed the Globalisation and Democracy Edu-game, also called the Multilayered Democracy Game**,** a tool for development and learning transnational democracy.

The tool, used for example by the Danish Organisation Nyt Europa, enables young people to relate to the issues of globalisation and democracy. Using this board game the participants learn to relate to the globalised world without the national perspective filter. Participants depart from their own challenges at all levels and exchange their perspectives. It opens for a variety of understanding of global and following negotiations.

In the age of information and globalisation we have four arenas with direct influence in our lives: 1) Local 2) National or State; 3) Regional or Federal; 4) Global. The arrangement of the board reflects these dimensions. The four arenas are arranged symmetrically in relation to the point of view of the brain.

In the first phase of the game the participants stand around the board and look at the Challenge cards. The participants discuss what the cards mean to them and each other to understand what the combination of the title and image represents. They then put on a side the cards that they feel irrelevant and use blank

cards to add important themes not represented on the premade cards. Participants place each card in the most relevant of the four fields representing political arenas.

In the second phase the participants turn to the second set of cards, the Institutions or Power cards, which they have to position near the respective challenge. In phase three the participants discuss how citizens can influence political decisions. The discussion is led using the Participation cards. The participants discuss on the basis of the two first phases of the game how citizens can have an impact on challenges and how they can control or influence institutions at the four levels. This phase should end with the group summing up its diagnosis of democracy at each of the four levels.