

"No Education, No Vote", a mandatory syllabus on EU affairs for European students was the most voted proposal at YEYS 2019



A mandatory syllabus on European politics to increase knowledge of citizens before casting their ballots was the most voted proposal in the 2019 edition of Your Europe, Your Say (YEYS), the youth event organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on 21-22 March 2019. This initiative and three other selected proposals, focused on the use of new technologies and social media to increase participation in EU elections, will be sent to the European Parliament for their consideration.

After 2 days of lively discussions and debates, the 99 high-school students aged 16-17 selected for YEYS 2019 presented 10 recommendations during a final plenary session. Education and social media were in the spotlight, and a lot of projects combined online platforms and real life meetings, to (re)connect the civil society with policy-makers. The 4 most voted proposals were:

1. **No Education, No Vote**, a project of mandatory syllabus for schools all across Europe with 3 branches: practical, with visits to EU institutions; theory, with tests and presentations; and an interactive platform with quizzes and videos.
2. **EU&U.EU**, a website summarizing information on EU and EU elections to increase transparency and awareness among citizens with an intensive use of social media and multimedia contents.
3. (ex-aequo) **Europe E-VOTE**, a proposal to transform election day in a national holiday and to promote electronic voting and **From You to EU**, an initiative to connect social movements with politicians and allowing them to work together to find solutions.

The other proposals presented by the students were:

#Insta (nt) vote: a proposal to improve EU social media accounts performance by including high quality content specifically addressed to young people, such as short videos and influencers comments as a way to increase awareness and participation.

Network of Young Europeans, a project addressed to inform on EU action and limits, to connect diverse people all across Europe and to inspire the debate through an Internet platform to organise projects and publish their outcome.

Find(ing) your voice, a project with two sections: a summit that would take place 3 times per year with a face to face dialogue and different activities with the participation of young Europeans and politicians; and a website with interactive contents and information.

Shape your future – express yourself, a project consisting in a website that would allow posting opinions on several topics targeting young people from under 26. Users could like or dislike the opinions and the most popular ones would be presented at the European Parliament.

SharEU, an APP that could be used to connect social movements to EU institutions, with specialized moderators that would submit to the European Parliament a monthly report on the initiatives posted, creating thus a closer link to the people.

Voices worth being heard, a platform where initiatives and speeches could be promoted to encourage voters to engage and fight for their own ideas. Audience would select the initiatives to be presented to the European Parliament.

Students were welcomed by **Luca Jahier**, EESC President, who said: *We have to follow the example of Greta Thunberg, who was capable to mobilise a great number in a short time using a direct language. Please engage in this fight, be provocative, as you are fighting not only for your own future, but also for our future.* **Isabel Caño**, EESC Vice-President for communication, closed the event with these remarks: *We are proud to share your ideas, your dreams, your enthusiasm and your solutions in an institution like the EESC, where we all learn to negotiate as a way to reach consensus.* **Irini Pari**, EESC member who initiated YEYS in 2010, added: *Every challenge is an opportunity, and you have proven it to us. Don't let fear take control, just open your wings. Europe is yours and the world is yours.*

Background:

Students were invited to share ideas about the **2019 European elections** and make proposals on specific key questions:

- How can we strengthen representative democracy in the future?
- What kind of political engagement exists beyond the European elections, and how would you take part in it?
- What in your view should be done to increase voter participation in the EP elections?

The 33 schools were selected to participate in this initiative using an electronic name picker. One school from each of the 28 EU Member States and five candidate countries (Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) will be involved. A record 1038 applications were received for this 10th anniversary.

Called "Your Europe, Your Say!" (YEYS), the event is organised by the EESC, the voice of civil society at European level, and is the Committee's flagship event for young people. Through this initiative, the EESC aims to ensure that

the views, experiences and ideas of the younger generation are taken on board in EU policy-making. The EESC wishes to maintain and develop its ties with British civil society beyond Brexit, and has therefore decided to engage British youth in this debate even though most likely they will not vote in the 2019 EU elections.

Further details about YEYS2019 are available on the [event's official](#) page.