Funded by
the European Union

ФПКО
FECE

REPORT

YE YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

Place:
Varna, Bulgaria

Date:
May 23-27, 2024

YE: Youth for Democracy

The purpose of this report about the youth exchange *Youth for Democracy* is to motivate other non-governmental organisations and young people to develop similar projects and initiatives to stimulate young people to be active citizens and through their actions to promote the common EU values, foster youth participation in Europe's democratic life and engage young people for sustainable and inclusive Europe.

Host organisation:
Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education, Bulgaria

Partners:
Youth for Equality, Slovakia,
Multi Kulti, Romania,
DGT Association, Moldova

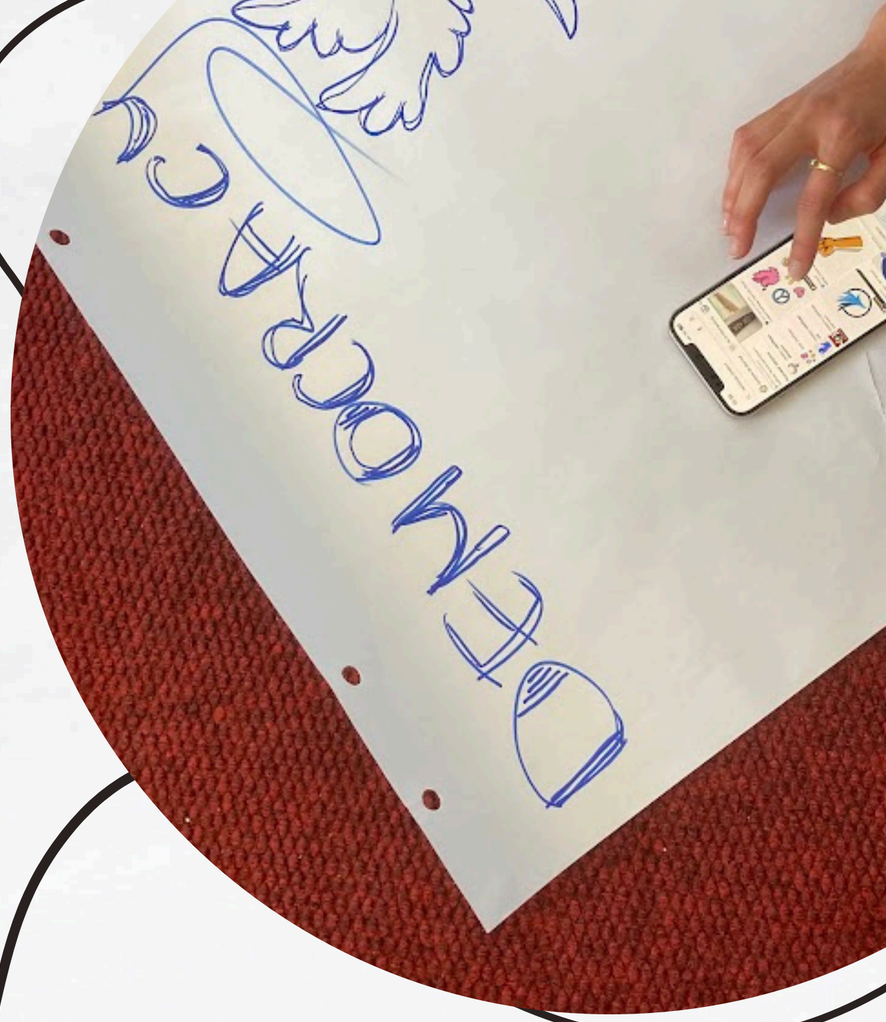
Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by the European Union

The youth exchange *Youth for Democracy* took place at Golden Sands seaside resort on the Northern Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The chosen accommodation was Detelina Hotel. It proved to be an ideal place for conducting the activities as it is located away from the big city, making it easy to work outside and enjoy the first sunny days of the summer. It is also minutes away from the beach and bus stops, thus giving participants the option to easily explore nearby places.

25 young people took part in the exchange, aged 18-30, from four European Countries: **Bulgaria**, **Slovakia**, **Romania**, and **Moldova**.
The participants arrived at the hotel on 23 May and left on 27 May in the morning.



YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY



The youth exchange explored the views and opinions of young people from across Europe through storytelling techniques and interviewing processes to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding democracy through active youth engagement.

The project implemented civil and non-formal activities to highlight the importance of youth participation through the exploration of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027), particularly YG #1 Connecting EU with Youth, YG #3 Inclusive Societies, YG #9 Space and Participation for All.

The topics of the project were:

- EU institutions and values
- European citizenship
- Youth active participation
- European Youth Strategy (2017-2024)

Various non-formal learning methods and activities were used:

➢ Ice breakers
➢ Role playing and collective games
➢ Creativity and teamwork games
➢ Discussion, debates, brainstorming and reflection
➢ Intercultural and experiential learning
➢ Soft-skill training

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

The aims of the project were:

- To raise awareness of the importance of youth participation for creating sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies across Europe
- To connect, engage and empower young people to be active citizens and to strengthen democratic processes across Europe
- The raise new knowledge and skills on active participation, activism and campaigning
- To raise awareness of the common EU values and provide ways to promote them and safeguard them
- To raise skills and new knowledge on storytelling and interviewing
- To explore the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and to promote ways and means by which youth's voices can be heard in decision-making processes



YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

The reached results:

01 Participants are more aware of the importance of youth participation for the creation of sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies across Europe

02 Participants gained a deeper understanding and new knowledge about the establishment of the European Union, its values and core institutions

03 Participants increased their understanding of the fundamental EU value such as democracy, equality, freedom, rule of law, solidarity, and human rights.

04 Empowered young people to become active European citizens and participate in the democratic life of Europe, through exploring the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and the Youth Goals connected to participation

05 Participants gained and further developed valuable soft skills including leadership skills, negotiation skills, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, constructive participation in dialogue and debate, the ability to comprehend abstract concepts and intercultural competences

What is democracy?

The participants were first asked to come up with three words/ definitions about democracy and then gathered in pairs and later in groups of five to come up with one agreed definition on what is democracy



Democracy is a political system, based on government which includes human rights, equality, liberty, fraternity and voting rights.

Democracy is a political system where power is in the people's hands and it is based on the collective work and equality between people and freedom in their lives.

Democracy is system where everyone has equal rights, responsibilities and freedom to choose their representatives by elections.

Democracy is the freedom to express out feelings, emotions and traditions in a public manner and to have an independent opinion voiced and respected. Democracy is a political system where citizens express political opinions in free elections.

Democracy is power, freedom, equality of the people who are able to choose their representatives with elections. Every human being must be threated equally by the law and will be discriminated by the authorities.

Tools for active participation

Traditional tools

- Voting
- Joining a political party or Trade Union
- Signals and Complaints
- Petitions (to European Parliament)
- Protests

Alternative tools

- Volunteering
- Activism
- Joining an NGO or CSO
- Social media
- Procotting and Boycotting
- Sit-ins (strikes)



In this activity, participants brainstormed and discussed the traditional and alternative forms of active participation and how to engage young people in decision-making processes

YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

Electioneering: *An informal moving debate was conducted, where ten different statements were discussed. After being presented with a statement, participants were encouraged to choose whether they agree or not and move to the according side. After that arguments were presented, and participants had the option to change their opinion, and move to the other side.*

- We have a moral obligation to use our vote in elections.
- We should obey all laws, even unfair ones.
- The only people who have any power in a democracy are the politicians.
- “People get the leaders they deserve”.
- It is the responsibility of citizens to control the day-to-day activity of the government.
- Freedom of expression means you can say that you want.
- Neo-fascist parties should be banned.
- Extremists should be banned from speaking in public.
- Voting should be an obligation.
- We aren’t born with right; We get them

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

Making Links: *A simulation game in which participants were divided into four groups, representing the four actors, and their functions in a utopian democratic society:* ***the government, the citizens, the media, and the NGOs.*** *The activity involved negotiation and a deeper understanding of the functions of each of the four actors, and the importance of promoting civic responsibility among each actor.*

YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

GOVERNMENT

- Adopts legislation
- Protects the interests of the different societal groups
- Manages the economic system through fiscal and tax policies
- Ensure peace and manage the defense system
- Maintain external and internal relations

CITIZENS

- Active participation and participatory government
- Continues education and deliberation
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Promotion of equality
- Environmental sustainability

MEDIA

- Spreading information
- Educating masses
- Socialization
- Entertainment
- Persuation

NGOs

- Advocacy
- Service provision
- Employment
- Accountability
- Research and education



Fighters for rights: *In this group activity, participants divided in groups had to research about inspiring icons fighting for human rights*

Che Guevara
A revolutionary and fighter for human rights

Bio: Ernesto "Che" Guevara, born 4 June 1928, in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina.
Quote: If you are able to feel pain when a blow is struck at any person in any part of the world and their rights are infringed, then you are my comrade!
Fact: Che founded the free healthcare system in Cuba
Legacy: Ideas of revolution and social justice

Marcus Aurelius
A former Roman emperor

Bio: Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, born 26 April 121, in Rome
Quote: Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.
Fact: Aurelius is considered as a Stoic philosopher
Legacy: Marcus Aurelius was considered as one of “the five good emperors”.

YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

Fighters for rights: *In this group activity, participants divided in groups had to research about inspiring icons fighting for human rights*

Cesar Chavez
American civil rights activist

Bio: Cesario Estrada Chavez, born 31 March 1927, in Yuma, Arizona, USA
Quote: Preservation of one's owns culture, does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.
Fact: Was 25 days on a hunger strike to protects labor rights
Legacy: Co-founded the National Labor Farm workers Association

Elizabeth Cady Stanton
American writer and activist

Bio: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, born 12 November 1815, Johnstown, New York, USA
Quote: The best protection any woman can have is courage. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equally.
Fact: Her father wished she was born a boy. After her death women gained the right to vote.
Legacy: Activist and leader of the suffrage movement. The first women's rights convention

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

Aware-raising campaigns: *The activity aimed to introduce participants to the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2024) and the 11 Youth Goals. Participants created aware-raising posters on four goals connected to youth participation: #5 Mental Health and Well-being, #6 Moving Rural youth forward, #7 Quality Employment for all, #9 Sustainable Green Europe*

YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

#5 Mental health and well-being

YE: Move Your Mind!
Place: camping site, 2 weeks
Participants: Young people (18-30)
Objectives:

- To raise awareness of mental health and well-being
- To promote physical well-being
- Meet new people and develop soft skills

Activities: Yoga, training exercises, breathing exercises, walking in the forest, self-reflection, meditations, biking and hiking
Guest facilitators: Psychologist, sports trainer, motivational speakers

#6 Moving Rural youth forward

Aware-raising campaign

Objectives:

- To establish a positive image of rural areas
- To protect rural traditions
- To involve rural youth in active participation in decision-making processes
- To foster inclusion of all young people
- Better access to high quality education and jobs
- Appropriate infrastructure, public services, data connectivity and housing opportunities.

Aware-raising campaigns: *The activity aimed to introduce participants to the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2024) and the 11 Youth Goals. Participants created aware-raising posters on four goals connected to youth participation: #5 Mental Health and Well-being, #6 Moving Rural youth forward, #7 Quality Employment for all, #9 Sustainable Green Europe*

YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

#7 Quality Employment for all

Aware-raising campaign
Objectives:

- Promotion of quality jobs which quarantee fair working conditions, working rights and the right to a minimum wage
- Fair treatment and equal opportunities for all young people in order to end discrimination in the labor market
- Ensure equal opportunities for all young people to develop necessary skills and gain practical experience
- Secure employment and social protection to ensure equal access to employment

#9 Sustainable Green Europe

Aware-raising, social media campaign:
Moto: *Sustainability starts with US!*
Objectives:

- To recycle
- Clean public places and streets
- Plant trees
- Activism and volunteering
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Install solar panels
- Usage of public transportation
- Reduce plastic materials
- Buy clothes from second hand stores

VARNA ADVENTURE

Participants prepared posters to promote democracy and EU values for the local people and created a playful, interactive, and entertaining video showcasing their excursion in Varna, including their interactions with locals and special moments.

An adventure game was organised during the fourth day of the youth exchange. Participants were divided into groups. To finish the game each group had to complete six tasks while exploring the sea garden in the city of Varna.

➢ *Each group must create a team name*
➢ *Each group must pick a symbol that represents the group: a stone or a seashell, or anything elsethat represents your group*
➢ *Each group must meet a local young person that speaks English and tell them about the European Youth Goals and the project*
➢ *Each group will have to make a photo with an animal and another local of all ages*
➢ *Each group must find the secret bridge of wishes, hidden in the Varna Sea Garden and make a wishthere*





Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural Evenings: Non-formal learning and sharing of national culture helped young people engage in intercultural dialogue. By organising cultural evenings, participants got the chance to proudly represent their country, while learning about other groups' culture, cuisine, music, dance, and interesting facts. The evenings included videos about different countries, filled with practical and interesting information, traditional foods and drinks, music, and dances. These cultural nights foster the formation of intercultural groups and cultivate a feeling of tolerance among young people.

Secret Friend Game

On the first day of the youth exchange, each participant picked a piece of paper on which was written the name of a different participant. As such, everyone received a secret friend, that remained unknown until the end of the exchange. The names of everyone were written on envelopes, that were then stuck to the wall. During the youth exchange, participants had to leave small gifts varying from notes, candy and souvenirs, to their secret friends, without revealing who it is. On the last day, an interactive game was played to reveal everyone's secret friend.

The youth exchange concluded with the awarding of Youthpass certificates, the secret friends revealing, and a final evaluation of the exchange.

YOUTH
FOR DEMOCRACY

The project Youth for Democracy was realised with
financial support of the Erasmus+ Programme.
Project No: 2023-1-BG01-KA151-YOU-000113444

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed
are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily
reflect those of the European Union or the European
Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither
the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us:

E-mail: foundation.ece@gmail.com
Web: https://foundationece.eu/

