

Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration

'Schengen'

6 December 2024

Schengen (Luxembourg) / Perl (Germany)

Introduction

On 6 December, five days into his mandate, Commissioner Magnus Brunner, in charge of Internal Affairs and Migration, paid a symbolic visit to Schengen and chose the Schengen Lyzeum for the first Youth Policy Dialogue organised under the new Commission. The Youth Policy Dialogue brought together 30 young people to discuss the future of Schengen and the priorities in the areas of internal security and rights protection, migration and asylum.

The core theme of Schengen and freedom of movement resonated well with the symbolic place where the dialogue was held, in particular with a view to the 40 year anniversary of Schengen Agreement in June 2025. The venue for the dialogue - Schengen Lyzeum, is located in Perl, a German village situated just across the river Mosel, directly opposite the Luxembourg town of Schengen, where the Schengen Free Movement Agreement was signed in 1985, nearly 40 years ago. The Schengen Lyzeum is unique in the sense that it is a binational school with degrees equally valid in Germany and in Luxembourg. The school has 850 students of 30 different nationalities, most from Germany, Luxembourg and France. The dialogue engaged 30 young people, aged 16 to 18. They cross borders every day to go to school and speak all three languages (German, French, Luxembourgish). The participants were representative of the population of the EU, both from a geographical and in a socio-economic background.

Summary of the Online Preparatory Meetings

Most participants already had a base knowledge of the EU. With the support of the EC Representation in Luxembourg and under the guidance of a teacher, the students prepared for the Youth Policy Dialogue on the basis of Commissioner Brunner's mission letter and the Commission's Policy Guidelines. The students prepared questions of particular interest to them, notably regarding the role and priorities of the Commissioner as well as about the freedom of movement, and EU challenges regarding migration, security and fundamental rights, as well as racial hatred and online child abuse.

Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue (In-Person Meeting)

The dialogue was moderated by Catherine Nothum, a former radio host and a social media influencer with a particular interest in making young people's voices heard. The size of the group (30) and the allocated time (1h20) allowed for interactivity for all those wishing to speak.

The dialogue kicked off with introductory remarks by the Commissioner, followed by questions of the students and the Commissioner's replies. The exchanges were organised in thematic clusters, to allow more in-depth attention to each.

In his opening remarks, the Commissioner highlighted the importance of Schengen area and freedom of movement as unique strengths of the EU, essential for the people but also crucial for the economy and Europe's competitiveness. The Commission is working hard to overcome challenges facing the EU and the Member States in relation to the Schengen Area. The Commissioner highlighted his responsibilities related to internal security, migration, the fight against antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and the Article 17 dialogue.

The Commissioner's closing remarks highlighted the importance of exchanges with youth and the special European role of Schengen and this school.

Topics of Discussion

The exchange broadly covered three core themes driven by the questions prepared by the students:

- (1) The role, priorities and the **professional path** of the Commissioner: young participants were interested in the Commissioner's experience as an EU trainee and his motivation for international work. The Commissioner stressed the important role of the Commission in building a truly European approach with an "EU hat", in close cooperation with all the Member States.
- (2) The most widely discussed topic was **migration and border security**, in particular the importance of human rights protection in this context, as well as the need to improve integration of migrants into host societies. The Commissioner stressed the importance of implementing the Pact for Asylum and Migration, strengthening FRONTEX, and developing an internal security strategy that also respects human rights. He acknowledged that migration and related risks are often captured and amplified by populist forces, and a key to preventing this would be to "give people the feeling that we have control over what is happening in Europe". The Commissioner also stressed the need for Member State solidarity in the area of migration, and the role of attracting talent from third countries to strengthen our economy also as ways to combat irregular migration: "Working is important to be integrated and to have an active role in society. Language also plays a crucial role. There is still room for improvement."
- (3) The EU and its role in managing various global crises, including the prospects of the war in Ukraine and its impact on EU security. On Russia's war in Ukraine, the Commissioner emphasized the need to "do everything we can to prevent such wars of aggression in the future" and to have Ukraine fully on board in finding solutions to this war which is also an

affront to our European values and economy. The EU has recently faced several crises, and “we all have to do more to overcome them and show that Europe works”.

There were about the protection of minors from sexual violence online and offline, and about the Commissioner’s plan to address anti-Muslim hatred. He confirmed his commitment to address these important challenges where incidents are unfortunately on the rise.

Follow-up Activities

Follow-up will be ensured in line with the Youth Policy Dialogue guidelines, to ensure that the youth voices are heard, communicated and further taken into account:

- The Representation has prepared a transcript of the youth dialogue, for further uptake in policy work;
- The Representation shared its lessons learnt from the Youth Policy Dialogue with colleagues in other Representations at the RepCom network meeting on 19 December, to foster exchange of best practices and tips;
- The Representation will return to the school for a feedback session on 24 January 2025, in order to source reactions from the dialogue participants about their expectations and experience at the event, to take stock of further ideas on the topics discussed, as well as to outline other possibilities for further engagement with the EU, including: (i) volunteering opportunities with the Representation notably in view of the events related to the 40th anniversary of Schengen Agreement in June 2025 and Europe Day 2025, (ii) group study visit to the EC and EP in Brussels, to further learn about the EU institutions and youth engagement opportunities, (iii) video testimonials by interested participants of the dialogue are also part of the follow-up activities.
- A debrief with the moderator is planned to gather feedback about the format and possible tips for further events.
- After the dialogue, a young content creator filmed a short interview with the Commissioner for social media.

Annexes and useful links

Media outreach statistics

Press coverage

Luxembourgish and Austrian press focused on the Commissioner's visit in Schengen, some mentioning the youth dialogue:

<https://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/brunners-erste-reise-als-migrationskommissar-geht-nach-schengen/615067274>

<https://lequotidien.lu/politique-societe/pour-leon-gloden-schengen-est-essentiel/>

<https://www.wort.lu/politik/neuer-eu-kommissar-brunner-besucht-schengen-auf-erster-dienstreise/28837901.html>

Web and Social Media activity

Date	Platform	Link	Views / Impressions	Interactions
05.12	COM's daily news website	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_24_6241	-	-
05.12	DG HOME X	https://x.com/EUHomeAffairs/status/1864640417045651569	1186	20
05.12.	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/ue_luxembourg/p/DDNCWJSInKa/	3774	39
05.12.	Facebook	(4) ↪ First Youth Policy Dialogue... - Commission européenne au Luxembourg Facebook	350	4
05.12.	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864696277222425016	816	26
05.12.	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864696280901144992	845	29
06.12	DG HOME X	https://x.com/EUHomeAffairs/status/1865051073217478875	879	10
06.12	Facebook	(4) Today, Commissioner Magnus... - Commission européenne au Luxembourg Facebook	2065	17
06.12	Facebook	https://www.instagram.com/p/DDPVe4OusWh/?img_index=1	1247	72
06.12	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/p/DDPv3amiGUU/?img_index=1	n/a (collab post)	229

06.12	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864970001767149715	5319	34
06.12	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864979876626804808	769	13
06.12	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864986728626639257	958	15
06.12	X/Twitter	https://x.com/UE_Luxembourg/status/1864995702301950174	1413	10
18.12	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/ue_luxembourg/reel/DDtr2T2PjzR/	2755	101
18.12	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/UEauLuxembourg/videos/1232517467808195	118	5
19.12	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/ue_luxembourg/reel/DDw92SjOLQo/	1869	32
19.12	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=521937180889757	96	1
		TOTAL (as of 20.12)	24459	657