



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE
Directorate B: Youth, Education and Erasmus+

Unit B.3: Youth and Volunteer Solidarity

First meeting of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group

27-28 March 2025, Brussels

MEETING REPORT

On 27-28 March 2025, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) launched [the EU Youth Stakeholders Group](#), as legacy of the 2022 European Year of Youth, delivering on commitments made in the [Communication on the Year of Youth](#).



This network connects the EU with young people and youth civil society.

It helps the European Commission have a better understanding of the needs and concerns of young people.

It strengthens young people's role in EU policymaking.

The meeting was moderated by Biliana Sirakova ([EU Youth Coordinator](#) in DG EAC) and attended by 92 members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group (member states' representatives, national youth councils, European youth organisations and stakeholders). The European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee were also represented.

DG EAC will publish the report, presentations and a collection of good practices from this first meeting on the [European Youth Portal](#).

Highlights



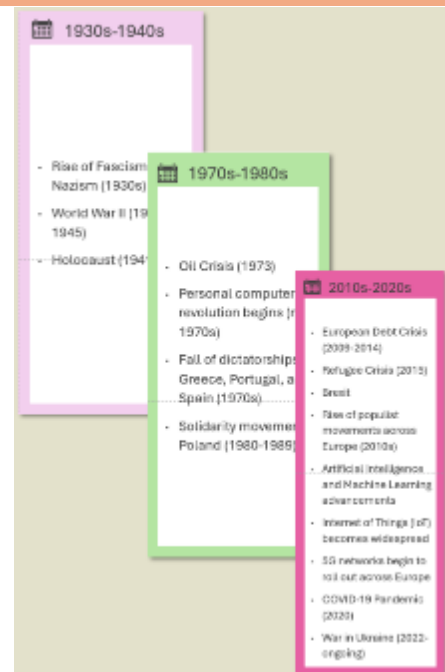
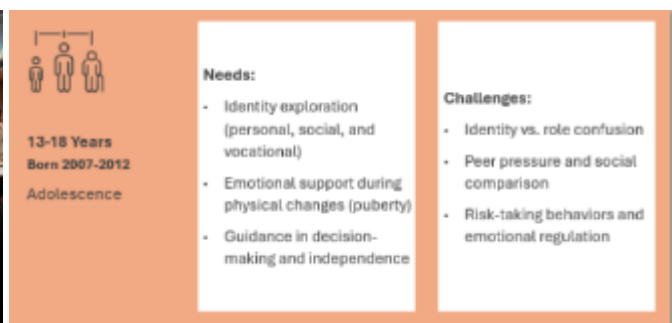
Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen (Director-General of DG EAC) opened the meeting.

In a fireside chat with Myrto Vamvakoudi (Policy Assistant in DG EAC), Pia set the context in which the group will operate and outlined the EU strategic priorities in the coming years. She gave examples of the contribution of EAC's policies and programmes across all fields of its portfolio.

Representatives of the Youth and Volunteer Solidarity Unit in DG EAC, Karen Vandeweghe (Deputy Head of Unit), Kari Gardelin (Policy Officer), Marta Touykova (Head of Sector) and Jadranka Vukovic Johnsson (Senior Expert) gave updates on **key youth policy initiatives**, including the [youth policy dialogues with Commissioners](#), the strengthening of the [EU Youth Dialogue](#), the Commission youth check and the [2024 EU Youth Report](#).



A workshop on the **new Strategy for Intergenerational Fairness** was run by Marta Malesinska and Nicola Spano from the EU Policy Lab of the Commission’s Joint Research Centre. The members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group examined different policy areas (such as housing, labour market, and healthcare) where the interests of different generations may diverge (as identified in previous workshops) and discussed the obstacles that prevent us from finding common ground. Interestingly, participants had to contribute from the perspective of a specific age group, most often different from their own.



In breakout sessions, the participants exchanged good practices linked to three topics: youth structures and youth participation, youth cross-sector cooperation and mainstreaming instruments and skills and non-formal learning in EU youth programmes (moderated by Stephanie Frangou (Policy Officer in the Erasmus+ coordination unit)).



The top voted practices included examples from member states (DE - Competence Centre for Child and Youth Participation and SI – the Government Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, an interministerial body), national youth councils (DE - "U18-Wahl" a mock national election for children and young people aged under 18, IE – initiative on skills recognition in youth programmes) and civil society (Hey Europe, Can We Talk? online citizen debates).

On the second day of the meeting, EAC's youth policy sector, represented by Marta Touykova (Head of Sector), Jadranka Vukovic Johnsson (Senior Expert) and Julien Wallerand (Policy Assistant) ran a **workshop on the future EU Youth Strategy**.

Ideas included stronger focus on targeted communication, more links and coherence between actions, link of the strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals, more flexibility of the strategy, so that it can be adapted to unforeseen circumstances, specific goals, key performance indicators and monitoring framework, increased funding and stronger role for youth civil society, stronger focus on youth mainstreaming.

Underlining the cross-sectoral nature of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group, the meeting featured presentations from:

Annalisa Cannoni (Policy Officer in the Schools and Multilingualism unit of DG EAC) on the [Union of Skills](#) and the **Action Plan on Basic Skills**.

Marie-Helene Boulanger (Head of Unit for Democracy, EU citizenship and anti-corruption in DG JUST) on the upcoming **Democracy Shield** initiative.

Sofia Afanasjeva from the EP Youth outreach unit presented the **Parliament's [youth offer](#)**.

Ioannis Malekos (Head of Unit for Youth and Volunteer Solidarity) drew conclusions highlighting that the launch of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group demonstrates that youth participation remains high on the agenda of the Commission. He noted that this commitment to young people is shared by member states and other EU institutions, and that the youth sector is active in advocating for youth and other important causes at the European level as well.





Commissioner Micallef addressed the participants inviting them to keep advocating for more opportunities for young people. He expressed readiness to continue engaging with young people and youth stakeholders across Europe as it was done in the first 100 days of this mandate. He thanked especially the young people, many of whom are volunteers.

Next steps:

The members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group were encouraged to continue exchanges on the online Team of Group. The rest of the meetings of the Group in 2025 will take place online.

Members were also invited to share with their networks and contribute to ongoing consultations and debates especially relevant for young people:

- [the EU's next long-term budget – EU funding for cross-border education, training and solidarity, young people, media, culture, and creative sectors, values, and civil society](#)
- [public consultation on the Democracy shield](#)
- [ideas from the youth policy dialogues with Commissioners on the Citizens Engagement Platform](#)
- [new Intergenerational Fairness Strategy on the Citizens Engagement Platform](#)

The report, presentations and a collection of good practices from this first meeting are available [here](#).

