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EU ADVOCATORS
Words in Action



EU Advocators: Words in action

Youth Exchange

Conducted in Varna, Bulgaria from 21 to 25 Sep 2026

Report

ФПКО FECE

BOVE Youth Foundation

YouthFully Yours SK

HESSA

Introduction

The project **EU Advocators: Words in Action** is a youth exchange that brought together young people from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia to explore active citizenship through content creation. The youth exchange took place from 20 to 26 September 2026 at Hotel Detelina in Varna, Bulgaria. Storytelling was the cornerstone of the project - the participants voiced their opinions and creative perspectives on youth-related topics such as mental health, information overload, work-life balance and sustainability, in line with the European Youth Strategy and the 11 European Youth Goals. Through photography, videomaking and podcasting, they acquired new skills to share the stories and views of young EU citizens.





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Partners

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Words in Action

- **Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education (host)**
- **YouthfullyYours**
- **HESSA**
- **Creative Youth Academy**

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ΦΠΚΟ FECE

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HESSA

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VENUE





The EU Advocators: Words in Action youth exchange 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 last sunny days of the summer.

26 young people aged 18-30 took part in the exchange. They came from four European countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. The participants arrived at the hotel on 20 September and left on 26 September.



Learning Objectives

To highlight the importance of the European Union in supporting young people's personal and professional development.

To raise awareness of the European Youth Strategy and the 11 European Youth Goals.

To strengthen cooperation, creativity and media literacy skills among the participants.

To raise awareness of the core issues that concern young Europeans, such as mental health, information overload, work-life balance and sustainability.

To support participants in acquire storytelling skills as a tool to engage and voice the perspectives of young EU citizens.

To acquire new knowledge about storytelling in different audiovisual formats - photography, videomaking and podcasting.

Reached Results

Developed critical thinking and a more conscious approach to media and online information

Gained practical skills in planning, scripting and presenting a story to an audience

Gained confidenc to speak up, share ideas and take an active role in their communities

Acquired knowledge of the Erasmus+ programme and drafted ideas for their own future projects



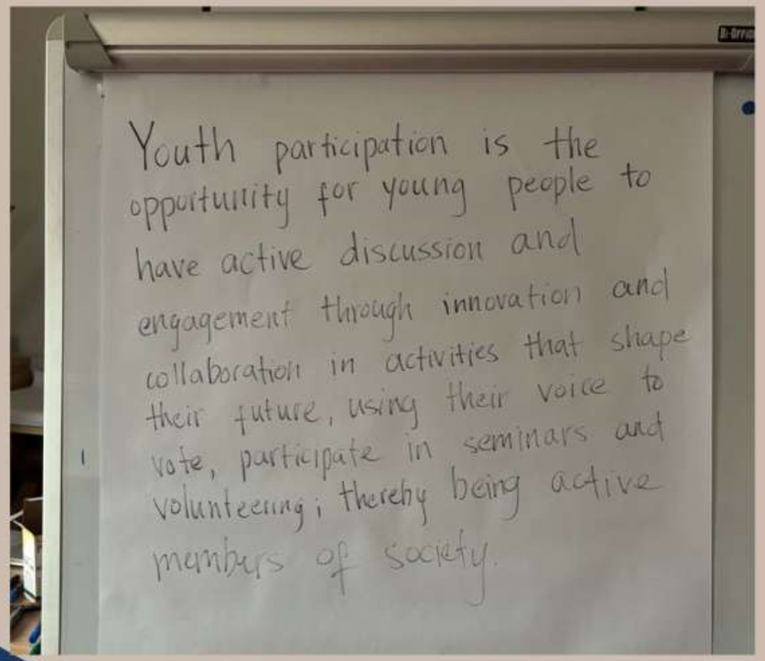
Turned their own ideas and experiences into finished content - photo collections, short videos and podcasts

Strengthened intercultural understanding and built a network of young people from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia



What is Youth Participation ?

The activity used a step-by-step method in which participants built a shared definition of youth participation. This prepared them for the following sessions on storytelling and active citizenship.



1. **First, each participant wrote down three words they associate with the term "youth participation".**
2. **Then, in pairs, they compared their associations and agreed on a common definition in one or two sentences, starting with "Youth participation is..."**
3. **Finally, the pairs joined into groups of four or five, discussed their definitions and agreed on one definition for the whole group.**
4. **Moving from personal ideas to a group agreement helped participants look at the topic from different perspectives, practise active listening and negotiation, and see how young people from different countries understand participation**

What is Youth Participation ?



Group 1
Youth participation is a form of advocacy that involves volunteering, being active in your community and promoting European values.

Group 2
Youth participation is an active lifestyle which benefits the growth of young people and local communities, by collectively working together and enhancing their social skills.









What is Youth Participation ?



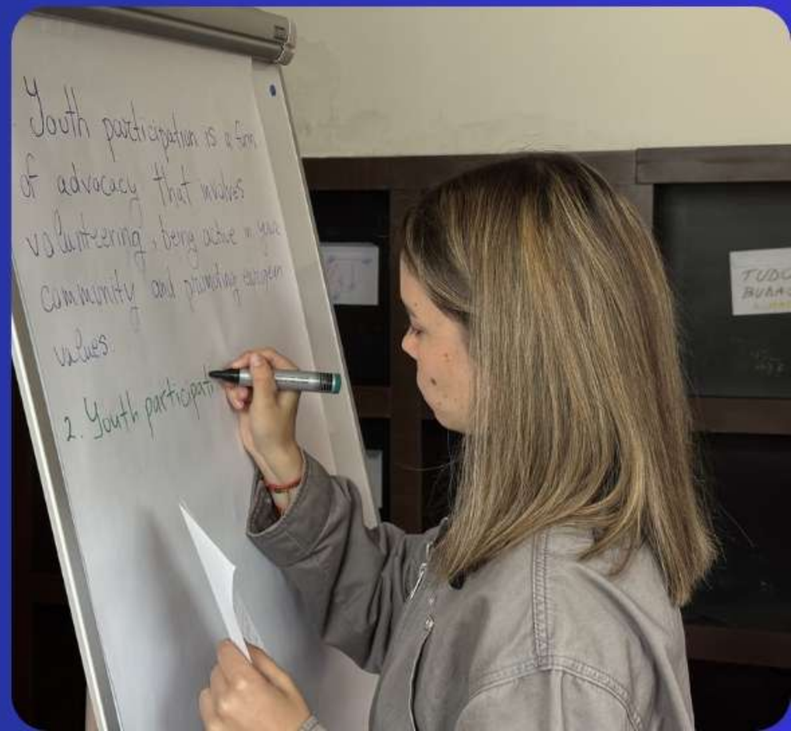
Group 3

Youth participation is the ability of young people to be involved and united in different world issues or decision making. It's the opportunity to have their voices heard and influence the course of actions, by being active in the community, as a volunteer and keeping up to date with changes in the local field









What is Youth Participation ?

Group 4

Youth participation is to give opportunity to link and develop together regardless of nationality and culture.







Group 5

By participating in these types of projects and learn about concerning topics and the struggles of day to day life, we're passively making the world a better place.



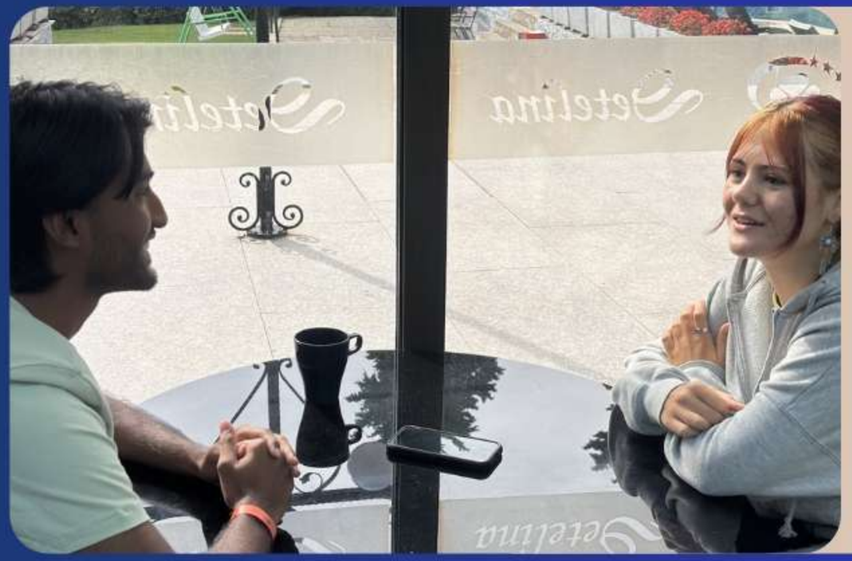
Digital Detox Walk

The activity let participants explore the themes of work-life balance and information overload through their own experience rather than through theory. Participants were paired with someone from another country, taking turns to answer reflective questions such as "When was the last time you felt completely disconnected from your obligations - and how did that feel? and "What in your daily life drains more energy than you admit out loud?



When they returned, each participant recorded a 60-second voice memo telling their partner's story in the third person instead of their own. In the debriefing, the group talked about what it was like to tell someone else's story and what they had learned about their own balance while listening.





The activity helped participants practise active listening, self-reflection and oral storytelling.





Exploring Podcast Basics

In this session, participants were introduced to podcasting as a tool for storytelling and sharing young people's views. They were divided into groups, and each group received a different type of podcast to explore. The groups researched the main features of their podcast type – its structure, style, number of speakers, the way it engages listeners, and the topics it suits best. Each group then presented its findings to the others. In this way, participants learned from each other and got an overview of the different podcast formats. The activity prepared them to choose the most suitable format for their own podcasts later in the project.

Act It Out

Each team received slips of paper with a short explanation of a form of civic action, for example protest, petition or civic activism. The teams had to act out their form without words, while the other participants guessed what it was. This way the young people learned about the different ways citizens can take action and have an impact on problems in their community.



Community Problem Solvers







Split into groups, the young people filmed short videos showing their ideas for solving community problems. Each group chose one problem from the list they had brainstormed together beforehand, such as :

- lack of safety in public spaces
- expensive public transport, lack of cultural venues
- lack of accessible education and lack of connectivity between people.
- lack of accessible healthcare/hospitals in rural areas
- lack of information about youth events

Erasmus project Sep 2026 - Google Drive

The Story Spine Writing Room



In this activity, the participants worked as a joint writing room and scriptwriting team. First, the facilitators introduced the storytelling arc of hook, character, conflict and resolution and read a short “spine” story. Then, in groups, the participants developed the characters in more detail, built a fuller version of the story with new parts and emotions, and revised it several times until they agreed on a final story. The groups then presented their stories to everyone. The activity helped participants practise creative thinking, improvisation, compromise and teamwork, and showed them how a clear story structure makes a story more engaging.

Blind Director

In this activity, the participants were randomly assigned one of four roles: Director, Photographer, Actor or Mediator. The Director decided the topic of the picture, the settings and the costumes, but was blindfolded and could not take part physically or communicate with the actors. The Photographer took the pictures and the actors appeared in them, and both followed the Director's instructions strictly. The Mediator took care of the settings and costumes and let the Director know if the actors were following the instructions properly. In this way, the groups created stories of up to five scenes, and the Photographer photographed each scene. At the end, the Director looked through the pictures to see if the story matched their original vision. The activity helped participants practise teamwork, communication and creative storytelling.









The Director chose the topic of the story from two options, "If I were immortal for a day" and "If I were president for a day"

Blind Director



In one of the groups, the Director chose the topic “If I were immortal for a day” and the team told a very funny story about an immortal man who was briefly robbed, but then remembered he could not die. He convinced the thief to rob a bank together, escaped, and left the thief to be shot by the police.

Intercultural night





On the evening of the fourth day, the participants took part in the intercultural night. Each national group had 20-30 minutes to present its country - its history, culture, traditional food, music and games - through fun quizzes, dances and group performances.

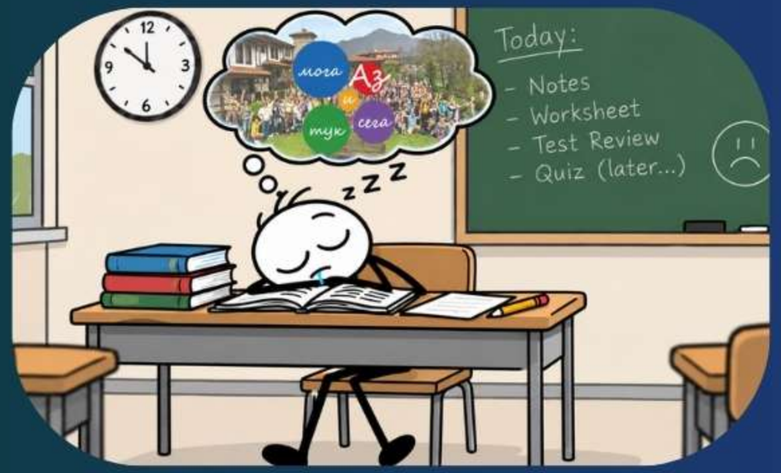


VARNA Adventure

On the afternoon of the fifth day, the participants explored the city of Varna in groups. The excursion gave them the chance to get to know the host city and its culture and to spend informal time with participants from the other countries. The activity helped them strengthen their friendships and teamwork outside the training room.



Creating Your Own Content



non-formal-opportunities.pptx - Google Slides



In this activity, the participants worked in national groups to create their own content. The format was completely free: each group could choose to make a photo collection, a video or a short podcast. The groups also chose which story, personal experience or idea they wanted to tell and stand behind, and how to tell it. The young people used what they had learned about storytelling, planning and working together on the previous days. The groups finalised their work and presented it to everyone. The activity let participants use their creativity and voice their own perspectives, and also gave them a practical way to apply the skills of photography, videomaking and podcasting.







Erasmus project Sep 2026 - Google Drive

Media Literacy in Action: from Awareness to Context



Journalism Bingo

The activity began with a Journalism Bingo about the history of journalism and the media. The participants were divided into two teams, and each team received a bingo card with 16 squares and a marker in its own colour. One participant drew a number from a bag, and the facilitator read the matching question with three possible answers. The first participant to raise a hand from the team whose turn it was answered individually, without consulting the team. For each correct answer, the team earned a point and marked the square on both cards in its colour. The first team to complete a full row or column called “Bingo!” and earned a bonus point. The game continued until all 16 questions had been played. In this way, the participants learned key facts about journalism and the evolution of the media in a fun and competitive way, and began to think critically about the news.

Erasmus+ Project Ideas

- Name and subject of your project
- What do you want to solve with your project? Why?
- What are your target groups? With whom will you partner?
- Project objectives and project activities
- When, where and how long is the project going to be?
- Name and subject of your project
- Where and how will you spread the results?
- What is your call to action?

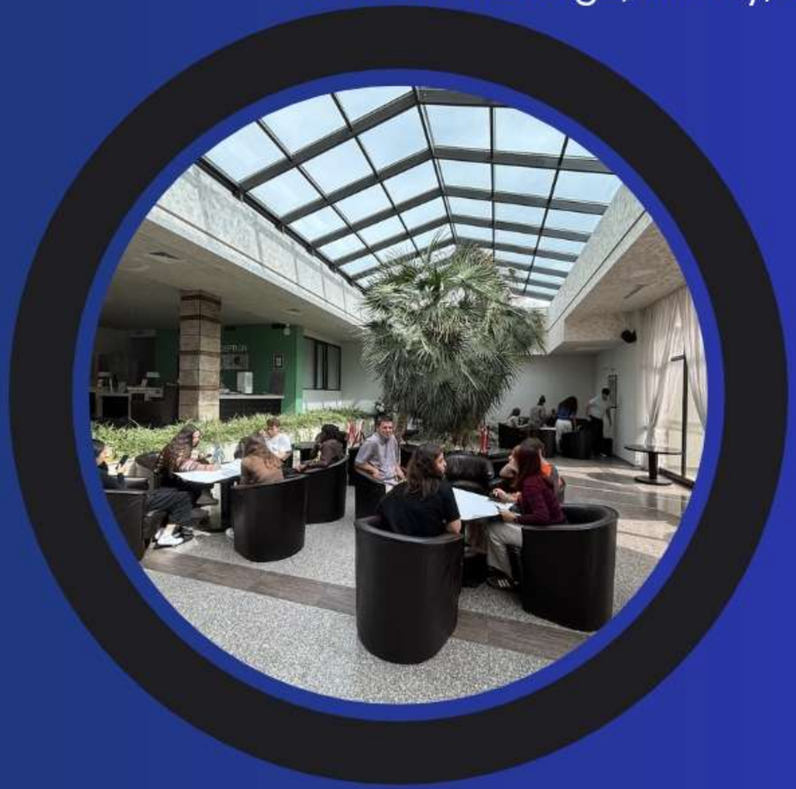
In this group activity, the participants developed concepts for future Erasmus+ KA1 projects and got familiar with the Erasmus+ Programme and its specifics. They worked in groups of five, and each group drafted a sample project based on what it had learned about the programme. After that, the groups presented their project ideas to everyone. The activity gave the participants a practical look at how an Erasmus+ project is planned, and encouraged them to use the opportunities of the programme in the future.

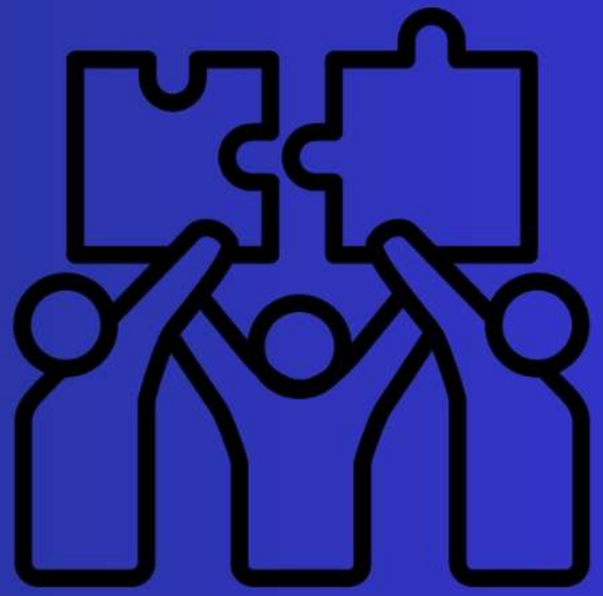
Erasmus+ Project Ideas





Group 1 - Culture without Borders
The group built its idea around the theme of culture without borders. On their poster, they gathered the key values and ideas behind the project: diversity, inclusion, connection, dialogue, exchange, collaboration and acceptance, as well as exploring cultural heritage, history, language and roots.





Erasmus+ Project Ideas



Group 2 - Cultural Mobility

The project combines culture and sports, with the aim to reduce cultural barriers between young people from different countries. Sport is used to encourage people to be more active and as a great way to connect. The target group is physically active people between 16 and 30, international students and locals. The activities include learning about sports from different countries, comparing traditional and modern sports, morning stretching and yoga, and five tournaments in different sports. The project would take place in Madrid in the summer (2 travel days and 7 activity days). Its expected outcomes are better physical condition, knowledge of other cultures and an understanding of the social role of sports. The results would be shared through social media, a website and different NGOs, under the slogan “Different cultures, same team!”.

Erasmus+ Project Ideas



Group 3 - Future for ALL

This project is based on the idea that accessibility should not count as a privilege. Its aim is to raise awareness in schools, nursing homes and everywhere in between. The target group is people with and without disabilities, aged 16 and above. The partner countries are Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. The activities include energizers, ice breakers and sports activities, as well as visits to schools, youth centres and nursing homes. The project is planned for 15-30 June in Ankara, Turkey.

Erasmus+ Project Ideas



Group 4 - Green Pals

Green Pals is a project about the environment, planned for 1-11 May 2027 in Bran, Romania. It is aimed at young people aged 16-25 from seven countries: Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Slovakia, Czechia, Ukraine and Austria. With 42 participants (five per country plus a group leader), the project aims to spread awareness about what an environmentally friendly city should look like and to address the lack of education among young people about their environmental impact. The activities include workshops, energizers, building an insect house and finding natural food sources, and the results would be shared through local campaigns. The slogan of the project is “Greenify your future”.

EU Advocators: Words in Action

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us:
E-mail: foundation.ece@gmail.com
Web: https://foundationece.eu/