

EUYD11 EU Youth Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. Conference Report



**Danish
Presidency**
Council of the
European Union



21-23 September 2025



**Danish
Presidency**
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Executive Summary

The EU Youth Conference (EUYC) took place in Copenhagen (Denmark) between 21st and 23rd September 2025 under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU and brought together 170 participants. The overarching thematic frame of the 11th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD11) was defined by the European Youth Goal number 1: Connecting EU with Youth.

The objective of the EUYC Copenhagen was to empower young people by giving them voice on the EU policymaking regarding the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme. To achieve this aim, youth delegates supported by ministry delegates and experts came together in working groups which created 23 recommendations linked to the following topics:

1. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and youth organisations
2. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and formal education
3. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and youth volunteering and solidarity
4. Horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme
5. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and the link to citizenship skills
6. Inclusion and accessibility of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme
7. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme addressing new challenges
8. Young people's awareness of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme

During the follow-on plenary session, an innovative online voting procedure allowed all youth delegates to use their smartphones to select one recommendation from each working group to be included in the final policy paper. This process ensured every youth delegate could influence the outcome and resulted in the following eight key recommendations being verbatim included in the final policy paper:

- Safeguarding a youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15%
- Distributing Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants before the start of the mobility
- Ensuring a dedicated space for youth volunteering and solidarity
- Addressing external challenges facing young people
- Creating dedicated Erasmus+ 2028-2034 funding stream for soft skills and citizenship skills
- Simplifying the application and reporting process for Erasmus+ 2028- 2034 opportunities
- Promoting preparedness, resilience and peacebuilding through Erasmus+ 2028-2034
- Introducing Erasmus+ Youth as a distinct section within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034

The policy paper is to be circulated among the key EU bodies, including the European Commission and the European Parliament's CULT Committee, to directly influence ongoing policy negotiations. This report summarizes the conference proceedings and participant perspectives collected via an online survey and includes a number of detailed information in the Annexes.



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A Starting Point: Setting the Stage

The EU Youth Conference (EUYC) took place in Copenhagen (Denmark) between 21st and 23rd September 2025 under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU and brought together 170 participants¹: 93 national youth delegates, 57 ministerial delegates, 5 IYGNO delegates², and 15 representatives of national and international stakeholders³. The overarching thematic frame of the 11th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD11) was defined by the European Youth Goal number 1: Connecting EU with Youth.



The aims of the EUYC Copenhagen were to empower young people by providing a platform for meaningful participation in EU policy making. Through structured dialogue and consultations, youth delegates shared their perspectives on the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme. The main ambition of the EUYC Copenhagen was to assist young people in formulating a policy paper on the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme, and to give them the opportunity to present and discuss their recommendations with decision makers.

¹ The participants came from all of the EU Member States, as well as from countries of the European Economic Area (all were invited, Iceland was represented), from the EU candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine), and from other non-EU countries (Armenia, Belarus, Kosovo).

² Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE-Europe), All Together in Dignity Fourth World (ATD Fourth World International), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organization (IGLYO) and World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

³ Representatives of the following stakeholders contributed to the EU Youth Conference Copenhagen: The Council of Europe (the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, and the CoE Advisory Council on Youth), the Danish Ministry of Children and Education, the Danish National Agency for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, Eurodesk, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the European Youth Forum.

The primary outcome of the conference was a policy paper summarizing young people's recommendations on the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme. This document is to be circulated within the Youth Working Party, the Education Committee, the European Commission and the European Parliament's CULT Committee. By directly engaging with decision-makers during the conference, youth delegates had the opportunity to present their views regarding ongoing policy negotiations, ensuring that their insights and recommendations help shape the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme.

This report summarises the proceedings and outcomes of the EUYC Copenhagen: final recommendations. In the Annexes, the report presents the full conference programme and the final *Policy paper on the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034*.

The Power of Diverse Voices: Backgrounds of Participants

The EUYC Copenhagen delegates brought a wide array of experiences. They were offered a chance to participate in an evaluation survey where several questions concerning the background of the various delegates were asked. This chapter summarises the results of the survey questions aimed at the identities of the participants, while the following chapters bring forward the results related to the EUYC Copenhagen proceedings, such as the voting or the dialogue with decision makers.



In total, 84 participants took part in the survey, constituting a response rate of 49%. It is important to keep this response rate in mind as it clearly shows that not all of the EUYC Copenhagen participants took up the opportunity to fill in the survey and all results only refer to those who kindly did. All shares are rounded to full numbers for easy reading.

All in all, only a small minority of survey respondents was aged 16-18 (4%), while most respondents were aged 19-25 (48%) and over 30 (27%), with a rather large group of respondents aged 26-30 (22%). In the group of the youth delegates, most were 19-25 years of age (68%) and 26-30-years old (25%). Most of the survey respondents were female (67%) with about 1% of those who identified as other gender. The gender distribution was, however, very different in the groups of youth delegates and the ministerial ones: there were 57% of women, 41% of men, and 2% of those who identified as “other gender” among the youth delegates; but there were 92% of women and only 8% of men among the ministerial delegates.

Overall, 49% of the survey respondents claim to have been victims of hate speech at some point in their lives and 56% of them claim to have been victims of discrimination at some point in their lives. When it comes to belonging to various minorities, survey respondents claimed to belong to the following ones:

- Ethnic minority: overall 13% (16% in the group of the youth delegates)
- Religious minority: overall 8% (11% in the group of the youth delegates)
- LGBT minority: overall 19% (18% in the group of the youth delegates)
- Linguistic minority: overall 7% (4% in the group of the youth delegates)
- Living with a disability: 0%
- Living with long-term health conditions: overall 6%, the same in the group of the youth delegates)
- Living in a rural or remote area: overall 30% (35% in the group of the youth delegates)

1% of the survey respondents fell into the category of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs), with 54% of respondents working full time, 31% working part time, and 54% being in full time education. About half of the survey respondents claimed to come from families with university backgrounds (49%), and only 4% of the survey participants were deeply worried about financial matters in their everyday lives. Lastly, 70% of respondents claimed to have been newcomers to the EUYD processes, with the EUYC Copenhagen being their first ever activity within the EUYD context.

A Journey through the EU Youth Conference Copenhagen: Innovations and Interactions

The EUYC Copenhagen was structured as a deliberative event focusing on bringing youth voices to the negotiations on the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme (see Annex 1 for the Conference programme). The deliberations took place in working groups of about 20 participants in order to allow for a genuine exchange of ideas and a smooth creation of final recommendations.

The EUYC Copenhagen was innovatively shaped by the young people even before it began through a choice of working group topics. Initially, the following 11 topics were available to the EUYC Copenhagen participants, focusing on specific aspects of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme:

1. EU Youth Programmes and youth organisations
2. EU Youth Programmes and formal education
3. EU Youth Programmes and sport
4. EU Youth Programmes and youth volunteering and solidarity
5. Horizontal priorities of the EU Youth Programmes
6. EU Youth Programmes and the link to citizenship skills
7. Inclusion and accessibility of the EU Youth Programmes
8. EU Youth Programmes addressing new challenges
9. Young people's awareness of the EU Youth Programmes
10. The geographical scope of the EU Youth Programmes
11. Administrative and technical barriers of the EU Youth Programmes

The EUYC Copenhagen delegates voiced their preferences on tackling the topics during the Conference registration process. Based on their preferences, 8 thematic working groups were set up to take place at the Conference. Reflecting the latest policy developments relating to the future EU Youth Programmes, namely the [Proposal for \(...\) establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034 \(...\)](#) published by the European Commission on 16 July 2025, the working group titles were updated to clearly link the deliberations towards the most recent policy draft. As a result, the following 8 thematic working groups took place during the EUYC Copenhagen:

1. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and youth organisations
2. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and formal education
3. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and youth volunteering and solidarity
4. Horizontal priorities of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme
5. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme and the link to citizenship skills
6. Inclusion and accessibility of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme
7. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme addressing new challenges
8. Young people's awareness of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme

The final evaluation survey showed that about 90% the EUYC Copenhagen participants considered these topics totally or to a large extent relevant for them personally, for young people they represented, and for young people generally.

Each of the working groups was supported by a background paper⁴ which summarised the topic, introduced related results of the EUYD11 consultations, outlined key information from other relevant documents, and provided the participants with further online reading sources. All working group themes were also summarised in the overall background paper called [EU Youth Conference in Denmark – The Future Erasmus+ 2028-2034](#).

Furthermore, all of the EUYC Copenhagen youth delegates were presented with relevant outcomes of the EUYD11 consultations by the European researchers supporting the EUYD11, and they were also provided with access to the key report [EUYD11 Results of the Consultation Phase: Connecting the EU with Youth](#). Lastly, [Handbook for delegates to the 2025 Copenhagen EU Youth Conference](#) was available to all participants, providing guidance on participant roles, code of conduct, and providing links to further reading materials mentioned above.



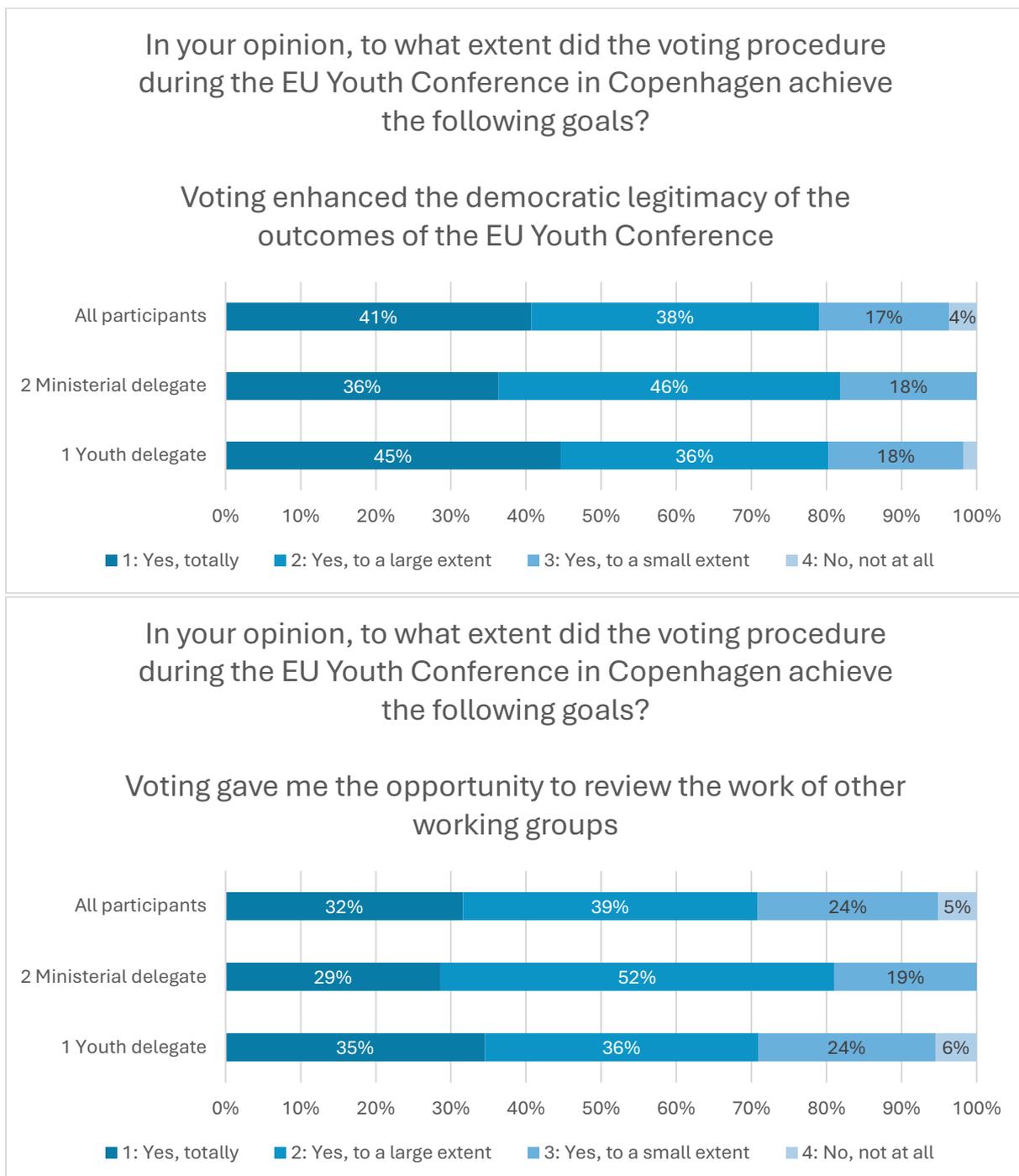
Each of the working groups was supported by a facilitator who encouraged all youth delegates to engage in deliberations and also ensured that the discussions stayed within the thematic focus of the working group. The deliberations started by identifying problems and issues in the given domain, proceeded by looking for solutions to these issues, and finally led to each working group creating up to 3 recommendations. The recommendations were created by the youth delegates using a template with clear guidance on format and length of the text. These were then shared with the group facilitators who submitted the recommendations to the conference team. The conference team proofread the recommendations and prepared them for the voting procedure.

⁴ You can find all working group background papers here: [EUYD11 EU Youth Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. Working Group Topics](#).

All in all, 23 recommendations were submitted by the working groups (one of them only submitted 2 recommendations, all others submitted the maximum of 3 recommendations). Coming together in the plenary session, each working group presented their recommendations one by one, and all youth delegates were asked to select 1 recommendation per working group to be included in the final policy paper. The selection process was conducted via an online voting platform at which youth delegates, using their smartphones, voted for the recommendation they wished to see in the final policy paper. This procedure led to selection of 8 recommendations which were verbatim included in the final policy paper (see Annex 2). The voting was an innovative procedure which enabled all youth delegates to influence the final results, and not only the results of their own working group. The final evaluation survey showed that 95% of the youth delegates voted on every recommendation, and 4% voted most of the times, with only 2% of youth delegates not voting at all.



Figure 1: General participant perspectives on the voting at EUYC Copenhagen, all participants and group comparison.



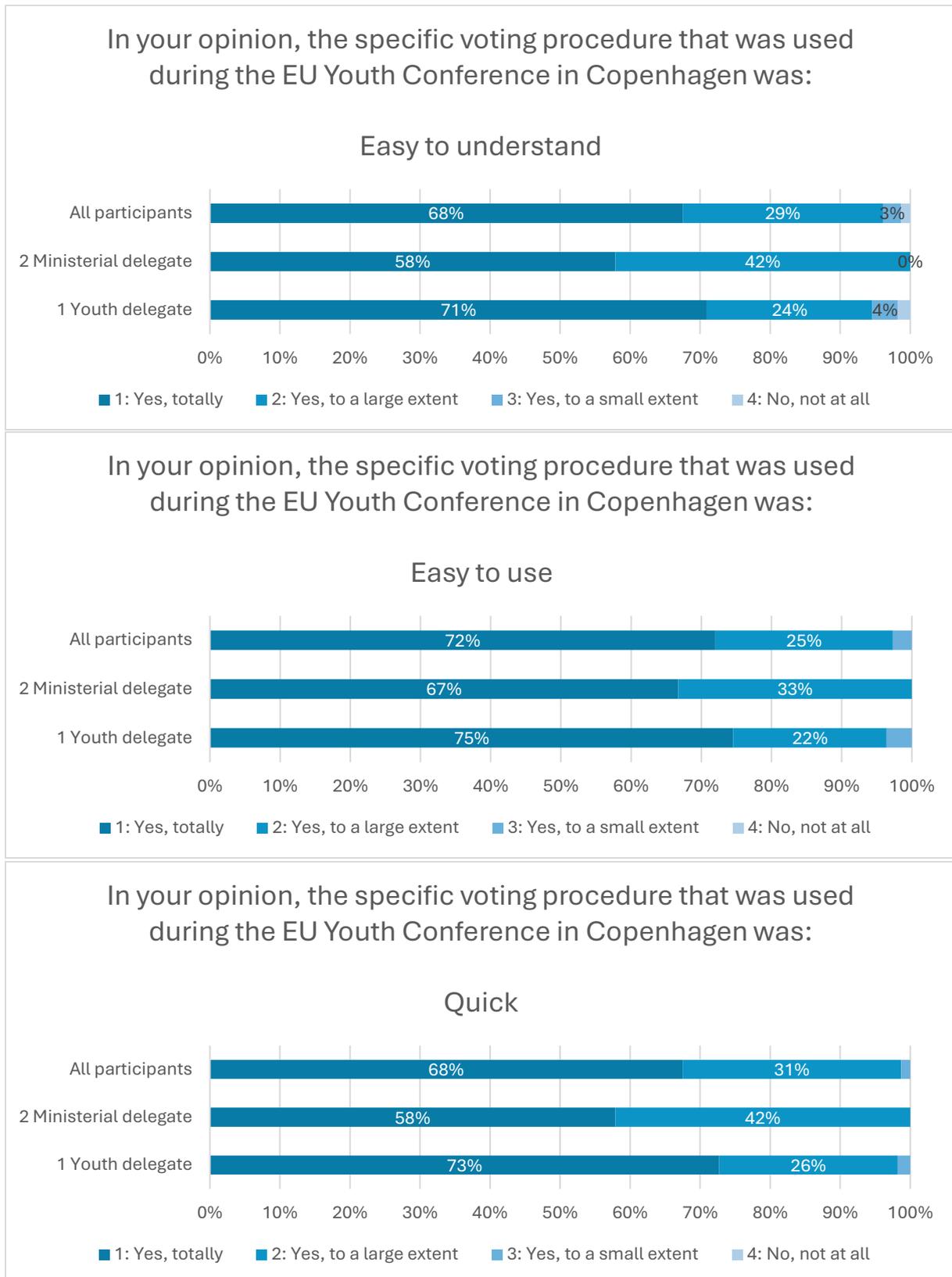
All participants were also asked their opinions on the effects of the voting procedure on the democratic legitimacy of the EUYC Copenhagen and on the empowerment of participants (see Figure 1). Among all participants, 79% believed totally or to a large extent that voting enhanced the democratic legitimacy of the outcomes, while 17% perceived the democratic legitimacy enhanced to a small extent, and 4% of the participants did not see any effects of voting on the

democratic legitimacy. Youth delegates were more enthusiastic about this than the ministerial delegates. When it comes to the level of influence over the final recommendations, 71% of all EUYC Copenhagen participants believe that voting gave them totally or to a large extent an opportunity to review the work of other groups, with 24% saying they only felt able to do that to a small extent and 5% who stated that they did not feel enabled at all. In this aspect, youth delegates are less enthusiastic than their ministerial colleagues.



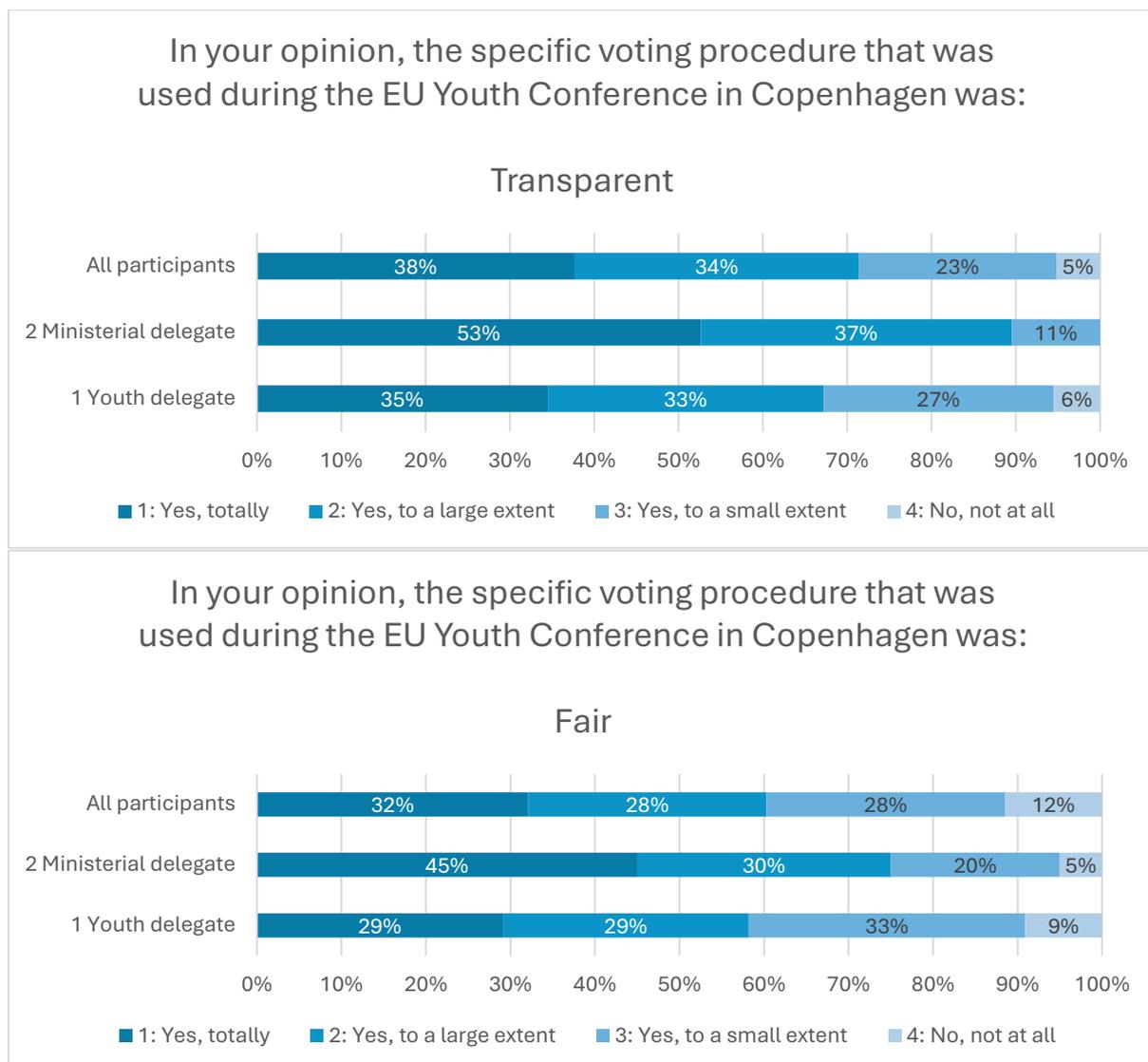
The survey also asked about the specific aspects of the voting procedure used at the EUYC Copenhagen (see Figure 2). All participants considered the voting to be easy to understand, easy to use, and quick. Youth delegates were slightly more enthusiastic about these aspects of the voting procedure than their ministerial colleagues.

Figure 2: Specific participant perspectives on the voting at the EUYC Copenhagen, all participants and group comparison, part I.



Furthermore (see Figure 3), 72% of the participants considered the voting to be totally or to a large extent transparent, with 23% considering the voting transparent to a small extent, and 5% not considering the voting transparent at all. 60% of all EUYC Copenhagen participants considered the specific voting procedure to be totally or to a large extent fair, 28% of them considered it to be fair to a small extent, and 12% did not consider it fair at all. In these two domains, the youth delegates were less enthusiastic than their ministerial colleagues.

Figure 3: Specific participant perspectives on the voting at the EUYC Copenhagen, all participants and group comparison, part II.



The EUYC Copenhagen participants were also encouraged to leave comments on the voting procedure, and these bring valuable insights especially on the aspects of transparency and fairness of the voting procedure. The suggestions from the participants included: showing all recommendations at once, so that youth delegates can consider all of them before voting (e.g.,

to avoid overlapping recommendations); allowing for more space to debate about the recommendations before voting (e.g., receiving the recommendations in full via email beforehand); introducing a countdown when casting votes to avoid young people missing their vote by accident; securing the voting system (e.g., making sure that only youth delegates can access; making sure that no one votes from more than one device; not allowing authors of any given recommendation to vote; making sure that country representation is balanced so that one country does not, in effect, have more votes than another simply by having more delegates present at the EUYC); refining voting rules (e.g., making sure that enough youth delegates support any given recommendation, and not including those with less than 50% support, for example); allowing to vote strictly on the basis of the merit of recommendations, not necessarily granting (only) one recommendation per working group (e.g., some working groups might have come up with two important recommendations); introduce a deliberation stage before voting (e.g., to merge or adjust the texts of recommendations based on a general debate across the working groups or in a plenary setting).



All of these suggestions show that young people have substantially thought about the voting process, and that they are trying to support its further refinement in the future. In specific terms, they suggest the following improvements:

- Preparations for the voting procedure should be refined in the following ways:
 - All recommendations from all working groups should be presented to all youth delegates before the voting procedure, ideally in such a setup that further negotiations and amendments of the recommendations are possible (e.g., to merge texts in case two working groups have similar recommendations).
 - Ample space for deliberations should be offered, once all of the recommendations put to vote are presented in order to allow all youth delegates to come to a conclusion based on as much debate as possible.
- Voting procedure should be refined in the following ways:

- Only youth delegates should be allowed to vote through a secure mechanism (e.g., a direct e-invite to vote received by youth delegates only and which ensures that only one vote per person can be cast).
- Countries should be represented fairly to avoid numbers of youth delegates from any given country to over- or under-represent their voices during the voting process.
- Voting process itself should be further elaborated on the to avoid situations in which any recommendation is voted in or out by a small fraction of votes.
- Limitations on an exact number of recommendations to be voted in from each working group should be lifted, so that youth delegates may vote for any recommendations they see fit (e.g., voting in two recommendations from one working group, and leaving out all recommendations from another working group).

A dialogue between youth delegates and the EU decision makers took place when the final set of recommendations was established through the voting process. Young people had an opportunity to bring up the recommendations to the attention of decision makers, and to debate them together.

Figure 4: General participant perspectives on the dialogues with decision-makers, youth delegates only.

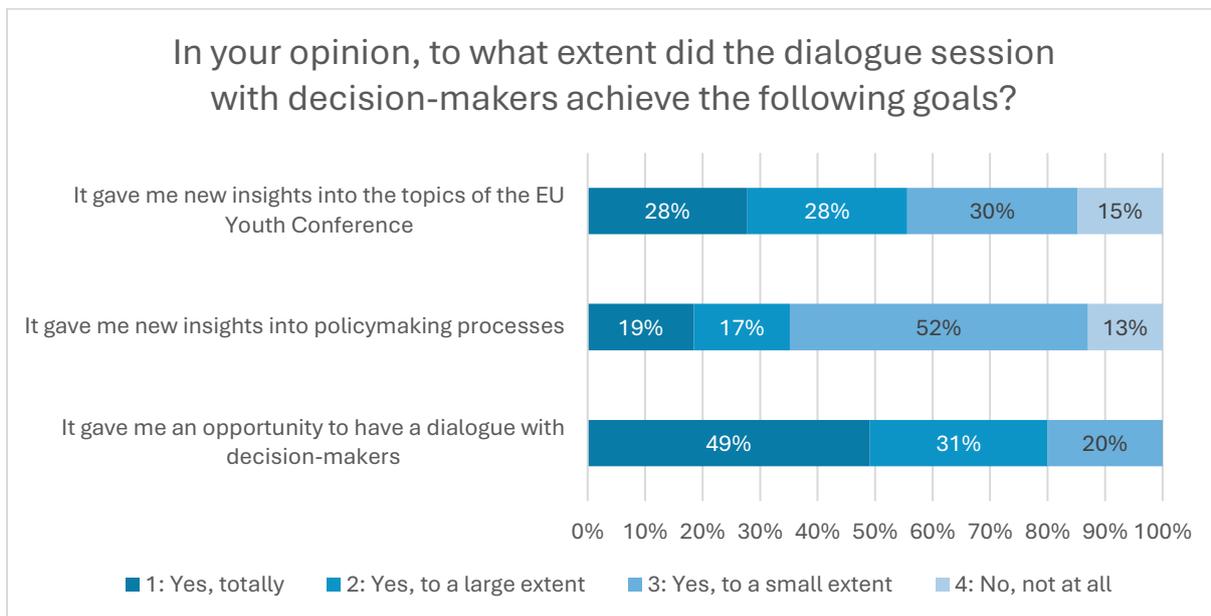


Figure 4 shows that 80% of youth delegates believe totally or to a large extent that they were provided with a real opportunity to talk directly to decision makers, while 20% of them felt this happened to a small extent only. Furthermore, only 56% of the youth delegates totally or strongly believe the dialogues gave them new insights into the topics of the EUYC Copenhagen, with 30% only gaining insights to a small extent, and 15% gaining no insights at all. Only 36% of youth delegates were totally or strongly convinced that they gained new insights into the policymaking processes, further 52% stated they gained such insights to a small extent, and 13% shared that

they gained no insights at all. These results show that the main goal was achieved to a large extent for a vast majority of the EUYC Copenhagen participants. Moreover, about a third gained strong insights into policymaking processes, and over half gained strong insights into the creation of the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 programme.

The Road to the Future: Conference Outcomes

Working groups were invited to submit up to three recommendations related to the topic of the working group, and aligning with formatting guidance, specifically: recommendation title of no more than 10 words, and description of no more than 100 words.

All in all, 7 working groups submitted 3 recommendations while 1 working group submitted only 2. Therefore, in total 23 recommendations were collected from the working groups and put to vote in plenary⁵ (see details above). The voting procedure resulted in selecting 8 recommendations which were subsequently included in the policy document of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU on the future Erasmus+ 2028-2034 (see Annex 2). The final 8 recommendations are as follows:

Safeguarding a youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15%

Volunteer-led youth organisations struggle accessing Erasmus+, because of lack of resources and capacities. A strong youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15% is imperative to safeguard the youth-led and grassroots nature of youth organisations. This youth chapter should include micro grants and youth operating grants. Furthermore, it should be accessible to democratically elected youth organisations from EU candidate countries.

Distributing Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants before the start of the mobility

According to the ESN survey V, two thirds of students are receiving their mobility grants after the start of the mobility opportunity. This creates and reinforces the economic disparege between students. Therefore, higher education institutions should ensure the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants are distributed to students before the start of their mobility.

Ensuring a dedicated space for youth volunteering and solidarity

A dedicated space should encompass the current core values of the European Solidarity Corps while distinguishing it from other skill-building mechanisms primarily focused on the labour

⁵ All submitted recommendations were proofread and minor language refinements were conducted to make sure the texts are written in correct and unambiguous British English.

market and recognising the importance of experiences acquired through volunteering for personal development and communities. This could be achieved through a dedicated Key Action Point, pillar, or any other method that ensures significant priority and relevance, potentially being part of a Youth Chapter of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This is in order for volunteering and solidarity to receive earmarked funding, attention and structural equality within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034, allowing it to become an umbrella target for budget allocation for diverse activities.

Addressing external challenges facing young people

We recommend keeping the existing Erasmus+ priorities as they are highly relevant, with some updates. Young people face a dynamic world where flexibility, trust, and active engagement are crucial. They are facing increasing disinformation and global instability. We recommend that Erasmus+ 2028–2034 prioritises adaptability as a broad horizontal priority which in programs can be adjusted and accurate to the need of youth civic society, ensuring young people can adapt and act effectively. This should be done by preparing youth workers, strengthening youth organisations, and creating dedicated funding, supporting standardisation of youth infrastructure, youth work and youth information.

Creating dedicated Erasmus+ 2028-2034 funding stream for soft skills and citizenship skills

While the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 rightly prioritises professional skills, a separate funding line must ensure sustained investment in soft skills and non-formal education. Citizenship skills — e.g. critical thinking, democratic participation, intercultural dialogue — cannot be fully developed through professional training alone. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 should therefore allocate specific funding for innovative initiatives such as digital citizenship games, non-formal traveling exchanges, and other initiatives that enable European youth to practice citizenship through intercultural cooperation. This balance safeguards European goals of creating active, responsible citizens alongside skilled professionals.

Simplifying the application and reporting process for Erasmus+ 2028-2034 opportunities

Young people face barriers in applying for Erasmus+ opportunities due to the complicated application process. Therefore, we recommend the mandatory provision of native plain language in all materials, including reporting materials. Furthermore, we recommend that the application and reporting process is individualised and simplified and proportionate to grant-size. This should be done by utilising less complicated forms, mentoring and oral application options as well as a support point, that can be accessed by phone and by e-mail to support individuals' needs. This can lower entry barriers for youth-led and grassroots organisations and individuals as well as make Erasmus+ accessible beyond large institutions.



Promoting preparedness, resilience and peacebuilding through Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Nowadays, global conflicts and crises are affecting youth in both Europe and abroad. Young people and Europe are unprepared to face these crises. Therefore, we recommend more focus on resilience and peacebuilding within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This should be done by (a) introducing a dedicated program priority that enables access for youth organisations and volunteers to training for the development of skills necessary to address upcoming threats (b) strengthening access to the programs in neighbouring countries affected by extremism, shrinking civic spaces and other crises in order to create more resilient democracies on our borders.

Introducing Erasmus+ Youth as a distinct section within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Many young people confuse Erasmus+ youth opportunities with higher education programmes, which reduces youth engagement. To address this, Erasmus+ 2028–2034 should establish a separate Youth section, within which volunteering activities are kept as a key element, and this section should have its own budget allocation, branding, and communication strategy. Youth work has unique approaches and values that differ from formal education. Clearer visibility would make opportunities easier to understand and more attractive for young people outside higher education. This should be supported by dedicated outreach campaigns, separate programme materials, and consistent branding that highlights nonformal education, mobility, as well as youth participation opportunities.



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Annexes



Annex 1: Programme of the EUYC Copenhagen

The EU Youth Conference in Copenhagen (Denmark) took place at DGI Byen from 21st September 2025 until 23rd September 2025.

Day 1: 21 September 2025

- 09.00-13.00 Arrival of participants to the venue & registration
- 12.00-13.45 Lunch
- 13.45-14:00 Welcome and introduction to the conference
- 14.00-14.45 Welcome address and panel interview on youth involvement
- Mattias Tesfaye, Minister of Children and Education
 - Anneline Larsen, Vice chairwoman of the Danish Youth Council
 - Laure Verstraete, Board member at European Youth Forum
 - Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen, Director-General DG EAC the European Commission (via a video message due to flight cancellations)
- 14.45-15.00 Power Speech on promoting democratic and political influence from outside the EU
- 15.00-15.30 Break
- 15:30-15.45 Follow-up on the EU Youth Conference in Lublin
- Kari Gardelin, policy officer, DG EAC, The European Commission
- 15.45-16.15 Plenary interview: Brief introduction to the Erasmus+ and the decision-making process in the EU
- Kari Gardelin, policy officer, DG EAC, The European Commission
- 16.15-16.30 Presentation of results on Erasmus+ 2021-2027 and European Solidarity Corps from the EU Youth Dialogue consultation
- Dan Moxon, researcher and director at People, Dialogue and Change
 - Ondřej Bárta, freelance youth researcher and a senior associate at People, Dialogue and Change
- 16.30-16.45 Group photo
- 16.45-17.30 Break and check in at hotel
- 17.30-20.00 Working group session: Ice-breakers and cultural activity in the gardens of Tivoli
- 20:30 – 22.30 Dinner at DGI Byen



Day 2: 22 September 2025

- 08.30-10:00 Registration of newly arrived delegates
- 09.00-12.00 Working group sessions. Youth delegates will attend one of eight working groups with a specific theme relevant to the next generation of Erasmus+
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch
- 13.00-15.00 Working group sessions continued
- 15.00-16.00 Break
- 16.00-18.00 Voting procedure: All youth delegates are to select one recommendation from each working group through a voting procedure. The selected recommendations will appear in a policy paper representing the perspectives of youth representatives on the next generation of Erasmus+
- 18.00-18:20 Break
- 18.20-20.00 Cultural activity: Canal Tours
- 20.30-23.00 Formal dinner at DGI Byen

Day 3: 23 September 2025

- 08.45-09.15 (Easy opening) Coffee and Croissants
- 09:15-09.30 Introduction to the day
- 09.30-11.15 Youth delegates: Dialogue between youth delegates and EU decision makers. Youth delegates have the chance to discuss their recommendations with relevant decision-makers.
- 09:30-11:15 Ministerial delegates: Ministerial delegates will informally discuss the upcoming work on the EU Youth Strategy. The session will be facilitated by the Commission.
- 11.15-11.30 Break
- 11.30-12.00 Panel interview with EU decision makers on the dialogue between youth delegates and decision-makers
- 12.00-12.05 Keynote listener: President of the European Youth Forum
- Rareş Voicu, President of the European Youth Forum
- 12.05-12.15 Speech from the Danish Minister to wrap up the conference
- Mattias Tesfaye, Minister of Children and Education
- 12.15-12.20 Presentation from the incoming Cypriot Presidency
- 12.20-13.30 Standing lunch and departure of participants



Annex 2: Policy paper on the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2035

This annex contains a full-text version of the final policy document built on the outcomes of the EUYC Copenhagen.

Policy paper on the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034

— outcomes from the EU Youth Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 2025

The Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union appreciates the opportunity to share the following policy paper regarding the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034⁶. The policy paper presents recommendations adopted by youth delegates during the EU Youth Conference, which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, 21 - 23 September 2025.

Recommendations by the youth delegates:

Safeguarding a youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15%

Volunteer-led youth organisations struggle accessing Erasmus+, because of lack of resources and capacities. A strong youth chapter with an earmarked budget of 15% is imperative to safeguard the youth-led and grassroots nature of youth organisations. This youth chapter should include micro grants and youth operating grants. Furthermore, it should be accessible to democratically elected youth organisations from EU candidate countries.

Distributing Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants before the start of the mobility

According to the ESN survey V, two thirds of students are receiving their mobility grants after the start of the mobility opportunity. This creates and reinforces the economic disparege between students. Therefore, higher education institutions should ensure the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 grants are distributed to students before the start of their mobility.

Ensuring a dedicated space for youth volunteering and solidarity

A dedicated space should encompass the current core values of the European Solidarity Corps while distinguishing it from other skill-building mechanisms primarily focused on the labour market and recognising the importance of experiences acquired through volunteering for personal development and communities. This could be achieved through a dedicated Key Action Point, pillar, or any other method that ensures significant priority and relevance, potentially being part of a Youth Chapter of the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This is in order for volunteering and solidarity

⁶ As elaborated on in the [Proposal for \(...\) establishing the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034 \(...\)](#) published by the European Commission on 16 July 2025.

to receive earmarked funding, attention and structural equality within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034, allowing it to become an umbrella target for budget allocation for diverse activities.

Addressing external challenges facing young people

We recommend keeping the existing Erasmus+ priorities as they are highly relevant, with some updates. Young people face a dynamic world where flexibility, trust, and active engagement are crucial. They are facing increasing disinformation and global instability. We recommend that Erasmus+ 2028–2034 prioritises adaptability as a broad horizontal priority which in programs can be adjusted and accurate to the need of youth civic society, ensuring young people can adapt and act effectively. This should be done by preparing youth workers, strengthening youth organisations, and creating dedicated funding, supporting standardisation of youth infrastructure, youth work and youth information.

Creating dedicated Erasmus+ 2028-2034 funding stream for soft skills and citizenship skills

While the Erasmus+ 2028-2034 rightly prioritises professional skills, a separate funding line must ensure sustained investment in soft skills and non-formal education. Citizenship skills — e.g. critical thinking, democratic participation, intercultural dialogue — cannot be fully developed through professional training alone. Erasmus+ 2028-2034 should therefore allocate specific funding for innovative initiatives such as digital citizenship games, non-formal traveling exchanges, and other initiatives that enable European youth to practice citizenship through intercultural cooperation. This balance safeguards European goals of creating active, responsible citizens alongside skilled professionals.

Simplifying the application and reporting process for Erasmus+ 2028- 2034 opportunities

Young people face barriers in applying for Erasmus+ opportunities due to the complicated application process. Therefore, we recommend the mandatory provision of native plain language in all materials, including reporting materials. Furthermore, we recommend that the application and reporting process is individualised and simplified and proportionate to grant-size. This should be done by utilising less complicated forms, mentoring and oral application options as well as a support point, that can be accessed by phone and by e-mail to support individuals' needs. This can lower entry barriers for youth-led and grassroots organisations and individuals as well as make Erasmus+ accessible beyond large institutions.

Promoting preparedness, resilience and peacebuilding through Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Nowadays, global conflicts and crises are affecting youth in both Europe and abroad. Young people and Europe are unprepared to face these crises. Therefore, we recommend more focus on resilience and peacebuilding within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034. This should be done by (a) introducing a dedicated program priority that enables access for youth organisations and volunteers to training for the development of skills necessary to address upcoming threats (b) strengthening access to the programs in neighbouring countries affected by extremism, shrinking civic spaces and other crises in order to create more resilient democracies on our borders.

Introducing Erasmus+ Youth as a distinct section within the Erasmus+ 2028-2034

Many young people confuse Erasmus+ youth opportunities with higher education programmes, which reduces youth engagement. To address this, Erasmus+ 2028–2034 should establish a



separate Youth section, within which volunteering activities are kept as a key element, and this section should have its own budget allocation, branding, and communication strategy. Youth work has unique approaches and values that differ from formal education. Clearer visibility would make opportunities easier to understand and more attractive for young people outside higher education. This should be supported by dedicated outreach campaigns, separate programme materials, and consistent branding that highlights nonformal education, mobility, as well as youth participation opportunities.

Background on the EU Youth Conference

The EU Youth Conference brought together youth delegates from EU Member States, countries of the European Economic Area, EU candidate countries as well as from other non-EU-countries⁷. In addition, representatives of International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs)⁸ and the European Youth Forum participated in the conference. Eight working groups were formed during the conference, focusing on different aspects of the Erasmus+ programme for the period 2028-2034. Each of the working groups formulated three recommendations, and through a subsequent plenary voting procedure, one recommendation was chosen from each working group by a simple majority. This policy paper presents the eight recommendations adopted by the national youth delegates at the conference.

⁷ Non-EU countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kosovo.

⁸ Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE-Europe), All Together in Dignity Fourth World (ATD Fourth World International), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organization (IGLYO) and World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).