

Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Wopke Hoekstra, European Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, and Glenn Micallef, European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport

Title of Youth Policy Dialogue: Climate Resilience and Preparedness

Date: 7 May 2026

Location: The One, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

The Youth Policy Dialogue on Climate Resilience and Preparedness brought together 17 young people from 12 different EU countries to discuss climate adaptation and resilience with European Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, Wopke Hoekstra, and European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, Glenn Micallef

The topic of climate resilience and preparedness was chosen in light of the Commission's ongoing work on the European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience, expected to be adopted in the second half of 2026. Youth input was sought given that young people are among those most directly affected by climate impacts, and will bear the long-term consequences of today's adaptation decisions. The topic is also directly relevant to Commissioner Micallef's portfolio on intergenerational fairness, making co-hosting the event a natural fit.

Participants were selected in partnership with European youth organisations, which were invited to nominate candidates through their member organisations, as well as through youth organisations particularly relevant for the topic (such as young farmers and rural youth). The selection process prioritised gender balance and geographical diversity across EU Member States, as well as diversity of professional and academic backgrounds. Participants included farmers, engineers, energy professionals, researchers, climate advocates, NGO workers and community organisers, all between 18 and 30 years old.

Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue (In person-meeting)

The day began with a welcome coffee and introductions at 9:30, followed by a presentation on climate resilience and adaptation by a DG CLIMA policy officer (10:00–11:30). A pre-Dialogue workshop (11:30–12:00) allowed participants to form groups, discuss the topics and prepare their questions and testimonies before a lunch break.

The Youth Policy Dialogue itself took place from 13:00 to 15:00, moderated by Martina Ceccarelli, DG CLIMA, and was structured around three main themes, each introduced by personal testimonies from participants:

- What just resilience means on the ground for young people (approx. 1 hour), covering extreme weather and health; food, water and nature; and cities and infrastructure
- Climate education and capacity building (approx. 30 minutes)
- Youth voice in adaptation policy (approx. 30 minutes)

Commissioner Micallef opened the Dialogue by setting the tone for the afternoon. He acknowledged the billions of euros already spent on dealing with climate disasters and stressed that this cost will only continue to rise without decisive action. He emphasised that young people should inherit a world shaped by young people, and that youth voices must be around the table. Commissioner Hoekstra engaged

throughout the discussion, drawing on the personal testimonies of participants and sharing his own reflections on the urgency and difficulty of climate action.

The event was interactive and conversational. Participants offered personal testimonies that grounded the discussion in lived experience, before moving to questions and a broader exchange with both Commissioners. The dynamic was generally open and frank, with participants raising both personal stories and pointed policy questions. Commissioners engaged directly and substantively, though participants noted in feedback that some answers remained too general and called for more concrete follow-up.

In their closing remarks, Commissioner Micallef encouraged participants to make themselves impossible to ignore — to run for office, use every platform available, and stay engaged. He pointed to the forthcoming 2027 EU Youth Strategy as a concrete avenue for embedding youth participation in policy. Commissioner Hoekstra acknowledged the scale of what lies ahead and encouraged participants to continue the good work.

Following the formal Dialogue, a mini-workshop (15:00–16:00) allowed participants to discuss and summarise the main takeaways from the afternoon.

Main takeaways

1. Climate change is already a lived reality for young Europeans, and adaptation is not keeping pace.

Participants brought vivid personal testimonies: disappearing Arctic ice witnessed across generations of a Norwegian farming family; heatwaves devastating mussel farming and tourism on Italy's Adriatic coast; fish populations disrupted by invasive species in Finnish waters. These stories underlined a consistent message: climate change is not a future risk but a present reality, and Europe's adaptation efforts are not yet adequate. Commissioner Hoekstra acknowledged that "the cost will be higher if we do nothing" and that mitigation alone is not enough. Both Commissioners stressed the need to accelerate action across all fronts.

2. Resilience must be just, locally grounded and properly resourced.

Across all three thematic sessions, participants raised the gap between political ambition and practical reality. Farmers expressed readiness to invest in resilience but flagged the lack of capacity and funding to do so. Participants from coastal regions, cities and rural communities highlighted the uneven distribution of climate impacts and the risk that the most vulnerable communities — those in low-value property, deprioritised neighbourhoods, or remote areas with poor infrastructure — are systematically left behind. Nature-based solutions were identified as critical, with one participant noting that every euro invested in nature can generate up to eight in return. The new Integrated Framework was seen as an important opportunity to address these gaps, provided it goes beyond general principles to deliver concrete, accessible support.

3. Meaningful youth engagement requires follow-through, not just dialogue.

The most consistent message across all sessions was a desire for genuine partnership rather than tokenistic participation. Participants called for clear follow-up mechanisms, transparency about how their input feeds into policy, and structural involvement in adaptation planning from the outset. Several participants noted that youth should not only be seen as vulnerable groups, but as active agents of change. Commissioner Micallef acknowledged this directly, calling on young people to organise, mobilise and make themselves impossible to ignore, and pointing to the 2027 EU Youth Strategy as a vehicle for embedding more meaningful participation. The debate continues on the [Citizens' Engagement Platform](#).

Follow-up Activities (if applicable)

The outcomes of the Dialogue will feed into the European Integrated Framework for Climate Resilience, expected to be adopted in Q4 2026. Key takeaways have also been submitted to the Citizens' Engagement Platform to extend the conversation beyond those present in Brussels.

Annex

News article: [Europe's youth engage with Commissioners Hoekstra and Micallef on climate resilience](#)