

## **Youth Inspires Politics - Ideas & Recommendations**

*There is one page for each of the three areas - recommendations related to youth parliaments/councils, ideas on other initiatives for youth participation, and any other relevant ideas.*



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## Area 1: Recommendations

For example:

What would help youth parliaments or councils to work better?

What would be the ideal structure of the youth parliament or council?

How to engage more young people in youth parliaments or councils?

How to strengthen connections between youth parliaments/councils and city councils / politicians?

### Recommendations

#### **R1 - Connecting youth parliaments and city councils**

Youth parliaments (or councils) are important for engagement of young people in public space and for amplifying their voice in the decision and policy making. This way, young people can make sure that their interests are being heard and concrete ideas, if practicable and beneficial for the whole community, are realised. In order for the youth parliaments to have an impact, support by municipalities or politicians is important.

To strengthen connections between youth parliaments and decision makers or public administration, structural links are important and useful. Based on the good practice from Slovakia (city of Bardejov) it's recommended to employ a possibility for members of youth parliaments to become Youth City Councillors. That means young people would work directly with city councillors on a specific agenda. It would also be a form of mentoring.

Another possibility is a kind of job shadowing, when a young person is in closer contact with a city councillor and can even initiate meetings on behalf of the city - these would need approval of both the youth parliament and councillor.

#### **R2 - Working groups and trainings**

It's recommended to establish topic-related working groups in youth parliaments, whose members would meet more often, not just for plenaries and other big events. These groups are enhancing the proposals of individuals or groups and then sending them to the plenary meetings. In ideal cases, the working groups would be in close contact with city councillors for advice to increase the chances that the proposal will eventually pass.

Youth parliaments should be providing training and other learning opportunities (such as study visits) to their members. That could help increase engagement of young people in the longer term and help them to grow both professionally and personally.

## Area 2: Ideas on other initiatives

For example:

What other initiative in the field of youth participation would you imagine to be involved in?

What practice would help engage youth in decision making in your community/country?

Except for politics, what other areas of public life young people should have their say in?

Ideas

### I1 - Audience council at the public-service media

Public service media shall follow the interests of the audience. One of the possibilities of how to ensure this are the councils, whose members are nominated by institutions/organisations representing various social groups. However, that doesn't seem to be enough nowadays. Good example of how to enhance public control is the audience council at the public broadcaster in Austria.

Using this example as a basis, it's recommended to establish similar audience councils in other countries as well. Members could be nominated by a wider spectrum of organisations, including youth ones, and then elected by the national parliament. An option to consider could be also individual nomination, meaning that people can be nominated by a group of citizens or by themselves. Representatives of each group would be elected separately, e.g. those nominated by the church, trade union, or youth NGOs, to ensure that each of them is represented. Disregarding nomination procedure, members of the audience councils could be also elected by the public or regional parliaments.

### I2 - Advisory councils to various public bodies

It's often talked about youth parliaments that work in cooperation with municipalities. However, it's also important to make sure the voice of young people is being heard by public bodies that execute political decisions. These are not taking decisions that would influence policies, but they can provide advice and important data to politicians and other decision makers, and through their acts they also directly influence lives of citizens.

Therefore it's recommended to establish youth - but not necessarily only youth - advisory councils to, for example, the police, urban planners, city architect, municipality media, or companies established by municipalities/regions/states that provide public services.

### Area 3: Other ideas

For example:

What would you like to change in your community/city/country?

How would you like to make a positive change in your area of interest?

Ideas

#### **I1 - Use the eSPOONe tool and add new functions**

E-participation is enabling more citizens to participate in decision making and make politics more inclusive and transparent. With additional functions, such as secure space for collaboration or online meetings, they can be also effectively used by youth parliaments or similar initiatives in their daily work. Hence they make even stronger links between citizens, youth parliaments, and decision makers and ensure that as many people as possible can be involved in the process of making proposals (from the first idea to draft and final text) and monitoring of their realisation.

It's therefore recommended to use eSPOONe or similar tools by youth councils. Then these tools can help create strong international collaboration as well. In the case of eSPOONe, new functions shall be added, such as publishing proposals publicly, allowing people to comment, monitoring realisation of ideas, or publishing youth-related data.

#### **I2 - Connecting social groups and generations**

Youth parliaments are naturally in the focus of structured dialogue under Erasmus+, but direct involvement of all citizens in decision making ought not to be forgotten. In this context, it's recommended to also establish bodies that are representing the voice of older generations - especially seniors - and various marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Those can be parliaments, councils, or various advisory bodies, depending on the local context and conditions.

Here the role of youth parliaments shall be to advocate for creation of such bodies and help with their establishment, at least by sharing the knowledge and good practices. They also should have a working group that takes care of communication and coordination of joint proposals with, for example, senior councils.