



Youth Exchange

2-10 April 2024
Sigulda, Krimulda,
Latvia



Context

and objectives

The 2019 European elections marked many elements towards an increased engagement of young people:

- ♦ *One of the remarkable aspects of the 2019 elections was the increase in voter turnout, which was the highest in 20 years. Youth turnout, in particular, has seen an increase, and many attribute this to issues such as climate change, which particularly affect young voters.*
- ♦ *More young candidates stood to be the next Members of the European Parliament than in previous years. They represented a wide range of political orientations and brought to the forefront issues of particular concern to young Europeans.*
- ♦ *Several initiatives and campaigns have targeted young voters to encourage their participation in elections. They used platforms popular with young people, such as social media, to spread awareness about the elections and the importance of voting.*

We will therefore have to act to maintain this positive momentum, by promoting the European elections to young people both for the present and for the future of the European Union.

Young people, often considered the leaders of tomorrow, do not constitute just one segment of the electorate; they are the very pulse of emerging trends, ideas and the dynamics behind societal change. In recent years, we've witnessed the growing influence of young activists and their ability to galvanize international attention on critical issues, from climate change to social justice. Their energy and idealistic nature make them a powerful force.

Yet despite their potential influence, young people historically have lower voter turnout rates in European elections compared to older age groups. This gap between their capacity for change and their electoral participation can result in policies that may not reflect the aspirations and concerns of a significant part of the population.

Moreover, the European Union, with its intricate set of institutions and processes, can sometimes seem distant or opaque to its citizens. Young people, many of whom did not witness the formative days of the EU, might not fully appreciate the impact of European decisions on their daily lives, from regulations that influence the quality of the air they breathe to policies that determine the ease of studying abroad.

By actively promoting European elections among young people, we can bridge this gap by making EU processes more transparent and accessible to its young citizens. Democracies thrive when their citizens are informed, engaged and feel ownership of the political process. By instilling the importance of the European elections in young people, we are nurturing a future generation of voters who

understand the weight of their responsibility and are more likely to actively participate in democratic processes throughout their lives.

The challenges and opportunities that Europe will face in the decades to come – whether they relate to digital transformation, sustainable development or geopolitical changes – will be felt more deeply by younger generations. Their voices, perspectives and votes are crucial in shaping the policies that will affect their lives and the lives of those who come after them.

It is with this in mind that EuroYouthVoice project aims to re-engage young people's interest in civic and democratic processes in Europe, leading to awareness of the importance of participation in European elections 2024 and its promotion within their communities. In order to achieve this goal, we will address the following specific objectives:

- ♦ **1.** Highlight how young people can shape their national and European decision-making processes.
- ♦ **2.** Clarify the role and functioning of European institutions and their complementarity with national processes.
- ♦ **3.** Cultivate critical thinking among participants in their approach to information conveyed online.
- ♦ **4.** Stimulate the creativity of participants to initiate digital campaigns promoting participation in the 2024 European elections.

Partner

organizations

MI HI

Asociatia GEYC

Asociación EuroMuévete

**Euro-mediterranean Association of
Exchanges Volunteering Events Polska**

Freeminds in action

Zarika Association

Youthfully Yours SK

CKB

Latvia

Romania

Spain

Poland

Italy

Bulgaria

Slovakia

France

EuroYouthVoice

Profile of participants

The main activity consists of a residential youth exchange in Sigulda, Latvia, in April 2024. The virtual part of the youth exchange will happen between April and June 2024, where the participants will continue implementing 8 campaigns, using the GAMMMA+ model to promote participation in European Elections around 8 thematics: Climate, Inclusion, Diversity, Entrepreneurship, capacity of initiative, education, civic life, and democratic transparency.

The youth exchange will gather 2 facilitators and 8 youth workers (group leaders 30+) to empower youth's participation and digital skills through non-formal education.

The main target is 42 youth, among them 24 with fewer opportunities, being the driving force of the project and demonstrating a particular interest in democratic engagement and participation.

Role of the participants

Preparation (before the youth exchange)

In country groups, you'll prepare a presentation about the realities of youth participation in your country. It can be about youth elections turnout, democratic/civic processes in your country and interest in digital participative tools, examples of successful initiatives, etc.

The presentation will be in the form of an infographic. You can use this link as a reference for infographics:
<https://www.coconutwork.org/infographic>

We will also create a survey that will be shared with the aim to have 50 respondents per country allowing to have an understanding of the needs and perception of youth with regard to participation and voting in European elections.

Follow-up (after the youth exchange)

These campaign groups will continue to produce content and promote it throughout the duration of the two months from the exchange and until the advent of the elections Europeans 2024. They will be followed and supported in this process by the leaders of the group. There should be one post for each week after the youth exchange corresponding to 8 in total.

Implementation (during the youth exchange)

There will be a facilitator conducting the pedagogic programme, nonetheless, active participation is mandatory and we can accommodate space and time for workshops led by participants. There will be a 'dissemination' rotation on a daily basis, where each 5-6 participants will write and share their impressions of the day and their learning outcomes.

At the second half of the youth exchange, we will start 7 digital campaigns on social networks led by the participants. The campaign groups will define, draft the plan and come up with the first content.

Accommodation

and transportation

We will organise the pick-up and drop-off for all the participants from Riga to the venues and back. Participants will be hosted in two different guest houses, within 5min drive from each:

Hotel Senleja

A hotel with triple or quadruple rooms with all the necessary amenities and private bathrooms.
<https://hotelsenleja.com/>

Reinis Hotel Sigulda

Which is a guesthouse on the outskirts of Sigulda. Surrounded by a peaceful natural landscape, the Reinis is a 10-minute drive away from the town center, Turaida Castle and the Gauja Valley, Gauja National Park.

A comfort stay for all participants, in shared rooms, apartments of 2,3,4,6 beds quadruple, triple, and twin with private and shared bathrooms and showers, shared kitchens. Free Wi-Fi connection is available.
Reinis, viesu nams (viesunamiem.lv)

NOTE

We will organise transportation for the groups between the two hotels, note that in the middle of the youth exchange. As sessions will take place in a meeting room a 2 min walk from Reinis Hotel Sigulda.

There will be an exchange of rooming between these 2 places, so each of the groups can experience a different venue.



HOTEL SENLEJA



REINIS HOTEL SIGULDA



The weather in Latvia



2° - 11°

April is very cold with temperatures between 2°C and 11°C, warm clothes are a must. You can expect about 3 to 8 days of rain in Latvia during the month of April. It's a good idea to bring along your umbrella so that you don't get caught in poor weather. You can expect a few days of snow in Latvia during April. We recommend having boots in case it's muddy around.

What to bring

Towels and personal hygiene things (shampoo, shower gel) will be provided; participants will need to bring **other personal hygiene** (toothpaste, etc.)

Minimum **one laptop for the country group**. We will have activities that require digital content.

A refillable **bottle of water**

Swimsuit for Sauna

Comfortable clothes and shoes for hiking and walking activities in the forest

Slippers to wear indoors the apartments and the guesthouse

There will be an intercultural night, you may bring light **objects that can represent your country**, as souvenirs or snacks.

Good mood and open mind!

Travel, finances

health insurance

- ♦ The accommodation and meals are 100% covered by the coordinating organization.
- ♦ The participants are provided with flight proposals that are the most suitable to reach Riga or other Baltic airports. The participants shall book all tickets and be reimbursed up to 2 months after the youth exchange. This reimbursement is conditioned to active participation and completion of the campaign posts.
- ♦ It is only allowed to book the airline tickets on the airline's own website, not through travel agencies or third-party websites. Plane tickets should always be accompanied by boarding passes. Consulting us is mandatory before booking any plane, train, or bus ticket.



Contact

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