

Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Marta Kos, European Commissioner for Enlargement

Title of Youth Policy Dialogue: Youth for Democratic Resilience

Date: 3-5 June 2026

Location: Europe Café, Chisinau, Moldova

Introduction

The Youth Policy Dialogue brought together 30 young people aged 19 to 29 from 20 countries across the European Union, enlargement countries and the Eastern Neighbourhood to discuss "Youth role in democratic resilience" with Commissioner Marta Kos and President Maia Sandu. The in-person programme took place from 3–5 June 2026 in Chişinău, Moldova. Preparatory activities were held at the Europe Café, while the high-level dialogue took place at the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova.

The topic was selected by DG ENEST and Commissioner Kos' Cabinet, based on Commissioner's priorities for her mandate. Democratic resilience was chosen in response to the growing importance of strengthening democratic resilience in Europe and partner countries, particularly in the context of foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and disinformation, declining trust in democratic institutions and youth civic participation. The Dialogue aimed to gather young people's experiences and recommendations on how they can contribute to safeguarding democratic processes, supporting ongoing outreach efforts and future policy discussions on democratic resilience and enlargement.

The choice of venues reflected both the participatory and political dimensions of the event. The Europe Café provided an inclusive and collaborative environment for participants to exchange experiences, develop recommendations and prepare for the high-level discussion. Hosting the Dialogue at the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova underscored the political importance of youth participation and offered participants a unique opportunity to engage directly with two senior politicians.

Participants were selected through a collaborative process involving DG ENEST, EU Delegations and geographical desks. The selection ensured geographical diversity across EU Member States and partner countries, gender balance, and a broad range of academic, professional and civic backgrounds. Participants were chosen based on their demonstrated experience in areas such as civic engagement, media literacy, countering disinformation, digital activism and strengthening democratic resilience, ensuring informed and practical discussions.

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

The Youth Policy Dialogue was structured around preparatory discussions in workin groups, facilitated by local facilitators, knowledgeable of the topic, and a high-level dialogue which combined presentations of the working groups' recommendations and an open discussion.

The working groups were organised around five thematic areas identified by participants during the preparatory workshops:

1. Intergenerational strategies for safeguarding election integrity
2. Social engineering of media literacy
3. Gender (in)equality in politics
4. Lack of trust in institutions
5. The role of platforms and platform policy in combatting disinformation

In her closing remarks, Commissioner Kos welcomed the quality and relevance of the recommendations and encouraged participants to remain engaged in promoting democratic resilience. She underlined the importance of ensuring that the ideas developed during the Dialogue would continue to inform future discussions and outreach activities. The recommendations will be consolidated into a dedicated booklet, developed jointly by DG ENEST and the Commissioner's Cabinet.

Main takeaways

1. Young people play a central role in strengthening democratic resilience.

Participants highlighted the important contribution that young people can make in protecting democratic institutions through civic engagement, peer education and digital activism. Particular attention was given to combating foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), promoting media literacy and encouraging informed electoral participation. These discussions support the European Union's broader objective of strengthening democratic resilience both within Member States and partner countries.

Commissioner Kos confirmed this to the participants by emphasising that youth is not our future, but our present, and that young people should be fully involved in decision-making.

2. Building trust requires stronger institutions and greater youth participation.

A recurring theme was the need to rebuild trust between young people and public institutions. Participants stressed the importance of transparent governance, meaningful youth participation in decision-making and stronger communication between institutions and citizens. This theme is even more of important for youth in partner countries where protests are happening as we speak, such as Georgia with the democratic movement, Serbia with the student movement, but also Albania with the flamingo movement, to name only a few. Participants in EU Member States also acknowledged that this is an increasing problem in the EU as well, where citizens are lacking trust in their representatives. Recommendations also focused on addressing online gender inequality and ensuring that democratic participation is inclusive and accessible for all young people.

3. Addressing youth from EU Member States and partner countries brings added value.

The Dialogue demonstrated the value of bringing together young people from EU Member States, candidate countries and Eastern neighbourhood countries, to exchange good practices and develop common solutions. A general comment we received from EU Member States participants is that they should be more widely represented, because topics like enlargement and even democratic resilience, is not discussed in EU societies enough. This edition, we had a bit less 1/3 of the participants who came from an EU Member State: in order to increase awareness amongst youth networks in the EU about these topics, we could imagine increasing the number to 50-50. EU MS participants were also genuinely interested to hear about and learn from youth in candidate countries, and concluded that the strongest advocates for European values are often not only within the EU, but also in candidate countries.

Follow-up Activities (if applicable)

As a follow-up to the Youth Policy Dialogue, participants' recommendations will be consolidated into a dedicated booklet prepared jointly by DG ENEST, the Cabinet of Commissioner Kos and the communication and graphic design teams. The publication will capture the key recommendations emerging from the thematic working groups and the exchanges with Commissioner Kos and President Maia Sandu.

An online version of the booklet is planned to be disseminated through DG ENEST communication channels, the Commissioner's communication channels if possible, EU Delegations and partner youth organisations across the region. The publication is intended to increase the visibility of participants' recommendations, facilitate wider dissemination among policymakers and stakeholders, and serve as a reference for future Youth Policy Dialogues.

Key lessons learned included the importance of a thorough participant selection process, maintaining a clear thematic focus, using Europe Houses and Europe Cafés as collaborative venues alongside high-level political settings, and working with experienced local facilitators to ensure discussions are well grounded in the national context.