



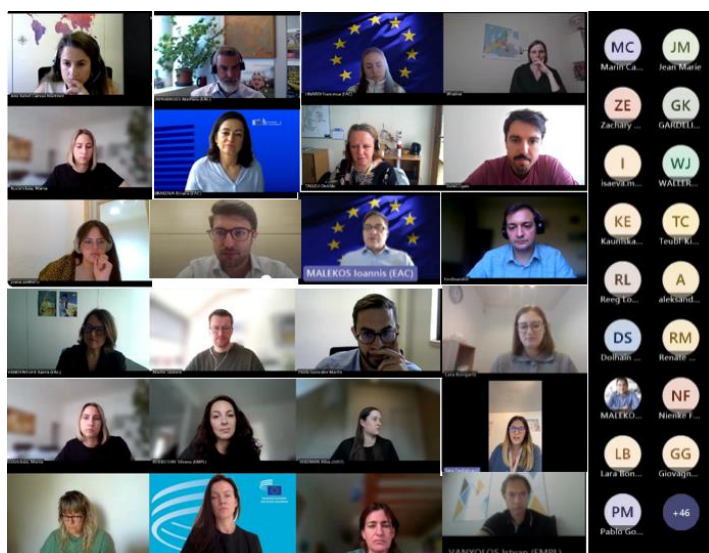
## Second meeting of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group

8 July, online

### MEETING REPORT

On 8 July 2025, the Youth unit in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) organised another meeting of the [EU Youth Stakeholders Group](#), a network launched a few months earlier in March, as legacy of the 2022 European Year of Youth.

The objectives of this meeting were to inform youth stakeholders on the progress on new actions like the recently launched President's Youth Advisory Board, to hear their views on upcoming initiatives going through the [Commission youth check](#) and to offer a space for exchange of good practices and learning to the benefit of the European youth sector.



Moderated by Biliana Sirakova ([EU Youth Coordinator](#) in DG EAC), the meeting brought together 74 members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group (member states' representatives, national youth councils, European youth organisations, stakeholders and the EU institutions).

Ioannis Malekos (Head of Unit for Youth and Volunteer Solidarity) opened the meeting outlining the meeting's dual purpose: to share updates on youth initiatives and to actively gather input from stakeholders on upcoming policy developments through the youth check process.

Representatives of the Youth and Volunteer Solidarity Unit in DG EAC - Karen Vandeweghe (Deputy Head of Unit), Kari Gardelin (Policy Officer) and Biliana Sirakova (EU Youth Coordinator) gave updates on key youth policy initiatives, including the [EU Youth Dialogue](#), the [Commission youth check](#), follow-up of [Youth Policy Dialogues](#) with Commissioners, and the [President's Youth Advisory Board](#).

### EU Youth Dialogue

Kari Gardelin informed that a **toolkit for the EU Youth Dialogue** is expected by the end of July. This resource will be shared with both national working groups and the different stakeholders in this group, recognizing their varied involvement in the Dialogue. A structural change is also coming with

the European Youth Forum officially take over responsibilities for **secretariat for the Dialogue**, with operations beginning in the next dialogue cycle. This change promises increased coordination and support for national working groups. Looking ahead, a **meeting for national working groups** is planned for **May 2026** (in Brussels). This gathering will focus on exchange of best practices and the development of new guidelines for monitoring and follow-up.

## **Youth Check**

The Commission has made very good progress on the **youth check**. Biliana Sirakova reported that with the support of the Commission Youth Network of 66 DG youth correspondents initiatives in the work programme were assessed for their relevance to young people and a number of consultations were organised (through many different formats). Members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group were invited to focus groups on the European Democracy Shield, the EU Anti-Racism Strategy and the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. Four initiatives, which already adopted (Union of Skills, the Vision for Agriculture and Food, the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, the European Ocean Pact) include targeted measures for young people.

DG EAC counts on the active contribution of this Group to the youth check process. Biliana highlighted an important administrative requirement (for taking part in dedicated consultations and for being members of this Group): **all participating organisations must be registered in the [Transparency Register](#)**. This ensures proper oversight of policy influence and is essential for continued participation.

## **Youth Policy Dialogues with Commissioners**

Karen Vandeweghe gave an update on the follow up of the first round of **Youth Policy Dialogues**. More than 400 young people from diverse backgrounds participated, including beneficiaries from Erasmus +, DiscoverEU, and European Solidarity Corps projects.

The dialogues, held in **more than 12 Member States**, covered most Commission portfolios, addressing topics from defense and climate change to the cost of living and housing. A comprehensive report is published on the [European Youth Portal](#), featuring both an overview of main takeaways and individual reports for each dialogue. Follow-up activities included feedback sessions and follow up meetings.

## **President's Youth Advisory Board**

The establishment of the **President's Youth Advisory Board** represents a significant milestone in youth engagement at the EU level. Announced in President von der Leyen's political guidelines, the Board was [formally established](#) by Commission decision on **June 25, 2025**.

The Board will bring together 28 young representatives, one from each EU Member State's National Youth Council and one from the European Youth Forum, to advise the Commission on policies relevant to young people. Youth-led organisations from candidate countries and potential candidates for EU accession are invited to join as observers.

## Roundtable

Sara Tagliabracci from **ESN** highlighted the [annual ESN report](#) and [survey](#), a new [Erasmus Careers competence inventory](#), the Enriching Communities through Engaged Mobilities (ECEM) [project](#) and the [EUniverse project](#).

Maria Kostetckaia from the **European Sustainable Development Network** discussed the involvement of youth organizations in the policy-making process of the European Economic and Social Committee through the [EESC youth test](#). Borut Cigale from the **National Youth Council of Slovenia** also praised this initiative.

Clotilde Talleu from the **EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership** provided an overview of recent projects - a seminar on [young people's mental health and well-being](#), the [4th European Youth Work Convention](#) in Malta, attended by 500 participants, resources linked to [youth mainstreaming](#), [youth knowledge](#) and [youth participation in European election](#). For the latter half of 2025, the Youth Partnership plans **Research Open Days** in Brussels in October, showcasing findings from research projects on youth mental health, global youth issues, youth in democracy and civic space, and youth mainstreaming.

Aleksandra Maldžiski (**DYPALL Network**) briefly introduced their "[Climbing the Ladder](#)" project, a European Youth Together initiative focused on **models and mechanisms of youth engagement**. They have published resources on good practices, case studies, and models. Qualitative guidelines for practitioners and policymakers on building youth engagement models are due this month. All content will be integrated into a platform launching in autumn, offering tailored proposals and guidance for establishing youth advisory boards to ensure participatory and inclusive spaces.

Larissa Ahanhanzo from the **European Youth Forum** shared a [position paper](#) and [Principles for a better Erasmus +](#), part of the More Erasmus = More Europe campaign.

Dimitar Ferdinandov provided an update from the **National Youth Forum of Bulgaria**. He explained their efforts to promote a more horizontal, cross-sectoral and impactful youth policy in Bulgaria. He also mentioned a proposed major education reform in Bulgaria, stressing the Forum's commitment to ensuring it is data-driven.

Tiago Guilherme from ENGSO Youth shared that they have recently hosted a 2nd edition of the European Youth and Sport Platform, which brought together over 150 young people from across Europe. The outcome of this event was [a conclusion paper](#), which was created using recommendations from consultation with the young people at the event. Additionally, at this event, they launched the [European Youth and Sport platform](#), which aims to address the underrepresentation of Youth in leadership and decision-making roles within sports organisations.

## Consultation on the new Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights (DG EMPL)

After a short break, the meeting moved to interactive sessions, starting with a presentation from Istvan Vanyolos and Silvana Roebstorf from DG Employment on the **Action Plan on the New European Pillar of Social Rights**, an initiative currently in the public consultation process and relevant for the youth check.

Participants were invited to discuss two questions in breakout rooms, based on a background note shared in advance of the meeting. In plenary the groups shared some key messages. The detailed output of the discussion is available in the Group's Team and [page](#). Andreas Schneider reported his group's top concerns: **housing, transport, and social issues** like fighting polarization and civic

education. Housing was deemed the most pressing due to the disparity between youth income and housing prices.

Renāte Mencendorfa highlighted **security and social inclusion**, particularly for regions near Russia and Belarus. Maria Kostetckaia echoed security as a concern, and her group also discussed **accessible accommodation, financial stability** and **climate change**, stressing its social impact, especially on mental health and vulnerable populations. Sara Tholl's group identified **access to secure employment** and **access to healthcare** (mental and physical) as crucial, observing challenges young people face in accessing these services both at home and abroad.

### Consultation on the EU Civil Society Strategy (DG JUST)

Alisa Vekeman from DG Justice introduced the main pillars of the **EU Civil Society Strategy**, emphasizing its focus on enhancing the engagement, protection, and support for civil society organizations. A key aspect highlighted was the particular attention to organizations operating in environments where civic space is shrinking. Alisa also mentioned the planned creation of a **Civil Society Platform** aiming to foster closer collaboration and provide a structured mechanism for civil society organizations to engage with EU institutions, ensuring their voices are heard in policy-making processes.

In breakout rooms the participants discussed three questions on the basis of a background note distributed in advance of the meeting. Input was again collected via a shared document, which is available in the Group's Team and [page](#). In terms of support expected from the EU, there was a strong call for **legal protections, robust reporting systems, preventative measures** against civic space shrinking, and, critically, more **predictable, long-term, and flexible funding**, including provisions for emergency situations. **Lara Bongartz** pointed that her group had doubts that yet another platform is needed. If a new platform were to be created, they stressed it must be youth-friendly and it should be well promoted to young people. Dimitar Ferdinandov emphasized the critical need for **financial stability** through structural, sustainable, and long-term financing for youth organizations.

Member of the Group were invited to share with their networks the ongoing consultations for these initiatives - [Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), [EU Civil Society Strategy](#).

Biliana Sirakova concluded the meeting, encouraging the members of the EU Youth Stakeholders Group to continue engaging on the Teams platform and to contribute to the public consultations and dedicated meetings linked to initiatives going through the youth check. It is expected that another two meetings of this network take place online by the end of the year.



The presentations, outputs from the breakout discussions and a meeting report from this meeting will be shortly available on the [dedicated page](#) on the European Youth Portal.