

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE REPORT

SPACE FOR DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

Report on the Implementation Phase of 8th Cycle of the EU
Youth Dialogue

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11 Things to know about the EUYD8 Implementation phase

1. The 8th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD8) runs from 1st of July 2020 to 31st December 2021 under the Trio Presidency of Germany - Portugal - Slovenia. The topic of the cycle is Youth Goal #9 'Space and Participation for All' under the title 'Europe for YOUth - YOUth for Europe: Space for Democracy and Participation'.
2. The EUYD8 implementation phase takes place in the second half of the cycle. The intention of the implementation phase of EUYD8 is to realise the outcomes and ideas generated towards implementing Youth Goal #9 during the first half of the cycle.
3. Reports on implementation were submitted by national working groups in all EU-27 countries except, Latvia, Romania, Greece, and Poland as well as International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation Working Group.
4. 125 follow-on actions were identified, all of which contributed towards implementing Youth Goal #9. Some actions occurred as a direct result of EUYD8. Others were more influenced by local and national initiatives but were still linked to EUYD8. Working groups were allowed to report completed actions, and actions still in planning.
5. Nearly 2/3 of actions contributed to more than one Youth Goal #9 target. 56.8% of actions focused on Target 1 (access to decision making) making it the most contributed to target.
6. The second most contributed to target was Target 7 (youth information). 44% of actions contributed to this. Working groups interpreted this target to include both youth information and educational activities.

7. 31.5% of actions aimed at enabling young people to engage with decision makers, 30.6% of action aimed at delivering educational or informational activities to young people, and 25% of actions aimed at improving the way participation activities were carried out (capacity building). The remaining 13.0% of actions were a mixture of these three.
8. The most widely reported barrier to implementing actions was COVID-19 and the challenges of running youth participation initiatives in digital formats successfully.
9. There were barriers conducting communications and outreach work to recruit young people. It said to be complex communicating what EUYD8 was, and what Youth Goal #9 was. This affected communication with other political stakeholders as well as young people.
10. Another barrier was gaining political support, and the challenges of building alliances with other actors to support EUYD8. Some working groups also identified challenges getting support from senior decision makers or fitting in with national political agendas.
11. In general, working groups did not attempt to systematically implement all the demands and suggested actions from the first phase of the cycle. Instead, they focused on similar actions that would fit with national priorities, and that contributed to Youth Goal #9. Overall EUDY8 has had a positive impact on youth participation across the EU.

Barriers to EUYD8 Implementation activities

This document is one of two documents containing all of the barriers reported by working groups under EUYD8 implementation.

The challenge of digitalising activities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic was the most commonly reported barrier.

This document contains all of the comments and reports from the working groups relating to other other barriers:

- Challenges building alliances, getting political support and working with other stakeholders
- Challenges with the concept of EUYD and youth participation
- Challenges with communications and outreach
- Challenges with use of digital tools and methods (see also pandemic section)
- Organisational issues (timing and resources)
- Miscellaneous challenges

Barrier to implementation

The barriers to implementation for many actions were not reported by working groups or were not reported in detail. Some working groups expressed that they had not faced barriers with actions, or they that the barriers were unknown as actions were still in planning.

The most widely reported barriers were issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. These consistently described the challenges being able to deliver activities in digital formats, or in some instances in face-to-face formats that respected social distance and vaccination guidelines. Some working groups reported the pandemic had weakened young people's motivation to participate. Planning activities within the uncertainty of COVID-19 was an ongoing concern.

Closely connected to this were barriers relating to the use of digital tools. This related to the ability and confidence of working groups to deliver activities digital formats effectively, especially when new methods were used. Some working groups reported concerns they could not make digital tools and formats inclusive, or that young people did not have digital access. In general, there was a feeling that implementing activities digitally was more challenging than face to face work.

Conducting communications and outreach work effectively was also a barrier affecting some actions. Several working groups identified challenges using social media for outreach effectively. There were also challenges conducting outreach through schools and youth centres, particularly during the summer period when schools were closed. This was said to make recruitment to activities challenging, particularly those that targeted marginalised groups of young people.

Communicating effectively about EUYD8 and the youth goals was identified as a barrier. It was said to be challenge making some of the concepts and ideas accessible and understandable to both young people and other stakeholders.

'It was challenging to convey the relevance of the European Youth Goals (EYGs) to the different policy fields. Not every stakeholder is familiar to them, so it has taken a while to spread the idea and history of the EYGs'

- Austrian Working Group Report

'A general observation we have made is that there are too many activities or initiatives from EU to have the time implement activities. For example, we had to focus the 9 cycle of EU youth dialogue since Sweden is part of trio-presidency for that cycle. Another problem is the Conference on the future of Europe. Many of actors on local and national level want to focus on the Future conference and it is difficult to find the synergies. On a local level, in Sweden there are the 290 municipalities that have some autonomy which makes it complicated to coordinate the youth dialogue on local level'

- Swedish National working Group

The breadth of topics within Youth Goal#9 and youth participation was said to be to be a barrier affecting some actions. Some working groups reported challenges creating common understandings of youth participation amongst stakeholders and dealing with the range of topics covered by Youth Goal #9.

A commonly reported issue was the challenge building support and finding common agendas with other actors to implement actions. Building alliances and partnerships with bodies such schools, municipalities and NGOs was identified as possible but difficult. This was linked to partly to the challenges of creating understanding of EUYD8 and the Youth Goals with these bodies.

At a more political level, some working groups reported lack of political support either for EUYD8, youth participation, or specific issues such as votes at 16. Other topics such as COVID-19 recovery, or elections took political priority. This resulted in challenges accessing senior decision makers or getting commitments from them. Whilst lack of political support was a certainly a barrier for some actions, more often the challenges were about harmonising with other political agendas, rather than a lack of support completely.

Alongside the above there were also more practical, organisational barriers reported, such as financial or human resource limitation as well as difficulties with the timescale of implementations.

Challenges building alliances, getting political support and working with other stakeholders

It took a long time to receive answers from the Prime Minister's Office and the final agreement to organize the meeting. It was also difficult to find a date that could fit its own agenda and the ones of young people. This meeting requested a long preparation ahead: questions and inputs of the participants had to be sent in advance of the meeting in order to enable the Minister's office to prepare it. Moreover, due to the frame set by the Office, young people could not really react to the Prime Minister's answers. This caused some frustration for young people because they did not have the opportunity to react "on the spot" or to ask more specific questions. In the future, Youth Forum will aim to make these meetings a real dialogue space that allows young people to challenge ideas and answers given by the decision-maker present. Another barrier was linked to its function, as Prime Minister. Young people could not ask very specific measures on a particular topic because he has no concrete ability such as Employment or Education. Still, it was efficient to invite the Prime Minister as first decision-maker to ensure the follow-up of the first qualitative consultations and to have his support. Decision-makers with youth-related competences will be invited to future events.

- Belgium National Working Group French Speaking Community

It took a lot of time to fix a date for the discussion because the cabinet put us off for several months, which was surely due to the pandemic and home-schooling.

- Belgian National Working Group - German Speaking Community

We realized that municipalities have a lot of autonomy and self-control on their territory. There are very few Flemish or federal decrees or laws that regulate local policy. That's why it's hard to change local (youth) policy for all municipalities in Flanders since they can decide on their own what to implement and in what degree the mayor take into account the recommendations of the youth councils

- Belgian National Working Group - Flemish Community

- This action was implemented in Croatia for the first time, so it was challenging to recognize who are the most relevant actors for developing partnership
- after the partnership has been established, it was a question how to adequately set the criteria (so that they are not too high nor too low)
- local elections were a potential challenge because some cities have applied mostly due to political reasons and were not yet ready for the certificate.

The challenges were approached through evaluation meetings, constant communication and on the principles of “learning-by-doing”. This approach helped to revise and explain the criteria even further. Solutions were also the cities that pointed out certain ambiguities that could be resolved in the process. And lastly, these challenges are expected to be approached even further through the new process of the certification.

- Croatian National Working Group

The action has been designed and will be implemented in near future to exploit the occasion of upcoming Municipal Elections, to advocate for and influence the agenda of political parties and candidates. The elections provide an excellent opportunity to spread awareness, promote and advocate for the results of the 8th Cycle, directly with the political parties and the candidates. Therefore, the implementation of the action has been postponed as the candidates have not been announced yet (also the election date has not been decided yet and it is under question) and the Cyprus Youth Council could not proceed with fruitful discussions on youth related issues in a productive and meaningful way that would impact the candidates’ agenda.

- National Working Group of Cyprus

The first barrier is to organize all key-stakeholders in order to achieve cross-sectoral cooperation. Another obstacle, even though this is a project which has already been awarded by a European Center and has been recognized by government back in 2007, still is a challenge to collect the input of all the ministries on time and to bring them into a dialogue with young people.

- National Working Group of Cyprus

As electoral alliances are formed at different times, it has been more difficult to contact them. We also see that a larger number of local youth councils could have set up their own platform, but we understand that such activities are new to them and hope that they will be more active in shaping their positions during the next elections.

- Estonian National Working Group

A barrier could be the follow up of the workshop. This barrier could be overcome through the further processing of the formulated solutions within the EU YD overall process. Still, it is up to political decision-makers and people working in European administration and the media to translate the demands into actions. The EU YD can play its part (see: Action on Social Media) but this action needs more actors to get involved in the whole EU.

- German National Working Group

An implementation barrier can be that political decision-makers or participants who placed bets don't always reply within the foreseen timeframe to follow-up on the bets made. Thus, sometimes, bets cannot be published right away or the information on the successful cashing of the bets is missing.

- German National Working Group

It can be assumed, that one of the difficulties could be the actual implementation of the recommendations shaped and compiled by young people in political decision-making.

- German National Working Group

The biggest barrier will be the absence of political will to pursue or prioritise this agenda. [votes at 16]

- Irish National Working Group

You'll need all the implied actors to be open for such a discussion and the will to make use of the input provided by the Youth Dialogue (i.e. formulating recommendations based on the outcomes of the ongoing cycle)

- National Working Group of Luxembourg

The recommendations at European level on Target 3, specifically on vote at 16, do not seem to be a priority for national organizations and there is some resistance if this recommendation makes sense in Portugal at this stage. Therefore, the development of a common ground and advocacy strategy on this matter by youth organisations is critical to understand if we should advance for concrete measures and which ones make sense in Portugal.

- Portuguese National Working Group

Lack of feedback by decision makers.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Another challenge we faced was the implementation of the campaign, as it was very difficult to address and attract more organizations to participate in the campaign to strengthen CSOs.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Proactive and balanced participation in each region, balancing the balance between Autonomous Communities: balance, degree of commitment and active and participatory involvement in projects that fully affect national and European Youth.

- Spanish National Working Group

There were quite a few obstacles. From the completely expected, such as the unwillingness of the Ministry of the Environment to enter dialogue with us and other organizations, provocations / insults while collecting signatures and promoting the referendum, to the less expected and much more worrying, such as civil servants being mysteriously withdrawn from the public administration during the collection of signatures, misleading and incomplete information, etc. We have overcome all obstacles with unstoppable optimism and pointing out holes in the system, which many people exploit for their own interests.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Challenges with the concept of EUYD and youth participation

First of all it was challenging to convey the relevance of the European Youth Goals (EYGs) to the different policy fields. Not every stakeholder is familiar to them, so it has taken a while to spread the idea and history of the EYGs. In addition, we noticed that the Sustainable Development Goals are much more mainstreamed and established than the EYGs. Furthermore, contributions to the SDGs are seen as obligatory – not so in case of the EYGs. It helped to communicate that the EYGs have been developed by young people and represent their visions and perspectives on cross-sectorial issues that affect the lives of young people. In a further step, the relationship between EYG and SDG was established. This means that the EYG can also be better incorporated into SDG implementation processes in the future.

- Austrian National Working Group

The youth Goal 9 covers many topics : political and non-formal participation, access to information, civic education, also youth-led physical facilities, safe virtual youth spaces but also quality youth work. It is difficult to cover all these topics through qualitative consultations and to ask young people their opinions about all of these topics. Consequently, the policy paper will unfortunately not contain recommendations about all the Youth Goal 9's targets. This variety of topics makes the policy papers difficult. Nevertheless, specific measures and recommendations must (and will) emerge to make the work done during 8 Cycle impactful and efficient. The overall topic of youth participation is very broad and concrete solutions or recommendations are difficult to formulate for young people. For instance, the question "How can young people better influence decisions that affect them?" do not provide precise measures from the young people interviewed. An information phase is necessary to explain to young people the existing measures that could reach this goal. In this way, young people can evaluate them and imagine other ones. In addition to consulting young people, our goal through the 8 Cycle is also to inform them. This information phase requires civic engagement skills and political ones that the Youth Forum does not fully have. The involvement of experts is therefore necessary and it takes time.

- Belgium National Working Group French Speaking Community

[A barrier is] bridging the gap between youth workers and the "complex" process of the youth -dialogue. Breaking it down to "useful" opportunities for youth workers to put in place spaces for youth participation in their respective local context.

- National Working Group of Luxembourg

During the sessions, it was very clear which concerns we shared and the challenges that need to be tackled to guarantee an inclusive participation that is accessible to all young people. But it wasn't always easy to come to concrete solutions to these problems and if there were proposals (such as quota on electoral lists), they weren't always supported by all participants.

- Belgian National Working Group - Flemish Community

[Our stakeholder believe that] Children are still understood as just "children," as incompetent participants within the dialogue whose opinions rarely count.

- Slovenian National Working Group

The projects were in some cases very badly written, even though the idea and project structure themselves were fine. In addition, Local Youth Councils sometimes didn't understand the EU Youth Goal #9 well and a few applied with irrelevant programs. In the future, it would be useful to hold an information session before opening the call for interested applicants and to offer individual support during project application phase. The open call was also carried out quite late, with successful beneficiaries being chosen at the end of May, due to dependence on (delayed) public funding.

- Slovenian National Working Group

The approach is rather abstract and generic, which generates a distancing towards the institutions that propose this format of consultation.

- Spanish National Working Group

A general observation we have made is that there are too many activities or initiatives from the EU to have the time to implement activities. For example, we had to focus on the 9 cycle of EU youth dialogue since Sweden is part of the trio-presidency for that cycle. Another problem is the Conference on the future of Europe. Many actors on local and national level want to focus on the Future conference and it is difficult to find the synergies. On a local level, in Sweden there are the 290 municipalities that have some autonomy which makes it complicated to coordinate the youth dialogue on local level.

- Swedish National Working Group

Challenges with communications and outreach

Dissemination - Due to the pandemic crisis, the Youth Forum faced many challenges to gather 1000 respondents to its surveys. Schools, universities and youth organizations will normally reopen in September so the survey could be easier disseminated. Alternative ways of dissemination are already in progress to face another lockdown. The survey will anyway be provided in a digital format to reach a maximum of young people online.

- Belgian National Working Group French Speaking Community

The added value: Finally, the last difficulty is that the podcast must be different from all those that already exist. We need, at first, to identify what our added value is, as national Youth Council. What will make young people want to listen to our episodes? The Youth Forum podcast channel must not be a simple showcase of our activities and projects. It must be a space for participation of young people, where they can express their opinions, as experts of their own reality.

- Belgian National Working Group French Speaking Community

It would also be good if some graphic material could be created for the consultation report that could be used in similar presentations. Something illustrative.

- National Working Group of the Czech Republic

The video is just to be done by August, but we don't expect any bigger barriers. There might be difficulties in reaching a high number of youngsters or a diverse group of youngsters, but we'll consider paying for the promotion if necessary.

- The Danish National Working Group

There are two main obstacles to this activity. Firstly, it has been difficult to find participants for the focus group interviews. Out of the planned ten interviews, we have so far conducted six. Secondly, we have not managed to involve NEET youth, who are an important demographic considering the topics of the interviews.

- Estonian National Working Group

Young people's participation in the video contest was rather poor. As organisers, we found a few likely barriers which could have resulted in that. Firstly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not actively involved young people in the past, nor have young people been a target audience before, which means young people are not used to following and keeping an eye on them. Secondly, the video contest took place in a time when students came back to schools for a month after COVID-19 restrictions, which means they were already busy with school work and getting used to a "normal" life and they couldn't focus on a video contest.

- Estonian National Working Group

Promoting the existence of the Instagram account has been challenging, as a lot of young people are not in the upcoming elections or don't see the value in following the account. While the following is growing right now, there was very little growth in the first few months, and even now the posts don't receive as many interactions as we first expected. However, the team is looking for solutions to bring the content to a larger audience and plans to use other platforms to distribute the content.

- Estonian National Working Group

Reaching out to a diverse number of young people in particular those young people who do not normally participate in such political activities.

- National Working Group of Malta

The main barriers to implementing this action concerned securing interviews with all candidates to ensure a nonpartisan feature of the campaign, as well as developing a communications strategy that would be appealing to young people.

- Portuguese National Working Group

The challenge is to involve a wider circle of children, especially those who come from different circumstances (vulnerable children).

- Slovenian National Working Group

There is an overload of information, especially online (information noise). [it will be hard to] make the website popular among young people.

- Italian National Working Group

Reaching minority and marginalized groups [is challenging].

- Italian National Working Group

Challenges with use of digital tools and methods (see also pandemic section)

The guide is a tool fostering youth participation in digital spaces. A barrier that we faced when developing the guide is the differing levels of expertise of the potential users regarding both, youth participation as well as digital methods and tools. Now that the guide is finalised a potential obstacle is reaching the target group that could use the guide to implement digital youth participation activities.

- Austrian National Working Group

We first wanted to organize podcasts between political decision-makers and youngsters with the aim to make policy more tangible for young people but it would have cost more than we could afford. We therefore changed the concept and made a smaller format in order to first test if young people are interested in listening to such podcasts. Depending on the success of these podcasts, we will organize other podcasts in future. In retrospect, the content of the podcasts fits even better in the implementation phase and we are curious about the result and its success.

- Belgian National Working Group - German Speaking Community

The novelty: This is the first time that the Youth Forum creates a Podcast channel. The Youth Forum staff members do not have specific expertise linked to the podcast. For this reason, we called on a Podcaster. Moreover, we do not know if young people will listen to the episodes and like it. It is also difficult for our volunteer members to design the Podcast channel identity and content. Podcast medium is itself a new media, not well known, whose building is not learned at school. The training by the podcaster is consequently essential.

- Belgian National Working Group French Speaking Community

During the session we experienced small barriers related only to the technical difficulties. As podcasts were firstly imagined to be shared via closed Facebook group, wi-fi was very low and not all participants had free internet data. This barrier did not last long, and it was eliminated with one participant's proposal who then created a mobile hot spot with his personal internet data. This led to the whole group's access to internet and podcasts were then smoothly updated in the closed Facebook group.

- Croatian National Working Group

Also, another obstacle is that the pandemic has changed the way that we have been working so long, demanding the use of more digital platforms/tools. This requires more funding and digital literacy not only from the part of young people and participants but also competence in digital platforms/tools from governmental services.

- National Working Group of Cyprus

The event took place online, so it was not possible to have a round of debates outside the main program. So her organization was more complicated, but it was still successful.

- National Working Group of the Czech Republic

Even though the social media channel and the website of the EU YD in Germany are including young people, they are still not 100% inclusive. The language used is simple, on the website there is the possibility to switch to simple language. Still, the content might be excluding and still be too complicated, due to the nature of the rather complicated structure of the EU-YD. One challenge is to constantly screen the online presence of the EU YD in order to make sure that the offering is as inclusive as possible.

- German National Working Group

The game is only accessible for young people who have access to the necessary digital infrastructure. It therefore might exclude young people e.g. with less economic means/ technical equipment. Additionally, the online game adds to the overall digital fatigue, occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the NWG is thinking about converting the online game into an offline game to be played if the pandemic situation allows.

- German National Working Group

Promoting inclusive digital spaces/occasions for the participation and engagement of young people without any offline social interaction/physical events and reaching minority and marginalized groups.

- Italian National Working Group

Activation of citizens, informing about this relatively unknown process.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Organisational issues (timing and resources)

Activity 1, as all of the [reported] mentioned activities are part of the project sequence of the Dialogue of 2021. As the Dialogue projects are delayed and the National working group in Bulgaria does not receive additional funding for its activities, all of the activities in 2021 are and will be executed with the bare minimum requirements due to the lack of financial resource. As some of the activities can be implemented without any sufficient recourse, others strongly rely on adequate funding and delaying the projects creates risk for the implementation of the overall process of the Dialogue in some countries as Bulgaria.

**- Bulgarian National Working Group
[this comment was reported across all Bulgarian actions]**

Timing - The timing allocated to the designing and the dissemination of the survey are very short so every step must be well thought and planned. Young Ambassadors must be good informed and supervised so that the survey will be efficient. Youth Forum must be proactive and respect every deadline so that the official position could be delivered on time.

- Belgian National Working Group French Speaking Community

Not everyone was able to attend the scheduled Zoom meetings, which is why we talked to people who could not attend the meeting over the phone and gave them the opportunity to present their suggestion.

- Croatian National Working Group

Only two sessions of the Council for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan were held during 2020 and 2021, which made it more difficult for us to present quality standards for their wider application to all stakeholders in Croatia implementing the Youth Guarantee.

- Croatian National Working Group

The problem was how to plan the awards structure. Not all Youth Goals are formulated to be applicable to a wider range of organizations. Another barrier was created by government restrictions on the coronavirus epidemic, all meetings could only take place online, which in some respects makes communication difficult and prolongs it. We now expect feedback from organizations on how important the awarding categories seems to them.

- National Working Group of the Czech Republic

Due to the amount of work with processing the grant application just before the summer, we had to reduce our summer activities. If less time was needed for administration and more time for the preparation of activities, we could do more similar workshops, because they are beneficial and effective, absolutely basic for the project.

- National Working Group of the Czech Republic

The main challenge of this action has been timing. As it's currently summer holiday in Estonia and many students have summer jobs, it's been difficult to find young people for the videos and schedule the filming dates.

- Estonian National Working Group

One of the barriers are the time resources of the young people engaging. As they do this on a voluntary basis, they have limited time resources. A project method like participatory action research requires a lot of time and other resources, which might be limited, especially when working with volunteers. Broad recognition of voluntary work would be helpful as well as developing youth participation methods which are more fitting to the realities of young people.

- German National Working Group

It is a long process, in which we will first do additional research before developing any type of platform. The risk is that it might not reach its goals or that it takes a lot of time before we can see results.

- National Working Group of The Netherlands

Monitoring and evaluation of policies can be time consuming (hence risk to fall under the table in the worst case) and you'll need all the implied actors to be open for such a discussion which lays out the good and the bad sides of an implementation.

- National Working Group of Luxembourg

We are facing two main barriers while organizing the event, it's a lack of human resources and a lack of sponsors for the event. There is another problem which is the small involvement of young people and youth workers in spreading the news about this event on social networks. It's causing a small number of registrations to the event and probably will cause a small number of participants at the event.

- Lithuania National Working Group

The Local Youth Council is changing the leadership (president & vice-presidents – board) this year and it took some time to take care of all the documentation and handover, which is why the project implementation has been delayed.

- Slovenian National Working Group

We presumed that our greatest challenge will be getting the cooperation of school decision-makers, but in most cases schools were happy to cooperate with us. Because we carried the workshops out in May and June, schools had little time before the end of the year to implement the changes and in some cases, those changes will take a long time (such as achieving greater equality between different school programs, improving grading systems, etc). It would be more efficient to start in September/October and monitor the progress of implementation during the year, offering additional support where needed.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Limited financial resources, human resources, time constraints of young farmers due to obligations on the farm, unwillingness and exposure in the public media by young farmers, lower participation than expected.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Miscellaneous

In the beginning, only members of parliament and no members of government wanted to participate and we only had masculine guests. In order to ensure a bit more diversity, the political parties luckily changed on their own initiative their representatives... For next editions, we will try either to take more time for discussion or to find another format to assure a more intensive discussion between young people and politicians so that young people can ask their questions directly.

- Belgian National Working Group - German Speaking Community

Another challenge is that the youth workers that are involved or intend to be involved in the particular action, although they are experts in their fields, we are still struggling with the recognition of youth work in Cyprus.

- National Working Group of Cyprus

We think that the idea of organising a centralised pan-European survey (instead of several national ones) was a bad idea! We received only about 10 % of responses that we normally did in the previous cycles. And even with that low participation, we were the 6th country in Europe. It was not possible to have prizes for participants which normally increases the number of respondents. We don't have any contact to respondents to provide feedback, and we don't even know if we ever get the responses of the Finnish participants in order to use that information for own advocacy work.

- Finnish National Working Group

Even if the student council elections are mandatory and dispose of a legal basis for many years, some schools still have to be reminded on a regular basis, not only to put in place a student council but also to provide the necessary support in order for those actors to be able to function.

- National Working Group of Luxembourg

The online youth center unfortunately had to be closed due to a violent event that happened at the end of January 2021. The event was reported to the police and is currently under investigation. Our main barrier, therefore, was anonymity and the related online violence.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Mainly financial barriers because we do not have stable funding for circus activities. The circus in our environment still has certain prejudices and consequently it is not possible to provide adequate funding for the work of trainers, equipment and easier accessibility of programs for end users.

- Slovenian National Working Group

Our largest dilemma is that three of the four active political youth parties in Slovenia are right-wing parties, and therefore the political representation is not balanced. That's why we decided to invite political parties (where there are no political youth parties) of all the political parties in the parliament. Only two have responded, but as they are both left-wing, we have thus ensured balanced political representation to some degree.

- Slovenian National Working Group

The roundtable discussion addressed issues related to the deficit faced by young people who are acting as representatives or decision makers in institutions on a European level, and similarly the relatively low level of youth participation on European level. Discussions addressed the short knowledge of existing structures for participation and youth participation. Additionally, many youth organizations' activities and methodology, such as non-formal education, have a low level of recognition in some areas. Similarly, the participants of the roundtable recognized that there is a general inefficacy to engage rural, marginalized and underrepresented communities in youth decision-making processes also on local and national levels, but an even bigger challenge on a European level. To achieve successful levels of youth participation on a European level there needs to be a bigger focus on young people from rural, marginalized and underrepresented communities. Youth organizations play big role in engaging young people in decision making, but they must be supported financially, and their methodologies must be given more recognition. For the event in it self, the roundtable discussion was taking place online which has some obvious accessibility issues for the participation of young people from rural or marginalized communities that has bigger challenges to access online platforms.

- IYNGO Working Group

The barriers related to the activities that the seminar participants recognized was the big issue around how young people feel regarding the decision-making processes, particularly at EU level right down to their own reality. Another issue was the access to youth-friendly, relevant information, which fuels the feeling of distance to the decisions made and a notion that it is very complicated to participate on the European level. Similarly, youth participation on a European level was seen to have barriers for particularly young people with a minority or rural background. The INGYOs in the EU Youth Dialogue recognized the importance for youth-friendly, relevant information for young people to participate on a European / international level. For this reason, the volunteers representing the INGYOs are developing a podcast that addresses relevant issues and perspectives on the topic, that will be available online and communicated to members of the INGYO and YFJ. For the actual seminar we found it difficult to get enough participants to engage, due to unfortunate choice of timing (it was right in the middle of exam periods, General Assembly's and other events of the INGYOs). Similarly, there was a general fatigue towards online meetings after the COVID-pandemic which forced INGYO members to host international events in that way for a long time.

- IYNGO Working Group