Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Maria Luís Albuquerque, European Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union

Money Management Skills

Date: 30 April 2026

Location: European Commission, Brussels

Introduction

On 30 April, Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union hosted a group of 15 young Europeans for a Youth Policy Dialogue on money management skills. The exchange took place at the Commission headquarters in Brussels, providing a platform for the participants to share their ideas and exchange views with Commissioner Albuquerque in a direct and personal setting.

The topic of the dialogue, money management skills, was selected to gather young participants' views on financial decisions they face in everyday life, the challenges they encounter when managing money, and the support they would like to see to help their generation make informed financial choices. The event covered the three topical blocks of (1) basic money management and financial inclusion, (2) investing for the future, and (3) opportunities and risks of digitalisation.

The participants, who came from across the EU, were the winners of a video competition in which entrants had submitted 1-minute videos of themselves describing why they thought it was important for young people to learn about money. The selected group of participants was balanced in terms of gender and geography, and included individuals with varying levels of expertise in finance.

Summary of the online preparatory meeting

In the week leading up to the event, participants attended a 45-minute preparatory call with the event organisers and moderator. During the virtual meeting, they were briefed on the planned structure and thematic focus of the dialogue, as well as the logistics for the day.

Summary of the dialogue and topics of discussion

The dialogue lasted two hours and was moderated by Simon Spornberger, Press and Media Officer at DG FISMA. Commissioner Albuquerque opened the discussion by welcoming the participants and highlighting the importance of listening to young people's perspectives when developing policies aimed at improving financial literacy, as it is an essential life skill that helps people make better financial decisions and plan for their financial future with confidence.

In the first block on basic money management skills and financial inclusion, participants discussed how financial literacy can be made more accessible across Europe. They stressed that financial education should be practical and inclusive, with attention to the different barriers young people may face in accessing financial knowledge. Participants also emphasised the need for financial education to consider gender disparities as well as inequalities related to socioeconomic background, disability, and migration history. In the second block, which focused on how to encourage more young people to

invest, participants stressed that financial education should be more accessible, personalised, and available from a young age. They noted that many young people feel uncertain about long-term financial planning, including pensions and investing, and would benefit from clearer and more practical information. Participants also highlighted the need to close the persistent gender gap in investing, where women continue to participate less than men.

The final block of the discussion focused on opportunities and risks of digitalisation in the financial literacy space. Participants noted the benefits of digital tools, which can facilitate money management and enhance the accessibility of financial services. At the same time, other participants highlighted that online content creators known as "finfluencers" often glorify unattainable consumption patterns, which can distort financial priorities and drive social division. Participants also debated how to make financial literacy content engaging enough to effectively reach young audiences, while ensuring that young people can distinguish trustworthy information from misleading or oversimplified advice.

In addition to the dialogue itself, the participants had the opportunity to meet with young staff members of DG FISMA and the Commissioner's cabinet for an informal exchange. They also had lunch at the Commission headquarters and gathered with the moderator for a feedback round after the dialogue.

Follow-up debate on the Citizens' Engagement Platform

Idea 1

Create free EU-wide online financial literacy courses

Several participants highlighted the need for more accessible financial education across Europe. To reach young people regardless of their background, they proposed the creation of free EU-wide online financial literacy courses. These courses could cover practical money management skills, such as budgeting, saving, understanding debt, pensions and basic investing.

Idea 2

Introduce financial education in schools and workplaces

Several participants suggested that financial literacy should start earlier and be taught in a more structured way. While recognising the EU's limited competence over national curricula, participants suggested making financial education a mandatory part of school education in the form of voluntary mentoring programmes. In addition, participants proposed integrating financial education into the workplace onboarding process.

Idea 3

Regulate Buy Now, Pay Later schemes

Participants warned that many young people are exposed to financial risks online, especially through "Buy Now, Pay Later" schemes that can encourage them to spend money they do not have, resulting

in the accumulation of debt. Thus, they called for concrete regulatory measures to better protect young consumers.

Follow-up Activities

In her closing remarks, Commissioner Albuquerque thanked the participants for their valuable contributions. She concluded by emphasising that their input would be carefully reviewed by her team, noting that the suggestions raised during the dialogue would be considered in the context of ongoing and future initiatives.