

# **Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Jessika Roswall, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy**

Ungdomsdialog - Gör din röst hörd

21 February 2025

Solna Gymnasium, Solna, Sweden

## Introduction

On 21 February, **Jessika Roswall**, EU Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, hosted a Youth Policy Dialogue in Solna Gymnasium, Sweden. Solna is located in the outskirts of Stockholm.

The event brought together over 400 high-school students on-site (from two schools) and an additional 300 students joining remotely from 12 schools across Sweden (see list in Annex). The dialogue was interactive, featuring live polling of the audience, a question-and-answer session involving 22 students, and direct engagement with Commissioner Roswall.

The 1hr30 dialogue was held in Swedish and was moderated by Johan Wullt, head of Communication at the European Commission Representation in Stockholm, together with four “student ambassadors” who introduced their peers as they took the floor to address Commissioner Roswall.

The schools that participated in the Policy Dialogue are part of an existing network of 350 teachers and school leaders all over Sweden, managed by the EC Representation. All schools in this network received an invitation to attend the dialogue in person or digitally. 14 schools registered and one (Solna Gymnasium) was selected to host the event. Alongside the Commissioner’s environmental portfolio, the students selected two additional topics for the dialogue: security and organized crime, and the future of the EU. All 14 schools were invited to submit questions and ideas to Commissioner Roswall on these three topics. From a total of 40 submitted questions, the Cabinet selected 18 to be answered live by the Commissioner during the dialogue. The remaining 22 questions received written responses after the event.

## Summary of preparations

Students at the 14 schools prepared for the Policy Dialogue in class with their teachers, as part of their regular learning programme. The EC Representation was regularly in contact with the teachers to facilitate the process. Questions were drafted and revised by students and then submitted to the Representation.

The Dialogue was announced on [DG ENV website](#) and through the DG ENV newsletter in January, and on social media a few days before the event.

## Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue

The event started with short introductory remarks from Commissioner Roswall, in which she presented her portfolio priorities and stressed how important it is for her to connect with young people whose lives are directly impacted by decisions made in Brussels.

The Dialogue was divided in four thematic segments: (1) get to know your Commissioner; (2) environment; (3) security; (4) future of the EU.

Throughout the event, the interactions were fast-paced and upbeat. The students repeatedly expressed support for their peers who rose to address the Commissioner. Approximately half of the questions originated from pupils participating remotely via weblink, which added a valuable element to the proceedings by extending the discussion to many other schools across Sweden. This aspect imparted a particularly dynamic and inclusive character to the dialogue.

Two tables at the entrance of the meeting hall provided general information about the EU (Europe Direct Stockholm) and information on EU careers (EU Career Ambassador network).

## Topics of discussion

### 1. Get to know your Commissioner

In this introductory segment, students asked the Commissioner about her educational and professional background, how she became EU Commissioner, and the political file she is most passionate about.

This segment allowed students to familiarize themselves with Commissioner Roswall on a personal and professional level. Understanding the Commissioner's background and areas of passion helps demystify the role and makes the institution more accessible to young audiences.

Establishing a personal connection and open communication aligns with the EU's broader goals of transparency and engagement with young citizens and contributes to the Commission's efforts to increase public trust by making its political leaders more relatable and approachable.

### 2. Environment

In this segment, students raised a number of environmental issues ranging from Europe's water strategy to the EU's action to protect endangered species, solutions to tackle the increasing amount of textile waste, and the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on the environment.

In an instant poll at the end of this segment, Commissioner Roswall asked the young attendees which actions they would like the EU to take to better protect the environment. Most students replied they would like to see the EU lead global efforts to protect our planet. Better protection of endangered species and support for sustainable agriculture and forestry came in a close second and third place.

The discussion on a wide variety of environmental issues reflects the growing concern among youth regarding sustainability, highlighting their awareness and proactive stance on environmental policies.

This segment related directly to the EU's Green Deal and its implementation, and to Europe's commitment to global leadership in environmental protection. Of particular relevance is the students' high interest in water issues, as the Commission is due to adopt the EU Water Resilience Strategy later this year. The high concern about textile waste is also very topical, as the co-legislators just reached a political agreement on a revised Waste Framework Directive which will make textile producers responsible for their products throughout their entire life cycle. Textiles should also be one of the first product groups to be tackled under the new ecodesign rules (ESPR).

Moreover, the students' clear support for EU leadership in planetary protection aligns with policy priorities aimed at safeguarding biodiversity and beating pollution (eg COP16; current work on international plastic treaty), promoting sustainable practices, and addressing climate change on a global scale.

### 3. Security

In this segment, students wanted to know more about how the EU deals with environmental and cross border crimes. They also raised the issue of free movement.

At the end of this segment, Commissioner Roswall asked students to rate the importance of Member States cooperation on security issues, via an instant poll. 73% of the audience rated it very important; 19% moderately important; 6% neutral; and 2% not important at all.

This segment underscored students' interest in understanding how security challenges are tackled by the EU. This interest reflects a broader anxiety among young people about the safety and stability of the world they inhabit. Concerns about environmental degradation, geopolitical tensions and crime resonate deeply with the younger generation, who often feel a more pronounced vulnerability to future uncertainties. Addressing these issues is crucial not only to advancing the EU's policy objectives but also to alleviating the concerns of young Europeans, thereby contributing to a more secure, fair and cohesive society.

#### 4. Future of the EU

Commissioner Roswall introduced this segment by asking students via the interactive poll whether the EU should allow more countries to join the Union. 78% replied "yes". The following discussion covered the EU's role in the Paris Agreement, relations with the current US administration, and the future enlargement of the EU.

This segment allowed students to explore the EU's future trajectory, contemplating enlargement and the EU's geopolitical role. The pupils' obvious interest on enlargement and Europe's international commitments such as the Paris Agreement supports the EU's strategic objectives of fostering unity and maintaining its role as a pivotal global actor. Importantly, the second and third instant polls showed strong support among the pupils for both increased EU cooperation on security matters and a larger union welcoming new Member States. As Commissioner Roswall summarised, *"In the challenging geopolitical landscape we face, it is more important than ever that we stand up for the EU's democratic values."*

## Main takeaways

1. **The importance of building trust and engagement** – Getting to know Commissioner Roswall on a more 'personal' level helped students connect with her, making the EU more transparent and relatable.
2. **Strong youth concern for the environment** – Students highlighted concrete issues such as water management, textile waste and protection of endangered species, showing a genuine and strong support for EU leadership in environmental protection. This impression was confirmed by a recent opinion poll conducted among 16-30 year olds by the European Parliament, consistently putting environment and climate policies among the top priorities for political action among young people.
3. **Security and cooperation matter** – Students recognized the importance of cross-border security cooperation, with a resounding majority rating it as very important for a stable and safe Europe.
4. **Broad support for EU enlargement** – A large majority of students favoured EU enlargement, aligning with the Union's strategic goals of unity, international cooperation, and democratic values.

## Follow-up activities

The key takeaways will serve as initial input as DG ENV builds on this first dialogue to develop further engagement with young stakeholders.

As more questions were received than could be taken on stage, written replies were prepared by the EC Representation, DG ENV and other Commission services, to be sent to all students who did not have time to address the Commissioner during the dialogue.

Participants were asked to fill out a satisfaction survey. Their feedback and recommendations will be taken into account for the organisation of future dialogues.

## Communications

On the day of the event, the dialogue was featured on the social media accounts of [Commissioner Roswall](#), [DG ENV](#), [EC Representation in Stockholm](#), [Europe Direct Stockholm](#), the [City of Solna](#) and a selection of participating schools (see for example [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

A recording of the event was published on the [YouTube account of the EC Representation in Stockholm](#) and shared with DG EAC to link to the Youth Policy Dialogues page. The Representation promoted the recording of the event on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

In the following days, DG ENV published further social media posts ([X](#), [LinkedIn](#); [Facebook](#)), including short interviews of four student ambassadors and the Commissioner (eg [IG reel on textile waste](#) ; on [recycling](#))

DG ENV also published a [news release](#) following the event; the news release was also part of the [February DG ENV newsletter](#).

Selected footage of the event and /or the interviews may also be used during Green Week 2025.

## Media outreach

<b>X</b> <a href="https://x.com/EU_ENV/status/1891773758735577534">https://x.com/EU_ENV/status/1891773758735577534</a> <a href="https://x.com/EU_ENV/status/1894011594285199811">https://x.com/EU_ENV/status/1894011594285199811</a>	<b>Total</b> Impressions: 5.363 Engagements: 165 Link clicks: 16
<b>LinkedIn</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7297540985796915202">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7297540985796915202</a> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7299774850619879425">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7299774850619879425</a>	<b>Total</b> Impressions: 4.908 Engagements: 620 Clicks: 476
<b>Facebook</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19xZRv2Vqo/">https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19xZRv2Vqo/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/EUEnvironment/posts/pfbid02qV">https://www.facebook.com/EUEnvironment/posts/pfbid02qV</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/EUEnvironment/posts/pfbid0bPNV">https://www.facebook.com/EUEnvironment/posts/pfbid0bPNV</a>	11,200 views, 36 Interactions 11,768 views, 98 interactions 6,790 views, 49 interactions
<b>Instagram</b> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DGnbOFOMP_F/?hl=en">https://www.instagram.com/p/DGnbOFOMP_F/?hl=en</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/insights/media/3575681907455717255/?hl=en">https://www.instagram.com/insights/media/3575681907455717255/?hl=en</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/DGNWFklsajn/?hl=en">https://www.instagram.com/p/DGNWFklsajn/?hl=en</a>	6,331 plays, 156 likes 5,897 views, 172 likes 4,953 views, 155 likes

### **Lessons learned from the communication activities**

- Strong support from EC Representation in Stockholm: The Representation's network allowed for involvement of 14 schools across Sweden, who shared news about the Dialogue on their own channels.
- Engaging content creation: Conducting interviews and quizzes with selected students resulted in authentic and engaging content for our social media platforms.
- Corporate visual identity kit: The corporate visual identity kit was instrumental in creating cohesive visuals for various platforms, including the web, social media, and the meeting hall, with 3 "roll-ups" and backdrop presentation.
- Professional imagery: The presence of an EBS photographer and videographer ensured high-quality images of the dialogue were available immediately for use (see here <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/reportage/P-065513>)

To be considered in following editions:

- Language regime: The event's language setup was a barrier for non-Swedish speakers, reducing potential outreach.
- Webstreaming: The absence of webstreaming limited the usefulness of advanced publicity (no possibility to register and follow proceedings) and restricted the engagement of a broader audience during the Dialogue.

## Annex: Participating schools

School	City
Östbergsskolan	Frösön/Östersund
Gislaveds gymnasium	Gislaved
Hvitfeldtska gymnasiet	Göteborg
Polhemsgymnasiet	Göteborg
Hjo folkhögskola	Hjo
Malmaskolan	Kolsva
Aranäsgymnasiet	Kungsbacka
Sörgårdsskola	Mölnadal
Solna gymnasium (host)	Solna
Cybergymnasiet	Stockholm
SG Södra Viken	Sunne
Arenaskolan	Timrå
Jensen Kopparlunden	Västerås
Wisbygymnasiet	Visby

