

EU YOUTH DIALOGUES

Topics, questions and themes for the conversation

This *EU Youth Dialogues* project aims at drawing a partial yet living picture of the current situation of the European younger generations. It surveys their aspirations, state of mind, hopes, anxieties, world representations, civic involvement and personal ambitions. Based on a conversation between those who have chosen for themselves a path to political commitment, and those who preferred to stay away from politics, the *Dialogues* invite all participants to share their motives, explore their goals and renew their purposes. Participants who are politically committed should be able to justify why and how they came to politics and collective actions, while those who aren't would explain their own views and personal priorities, and why they desire remaining outside the field.

To drive the conversation, 4 topics will be recurring.

They have been chosen in order to help draw a map of the contemporary challenges that our societies have to meet at collective and individual levels. These questions are about the future as much as the present. They put in perspective the personal situations of the participants and invite them to connect with the broader issues at stakes in the world, from geopolitics to climate change. They represent the problems, causes and values that underpin politics but shouldn't be left only to those who became members of a party, a movement or a collective action.

The main concern driving the whole project is about upholding, consolidating and expanding democracy, at national and European levels.

1. Crisis mood – we emerged from two years of constraints and restrictions due to the pandemic, only to fall into the shock of the return of war on our continent. Prices are rising. There are tensions on the energy and food markets. The news cycle is ridden with war rhetoric and propaganda. And the pandemic already took a heavy toll on the mental stability, confidence in the future and hopes of many young Europeans.

How do you feel? What is your state of mind? How did the pandemic affect you, your loved ones, your studies, and your view of the world? What do you think about the

war and the changing geopolitical situation? Do you feel fear, anger, resentment, enthusiasm,...?

2. Changing atmospheres – in addition to these uncertainties, the current situation takes place in the context of a long-term ecological crisis, from climate change and the loss of biodiversity, to the various pollutions (air, water, plastics, etc.) affecting our environment. It challenges our beliefs in the sustainability of our economic model. It questions our production and consumption habits and our way of doing business. It impacts our society's organization and prospects.

How do you view the challenge of climate change? Do you share (or not) the feeling of eco-anxiety rising in the European youth? What do you think of the current economic model? What kind of employment are you seeking, or already occupying? Is it important for you that your work makes sense?

3. Evolving solidarities – Whether it's a geopolitical crisis or climate change sending droves of refugees towards the EU, or the growing gaps in the distribution of wealth, or the changes in our demographics and our family models, the very fabric of our societies has been increasingly challenged over the past decade. In many countries, the rights of minorities or the fundamental rights of women are under pressure, and sometimes critically threatened. We find ourselves increasingly torn, between the unwanted consequences of a more connected, interdependent world, and the dangerous call for egoistic or individualist priorities.

How do you see the cohesion of the society nowadays? How individualistic or cooperative do you see our world evolving? How much solidarity should we/do you provide to the migrants, the refugees, the poor, the elder, and all the vulnerable ones? Are our social security systems sustainable? Is there an acceptable level of inequalities? How should we address the persistent gender imbalances, from pay-gap to sexual violence?

4. Taking care of democracy – Most of these issues bring us to the one of individual implication in the life of the City. In other words to politics. Our liberal democracies seem to suffer from a lack of involvement from the citizens, paving the way to the rise of populist movements and radical attitudes. The institutional and civil worlds seem to drift apart from each other. General interest seems increasingly diluted in the claim of more particular interests, whether private, local, or sectarian; a phenomenon reinforced by the polarization brought by social networks practices.

Do you agree with how the world, or the society currently functions? What would you like to change? And what would you do to change it? Do you have a personal interest for, a prejudice against, or some experience in, politics? Are you involved in any collective action, whether partisan or cause-driven? What about the various levels of power, from local to national to European? Do you consider yourself as an active member of the civil society? Do social networks create a sufficiently viable environment for democracy?