



Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

Chaired by Silja Markkula, President of the European Youth Forum

Friday 21 January 2022, 10:00-12:00

1. Opening by the Chair

The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting, taking place in a hybrid format, and announced the webstreaming of the Working Group (recording available [here](#)).

She highlighted the state of play of the European Citizens' Panel 1 on "A stronger economy, social justice and jobs/Education, culture, youth and sport/Digital transformation", explaining that the third session of the Panel had been postponed to 25-27 February due to the health situation and that there were therefore no recommendations to discuss yet. Thus, the debate would be based on contributions on the Multilingual Digital Platform and previous discussions in the Working Group.

2. Reports on the state of play of discussions in European Citizens' Panel 1 and in National Citizens' Panels relating to the Working Group on Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

The Chair recalled that at the previous meeting of the Working Group, representatives of the European Citizens' Panel gave an overview of their discussions so far. In addition, ideas related to education, culture, youth and sport had been addressed in National Citizens' Panels. The recommendations of both European and National Citizens' Panels would be presented in the Plenary and in the Working Group in March.

3. Presentation by the Chair on the ongoing exchanges on the Multilingual Digital Platform and thematic discussion

The debate was structured by 4 topics: education, sport, youth and culture. The Chair first summarized the input from the platform and previous discussions and then asked the members of the Working Group, based on the contributions on the platform, which other concrete proposals could be put forward and how the existing work in the group could be built upon.

3.1 Education

The Chair noted that so far the main topics highlighted have been: ensuring equal access to education especially in the context of the pandemic; fostering European identity through common teaching programmes or a history book; tackling racism and intolerance via education; promoting a future proof education including climate, digitalization and soft skills; developing common ground between business and educational institutions to better respond to the needs of market; improving access to and visibility of mobility programmes (Erasmus +), as well as improving the recognition of apprenticeships. The debate focused on:

- Access to quality education and life-long learning in remote or rural areas, but also for marginalized groups. There were calls for putting in place robust digital infrastructure across the EU and for

developing online resources and teaching, including teaching platforms, in order to help students and teachers. The idea of a common European framework of reference for quality education was raised.

- Future-proofing education was also addressed in several interventions: teaching children soft skills, interpersonal relations and communication skills, health and environmental issues, but also reskilling adults who have to change jobs. There were calls for training teachers to level up education offers, as well as to ensure the availability of up-to-date textbooks, including through an online platform. One suggestion was to offer every young person a package of guaranteed skills recognized across the EU.
- Developing a concrete plan for implementing the European Education Area by 2025 was suggested.
- Encouraging the mobility of teachers and local level officials/politicians and developing the Erasmus+ programme through hybrid and online learning was raised. Concerns were expressed regarding brain drain due to economic constraints or as a side-effect of mobility.
- There were calls to have a broad module or curriculum for teaching Europe in schools (covering history, culture, values and current affairs), or a common strand on EU history and the working of the institutions as a more limited solution, to foster common European identity.
- Ideas were raised to tackle racism and intolerance by introducing ethics classes at school, possibly on a mandatory basis, teaching about issues such as gender equality, sexual orientation and inclusive society.
- The need for greater mutual recognition of academic degrees and apprenticeships including for those with migrant and refugee backgrounds.
- the promotion of minority languages through educational opportunities previously discussed in the context of culture was emphasised.

3.2 Sport

The Chair noted that so far the main topics highlighted have been: unhealthy lifestyles; the need for more integrated sport and health policies at European level; promoting European identity through EU teams and EU branding; the need for more awareness raising, such as through the European Week of Sports; and promoting the knowledge of traditional sports. In the debate, the following ideas were emphasized:

- The need to provide better infrastructure and financing for grass root sports not just “elite sport”, as well as to support local sports clubs and provide education in sport and healthy lifestyles, in particular for younger children. The need for more sport teachers was mentioned in the same context, as well as the importance of peer learning and exchange of best practices between sports officials.
- The creation of a common sports policy at EU level, covering lifestyle and professional sport, and guaranteeing all children an access to sport, also as part of the implementation of the Child Guarantee.
- An idea was mentioned to use the European Week of Sports and events across the EU to promote local and traditional sports.
- Some interventions focused on the contribution of sport to promoting an inclusive society (including equal treatment between men and women).
- The idea of using EU teams and an EU flag at international competitions to foster European identity was recalled.

3.3 Youth

The Chair noted that so far the main topics highlighted have been: how to tackle youth unemployment and enhance access to quality jobs, including banning unpaid internships; a better involvement of young people in the decision-making process and lowering the voting age to 16 years old; mainstreaming of youth across different EU policies; increasing and expanding mobility via the Erasmus+ programme. In the debate, the Working Group members underlined in particular:

- Their concern to ensure young people’s access to the labour market and quality jobs. Concrete ideas mentioned included a ban at European level of unpaid internships through a legal instrument, excluding discriminatory wage practices, such as youth minimum wages, or considering positive

discrimination in favor of young people, as well as combining education with practical work in businesses.

- The idea of creating a youth platform to offer better guidance to young people, by allowing them to exchange of ideas, explore study, job, and internship opportunities, also improving their understanding of what businesses need.
- The suggestion to create a funding mechanism for youth entrepreneurship projects, with the aim of creating 1 million start-ups in 10 years, in line with the relevant idea on the Multilingual Digital Platform.
- The importance of implementing and strengthening the Youth Guarantee in all Member States and addressing issues encountered by young people in the context of the pandemic, as well as increasing the support given to youth workers and youth organisations, including through funding and a suggestion of a Common Framework of Reference at EU level to support youth workers.
- A better recognition of informal and non-formal learning was also raised.
- Ensuring young people’s access to social protection and addressing the issue of housing, including through EU funding.
- Better involvement of young people in decision-making and the design and implementation of EU policies, going beyond “youth issues” and the lifetime of the Conference. The idea of granting voting rights from the age of 16 again divided opinions. It was suggested that any such right should go hand in hand with civic education and a common European curriculum.
- The creation of a European civic service was raised again as a means to enhance solidarity.

3.4 Culture

The Chair noted that so far the main topics highlighted have been: how to promote a European identity, such as through the organisation of international events and promotion of European heritage and cultural exchanges; protection of minorities (languages and cultures); the need for a social protection and a protected status for artists; the role of culture in the fight against racism and intolerance. The idea of a ‘Culture Commissioner’ was also raised. In the debate the following points were added or repeated:

- Promoting social inclusion and the fight against racism and intolerance through culture, for instance by reducing barriers to participation and supporting projects and NGOs furthering these objectives.
- Creating a specific fund for supporting cultural heritage, which would bring together different sources of funding at EU level, and promoting cultural heritage through digital means.
- The high interest in the European Bauhaus initiative and the need to further promote it across European regions.
- The idea of a European “cultural pass”, going beyond free train tickets under Discover EU, to encourage young people to discover Europe culturally. The idea of books to promote European identity was also put forward.
- The concern regarding the protection of minority languages was repeated, with suggestions to put in place a “holistic multilingualism policy” funded by EU, ensuring that children can study and be taught in minority languages, and providing funding for multilingual content and the recruitment of teachers. Against this background, there were also some calls for ensuring the implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and encouraging Member States to sign up to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
- The ideas of a European statute for artists and encouraging their mobility were raised again.

4. Closing by the Chair

In her concluding remarks, the Chair noted similarities in the ideas raised during the Working Group meetings, considering this a good place for the Working Group to start discussions on citizens’ recommendations. She summarized the main points made in the debate and noted that further work would be organized on the basis of the recommendations of citizens’ panels.

Annex: List of Members of the Working group

Chair **Silja Markkula** **European Youth Forum**

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Ms	Greta Karoline	ADAMEK	European citizens panels
Ms	Christine	ANDERSON	European Parliament
Mr	Tiago	ANTUNES	Council
Mr	Hugues	BAYET	National Parliaments
Mr	Matteo Luigi	BIANCHI	National Parliaments
Mr	Emil	BOC	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Fabíola	CARDOSO	National Parliaments
Ms	Paula	CARVALHO	Council
Mr	Lefteris	CHRISTOFOROU	European Parliament
Ms	Gabriela	CRETU	National Parliaments
Mr	François	DECOSTER	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Daniela	DUMITRU	European citizens panels
Ms	Laurence	FARRENG	European Parliament
Ms	Kinga	GAL	European Parliament
Ms	Josune	GOROSPE	National Parliaments
Mr	Enzo	GORZA	European citizens panels
Ms	Alicia	HOMS GINEL	European Parliament
Ms	Zuzana	HOZLÁROVÁ	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Tea	JARC	Social Partners
Ms	Danuta	JAZŁOWIECKA	National Parliaments
Ms	Željka	JOSIĆ	Council
Mr	Peter	KMEC	National Parliaments
Mr	Antonis	KOURRAS	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Regina	LAUCYTE	European citizens panels
Ms	Silja	MARKKULA	European Youth Forum
Mr	Kieran	MCCARTHY	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Nora	MEBAREK	European Parliament
Ms	Dace	MELBĀRDE	European Parliament
Mr	Jean Claude	MICALLEF	National Parliaments
Ms	Baiba	MILTOVICA	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Vidmantas	MITKUS	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Pascual	NAVARRO	Council of the European Union
Mr	Victor	NEGRESCU	European Parliament
Ms	Aoife	O'LEARY	European citizens panels
Mr	Elyes	OUERGI	European citizens panels
Mr	George	PAPANDREOU	National Parliaments
Mr	Luc	PAQUE	Council
Mr	Igors	PIMENOV	National Parliaments
Ms	Anne	PRÉDOUR	Council
Mr	Paul	RUBIG	European Economic and Social Committee

Mr	Piero	SAVARIS	European citizens panels
Mr	David	SMOLJAK	National Parliaments
Ms	Michaela	SOJDROVA	European Parliament
Mr	Guy	VERHOFSTADT	European Parliament
Ms	Isabel	WISELER-LIMA	European Parliament
Ms	Salima	YENBOU	European Parliament
Ms	Marina	ZELENETSKA	European citizens panels