



The Youth Policy Dialogues during the first 100 days of the new mandate of the European Commission

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Executive Summary

In line with the **Political Guidelines** of European Commission President **von der Leyen**, **all Commissioners** of the new College were tasked with organising **Youth Policy Dialogues within the first 100 days** of the new mandate, under the **coordination of Commissioner Micallef**, and to continue these Dialogues on an annual basis thereafter. By 10 March 2025, all College members had delivered their first Dialogues.

Drawing on the reports submitted by each Directorate-General (DG) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) on behalf of their respective Executive Vice-President or High Representative/ Vice-President or Commissioner, this general report provides an **overview** of the Dialogues, the **main takeaways** and the **way forward**.

The core ideas discussed during the Dialogues can be categorised into **five overarching themes** of relevance to the current Commission mandate:

1. **A Safe Union:** Several discussions centred around the EU defence strategy, the Unions' preparedness strategy, the war in Ukraine, the financing of defence projects, the fight against organised crime and terrorism, as well as migration management and border security.
2. **A Competitive and Sustainable Union:** In multiple Dialogues, young people highlighted the interconnection between sustainability, climate goals, competitiveness and economic policies, addressing issues such as enhanced environmental protection, clean energy transition and clean technologies, sustainable tourism and transport, green taxation, and the need for regulatory simplification.
3. **A Democratic and Digitally Fit Union:** The main topics discussed in some of the Dialogues included democratic empowerment and involvement of young people, artificial intelligence (AI), as well as the digital financing accessible for everyone.
4. **A People-Centred and Social Union:** Several discussions revolved around the topics such as cost of living and lack of affordable housing, working conditions and rights of employees, gender equality in the labour market, skills (including the digital ones), EU health policy, mental health and also inclusion and equality in general.
5. **A Global Union:** Numerous Dialogues addressed topics such as the EU's role as an international and trade partner, climate diplomacy, social media platforms, enlargement, the Global Gateway strategy, human rights and global diplomacy.

Via the Youth Policy Dialogues, the European Commission has brought the youth perspective to the forefront across all policy areas and has elevated youth concerns at the highest level of EU policy and decision-making. This has added to the momentum created by the Youth Check and the EU Youth Stakeholders Group in reinforcing **youth participation** and **youth mainstreaming**.

More specifically, it has brought together young people from all over the EU and beyond, providing them with opportunities to **interact directly with European Commissioners** on key issues that align with their interests. Held at the beginning of the Commission's mandate, these Dialogues have informed all European Commissioners, their Cabinets

and DGs, as well as the EEAS about the views of young people, offering **valuable insights that can inform and shape future EU policies**. The findings from these Youth Policy Dialogues revealed a vision among the participating young Europeans and non-Europeans of an EU that embodies democracy, resilience, adaptability, and sustainability.

Overall, by making these Dialogues an annual event, the European Commission has established a sustainable model for ongoing youth engagement in EU decision-making processes, thereby strengthening the **democratic connection between the EU and its younger citizens**. The **cumulative effect** of the Dialogues has been significant and beneficial to the ongoing **efforts of strengthening EU youth policy**.

I. Introduction

President Ursula **von der Leyen** highlighted this Commission's ambition of youth involvement in the **Political Guidelines** for the 2024-2029 Commission. The President asked all Commissioners to organise Youth Policy Dialogues within the **first 100 days** of the new mandate and to repeat these discussions **annually** thereafter. These Dialogues are designed as a platform for young Europeans to directly share their views, concerns, and aspirations with top EU decision-makers. This continues the Commission's ambition to give young people a stronger role in EU policymaking, as also highlighted in the Commission **Communication on the European Year of Youth 2022** adopted on 10 January 2024.

The responsibility of **coordinating** the work of all College members on this initiative was entrusted to **Glenn Micallef, Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport**.



Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Glenn Micallef

II. Overview of the first round of Youth Policy Dialogues

All College members completed their Dialogues by 10 March 2025 — the final day marking the first 100 days of the new Commission's mandate. Several of these Dialogues were **scheduled to coincide with other key events**. For instance, Commissioner Hansen hosted his Dialogue in the margins of the EU Agri-Food Days, Commissioner Várhelyi organised his on World Cancer Day, and Commissioner Kadis engaged with young people during the European Ocean Days event.

The Dialogues took place in **various locations across 12 Member States**: Belgium, Poland, Germany, Greece, Slovenia, Austria, Sweden, France, Croatia, Italy, Finland, and Ireland. **Half** of these events were held in **Brussels**. Additionally, as **Poland** assumed the presidency of the Council of the EU at the start of the year, **4** Dialogues were organised in Poland in (Warsaw and Natolin). Some Commissioners hosted their first Youth Policy Dialogues in their **home countries**, while others carefully selected event locations for their **symbolic significance**. For example, Commissioner Micallef opted for Athens, a city emblematic of democracy, sport, and culture. Commissioner Kos selected Nova Gorica/Gorizia, the first-ever cross-border European Capital of Culture, as the venue for her Dialogue.

In terms of **participants' profiles**, young people **aged 16 to 30** were selected through various methods, depending on the lead DG and following guidance offered by DG EAC. In all cases, **inclusivity and diversity criteria** were met. These criteria considered, inter alia, **factors** such as different socioeconomic backgrounds, a variety of interests, age groups, gender balance, geographical representation, whether participants were from rural or urban areas, as well as whether they represented organisations or were invited as individuals. It can be estimated that **overall about 400 young people** were actively involved.

In order to enable for meaningful participation, it was essential to prepare the participants well, so that they could make the most of this opportunity. To ensure this, DGs provided **background notes** with crucial information on the topic and key points for reflection prior to the Dialogues. In addition, the majority of DGs held **preparatory meetings** with participants in order to meet the organisers and the moderator, foster familiarity, discuss the topic, set expectations, and address any questions.

Furthermore, the Dialogues were often accompanied by **side events**, such as participatory workshops, thematic sessions, community-building activities and visits to EU institutions. Such additional elements provided participants with a well-rounded programme, enriching their understanding of the topics discussed during the Dialogue.

After the conclusion of the Dialogues, there were a series of **follow-up activities**, including debriefing sessions with the moderators, feedback meetings with the participants, as well as written replies sent afterwards to them.

A **wrap-up video** of the Dialogues can be found [here](#).

III. Analysis of the key takeaways

The inputs from the young people expressed during the Dialogues were gathered and compiled into **reports by each DG**. These reports are publicly available on the [European Youth Portal](#) and offer an overview of several fundamental aspects of the Dialogues such as the participant selection process, the preparation, structure and content of the discussions, main outcomes, as well as the follow-up activities to each Dialogue.



The reports provide a wealth of **takeaways on a broad spectrum of issues**, as each Commissioner engaged with young people on topics relevant to their respective portfolios. This includes security, economy, competitiveness, social challenges, sustainability, digital transformation, and more. A complete list of the topic and date for each College member's Dialogue and responsible DG or EEAS can be found in Annex 1. In addition to the diversity of topics covered, the Dialogues revealed a number of cross-cutting issues, including preparedness, regulatory simplification, democratic empowerment, skills development, and climate diplomacy, all of which emerged repeatedly across different conversations.

By analysing the common themes raised, the core ideas of the Dialogues can be organised into **five overarching categories** of relevance to the priorities of the current Commission mandate:

1) a Safe Union

2) a Competitive and Sustainable Union

3) a Democratic and Digitally Fit Union

4) a People-Centred and Social Union

5) a Global Union

The analysis below **synthesises** key discussion points and takeaways from all the Dialogues within these five categories.

1. A Safe Union

Given this current geopolitical situation and the renewed focus on security and defence, several Dialogues centred around these issues, revealing shared concerns among young people regarding Europe's preparedness and strategic direction.

Firstly, a central theme was Europe's **defence strategy and its relationship with traditional alliances** like NATO. For instance, in the Dialogue with EVP Séjourné, young participants questioned the feasibility of a fully autonomous European defence, with the EVP responding by stressing the importance of self-determination while maintaining vital connections with democratic allies. Similarly, in the Dialogue with Commissioner Roswall, the significance of cross-border cooperation for security was flagged, with young people underlining its necessity for a stable and safe Europe.

Focusing on security **preparedness**, the discussions extended to Europe's overall **defence capabilities**. In the joint Dialogue with Commissioners Kubilius and Micallef, participants raised concerns about the EU's current defence readiness, pointing out that the Union is not excelling in its ability to defend itself. They also noted that European citizens might not be prepared to accept the trade-offs required for increased defence readiness, calling for a cultural shift. Nationalism was also identified as a potential threat to EU defence efforts, though participants recognised that collective EU strength could enhance defence capabilities.



Participants from the joint Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioners Andrius Kubilius and Glenn Micallef

The exchanges expanded also to **preparedness in other areas**, particularly disaster and health emergencies. In the Dialogue with Commissioner Lahbib, young people proposed that youth organisations play a key role in spreading alerts, conducting school simulations, and fighting disinformation. They urged the EU to invest in military reserves, nursing workforce, inclusivity in the emergency response, as well as research and innovation to fortify overall preparedness.

The **war in Ukraine** emerged as a theme in several discussions as well, notably regarding its impact on European security and the continent's future. In this context, Commissioner Brunner underscored the EU's responsibility to take all possible measures to prevent future wars of aggression and to support Ukraine in finding a solution to the conflict, describing it as an affront to European values and economy. Participants considered similar points with HR/VP Kallas, who emphasised the pivotal role of EU defence in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine. Within this context, the young participants from across 24 countries also underlined the importance of involving youth in these peacebuilding efforts.

Another aspect discussed was the **financing of defence projects**. More concretely, during the Dialogue with Commissioner Serafin, participants posed questions about the feasibility of financing defence initiatives at the European level, whether such funding could follow the model of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) and if there was a risk of over-relying on common debt mechanisms in the future. The Commissioner reminded the recent announcement by the President of the European Commission, stating that military spending would be exempt from the fiscal deficit limits. A further point of debate centred on how decisions regarding EU defence and security spending would be made at the Member States level, and whether unanimous approval would be required. Additionally, in the Dialogue with EVP Séjourné, worries were expressed about the potential impact of increased defence spending on Europe's industrial strategy, especially in relation to the Clean Industrial Deal, with the EVP insisting on the need to align defence investments with broader industrial policy goals to enhance both security and economic competitiveness.

Internal security strategy topics, such as growing **threat of extremism** in the EU and the fight against **drug-related crime** and its impact on young people have also been discussed. The Dialogue with Commissioner Brunner highlighted concerns about growing anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe, calling for the EU to help to prevent hate, divisions and discrimination.

Finally, the topic of **migration management and border security** came across multiple Dialogues too. For example, during the exchange with Commissioner Brunner, participants drew attention to the significance of human rights protection in migration policy and the need to improve integration strategies for migrants. Furthermore, the conversation spotlighted ideas such as implementing the Pact for Asylum and Migration, strengthening FRONTEX, ensuring that internal security strategies uphold human rights, accentuating the role of solidarity among EU Member States, providing employment opportunities for migrants to support their integration and attracting talent from third countries to reinforce EU's economy. In his Dialogue, Commissioner Serafin noted a shift in EU thinking on migration, particularly emphasising effective returns for those without legal status in the EU, signalling a change in migration management priorities.

Overall, the discussions underlined the need for a multifaceted approach to security and defence, with an emphasis on both military readiness and the broader socio-political frameworks necessary to address current and future challenges in Europe. They also stressed the need to integrate youth perspectives into Europe's defence and preparedness strategies, recognising that the values, concerns, and innovative ideas of the next generation are key to developing resilient and forward-looking policies, and to reflect both societal needs and democratic principles.

2. A Competitive and Sustainable Union

The **integration of sustainability with economic policies** was at the forefront of the Youth Policy Dialogues. Young people, as vital stakeholders in Europe's future, expressed concerns about climate change and socioeconomic challenges that closely align with the Union's long-term strategic objectives. This was evident in the Dialogue with Commissioner Šefčovič, where participants reiterated the need to balance the EU's ambitious sustainability targets with the imperative to maintain economic competitiveness to guarantee that Europe remains a global leader in both environmental stewardship and economic innovation. In conjunction to this, in the Dialogues with Commissioners Hansen, Dombrovskis and Hoekstra, the emphasis was placed on harmonising the EU's climate goals with its economic actions to foster green growth and competitiveness. Young participants advocated for addressing climate challenges in sectors like agriculture and reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to better support sustainable farming methods. Furthermore, participants called for increased funding for research into sustainable agricultural practices and climate adaptation tools, alongside more targeted support for young farmers and new entrants to the field.

Likewise, during the Dialogue with Commissioner Roswall, there was a pronounced **demand** from young people **for enhanced environmental protection** concerning specific issues such as water management, textile waste, and the protection of endangered species, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable practices. The Dialogue with Commissioner Kadis addressed this matter too, with participants advocating for thorough environmental assessments prior to ocean-based development, especially in renewable energy and deep-sea mining. Concerns about the environment featured prominently in many other Dialogues, for instance linked to the issues of transport, tourism and agriculture, underlining young people's interest and support for more environmentally responsible policies, innovative solutions, and a shift toward more sustainable lifestyles and economies.

Another major part of exchanges focused on the **promotion of clean energy transition** and the **need to innovate and invest in clean technologies** while ensuring fair adaptation support for climate-vulnerable sectors. Within this context, participants in the Dialogues with Commissioners Hoekstra, Dombrovskis and Jørgensen insisted on the accountability of high-polluting sectors like fossil fuels, calling for the phasing out of subsidies, the enforcement of stricter regulations and the promotion of circular economy. In parallel, financing climate-resilient infrastructure and enhancing electricity interconnections to strengthen energy security and affordability, especially for the most vulnerable consumers, was deemed necessary by participants in the Dialogues with EVP Ribera and Commissioners Jørgensen and Síkela.



Participants from the Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Dan Jørgensen

Investing in both **sustainable tourism and transport infrastructure** was one of the main takeaways from the Dialogue with Commissioner Tzitzikostas. Regarding tourism, young people urged for it to be made more balanced and aligned with the values of young travellers, such as sustainability and inclusivity. On the transport front, recommendations included expanding public transport, particularly rail, in underdeveloped areas, reducing train travel costs, improving ticketing systems, enhancing safety for all travellers, and promoting sustainable urban mobility through initiatives like hydrogen buses and cycling. All these proposals represent concrete ways to enhance accessibility, reduce CO₂ emissions, and create safer, more efficient, and sustainable travel options across Europe. A similar priority on improving public transport was also reflected in the discussions with Commissioners Šuica and Zaharieva. In the Dialogue with the latter, young people further highlighted issues such as urban sprawl, poor connectivity outside city centres, the need for incentives prior to vehicle bans, and the lack of infrastructure for electric vehicles, while also proposing stronger public-private partnerships and the creation of green corridors around cities to protect biodiversity and support wildlife.

Smart incentives for businesses and greener taxation were also addressed. For instance, during the conversation with Commissioner Hoekstra, young participants suggested rewarding innovation, making clean technologies more affordable, and establishing predictable regulations for businesses. They also acknowledged the significant role of taxation in influencing both consumer and corporate behaviour, arguing that it must be fair and socially balanced to be truly effective. This point was also echoed in the Dialogue with Commissioner Dombrovskis, where it was concluded that tax measures could serve as a tool to discourage environmentally harmful companies and industries from operating within, and beyond, the EU.

Last but not least, the concept of **regulatory simplification** to foster innovation and economic growth was a further recurring theme throughout the Dialogues. In discussions with EVP Séjourné and Commissioners Hoekstra, Serafin, Hansen, Dombrovskis, Šefčovič and Šuica, participants pointed out the importance of streamlining bureaucratic processes, reducing administrative burdens, addressing legal uncertainties, and facilitating easier access to loans. These steps were seen as crucial, particularly for small businesses, young entrepreneurs and start-ups, to help them thrive without being hindered by excessive red tape, while still ensuring adequate security and oversight.

Young people's proposals, ranging from green growth and clean energy transition to regulatory simplification and cross-sector collaboration, indicate a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between environmental, economic, and social struggles. Participants also put forward tangible ideas to drive innovation, inclusivity, and resilience, aiming to build a sustainable and prosperous future that benefits generations to come.

3. A Democratic and Digitally Fit Union

To engage civil society into the decision-making process is a key element of democratic system and the involvement of young people through the Youth Policy Dialogues serves as a good example of such. The discussion on the topic of **democratic empowerment** in the context of the forthcoming European Democracy Shield was most visible during the Dialogue with Commissioner McGrath. Among other topics, participants noted that young people frequently feel that awareness campaigns about democratic engagement do not resonate with them, advocating for the use of language that better aligns with youthful perspectives. They also emphasised that young people should be more systematically included in all the relevant fields and need to feel empowered to participate in democracy. Democracy-related actions should also start at the local level, and rural areas should not be forgotten. In addition to that, participants also highlighted that funding (accompanied by capacity-building to access it) is important to support youth initiatives (e.g. a fund for the young by the young).

Further support and **involvement of young people** in general, as one of the priorities of the European Commission, were the topics cross-cutting through most of the Dialogues, such as the Dialogues with HR/VP Kallas, EVP Séjourné and Commissioners Serafin, Hansen, Síkela and McGrath, where participants called for more formalised seat at the table for young people, for example through quotas, lowering the voting age, more Youth Dialogues or involvement into local councils. In this context, the EU should set concrete goals related to participation of young people to make it more measurable. During the Dialogue with Commissioner Kadis, participants urged for more direct youth involvement with citizen science initiatives, such as coastal cleanups, field data gathering, and becoming "ocean reporters." They also emphasised the importance of having young people actively participate in enlargement and policy discussions, as highlighted in the Dialogue with Commissioners Kos and Micallef. During the Dialogue with Commissioner Lahbib, the importance of youth organisations was highlighted regarding the spread of information and preparing communities for emergencies. Specific call also emerged in the Dialogue with Commissioner Várhelyi for the involvement of young cancer survivors into the decision-making.

In line with the efforts of the European Commission to counter foreign information manipulation and deterrence online, the topic of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** emerged during several discussions, such as the ones with EVP Mînzatu and EVP Virkkunen. Participants identified AI both as a threat (e.g. an enhancer of disinformation practices) and at the same time as a significant breakthrough which can bring many benefits. In other Dialogues, participants underscored the need for the EU to tackle the challenges posed by AI by creating protections against AI-generated content, such as bot comments, fake creators, and deepfakes, which could be exploited for revenge or political unrest. They recommended watermarking AI-produced content and employing 'proof of humanity' cryptographic tools to confirm social media interactions. Furthermore, the discussions covered potential AI applications, including its role in

cancer care as discussed with Commissioner Várhelyi, and in ocean protection as mentioned in the Dialogue with Commissioner Kadis, where young people used the example of the digital twin of the ocean—a complex model that combines global data to simulate and predict changes within the ocean.

Additionally, the digital agenda was highlighted also in connection to **digital finance**. During the Dialogue with Commissioner Dombrovskis, participants stressed the need for the digital euro to be accessible both across and within Member States. Participants of the Dialogue with Commissioner Albuquerque recommended the creation of a simple and digital pan-European savings product as well as EU-wide finance app aggregator allowing users to see all accounts in one place and make transfers with other people, including a budgeting function and information on investing.



Participant from the Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis

The discussions focused on enhancing democratic engagement, particularly through the increased involvement of young people in decision-making processes. This included concerns on civic participation, advocating for formal roles such as quotas and lowered voting ages, and involving them in citizen science and policy initiatives. Additionally, the participants identified AI as both a potential threat and an opportunity, emphasising the need for regulatory measures to prevent disinformation. Young people also referred to today's digital world when stressing the importance of accessible and integrated financial services, including the digital euro and a pan-European finance app.

4. A People and Social Union

During several Dialogues, participants identified the **rising cost of living and the lack of affordable housing** as a significant concern to the young generation. During the Dialogue with Commissioner Šuica, participants pointed out the problem of the lack of student accommodations calling for further support and investment. In the dialogue with EVP Ribera on Europe's housing crisis, young participants advocated for controlling speculative demand in housing markets. The discussion also asserted the need for gender-sensitive housing policies, suggesting supportive housing models such as shared housing initiatives that offer women the opportunity to live in communities while cutting down on living costs.

Working conditions and rights of employees were some of the topics raised during Commissioner Tzitzikostas' Dialogue, where participants asked for a major involvement of the

European Labour Authority (ELA), especially in enforcing driver's rights. Enhancing working conditions and training was deemed as crucial for attracting a younger and more diverse workforce. As stated by the participants of the dialogue with EVP Mînzatu, there is also a need for a digital-era social dialogue, with trade unions playing a key role. Trade unions must adapt and build their capacity to effectively represent and assist remote and digital workers also with regards to their right to disconnect.

Additionally, achieving **gender equality in the EU labour market** was discussed in the Dialogues with EVP Ribera and Commissioner Šuica with the call from the young people on advancing women's participation. They pointed out existing disparities faced by women, such as the gender pay gap - including in sports and culture, as noted in discussion with Commissioner Micallef - and the limited availability of family-friendly workplaces.



Participants from the Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Dubravka Šuica

The Dialogues also underscored the importance of **equipping young people with diverse skills** that are relevant to current and future economic landscapes and supporting career adaptability. In the discussions with EVP Mînzatu and Commissioner Šuica, participants advocated for strengthening education systems to provide young people with transferable skills and opportunities for lifelong learning and reskilling. Participants also called for providing training in diverse areas, such as energy issues and careers support for young people and workers moving into the green jobs, as pointed out in the Dialogue with Commissioner Jørgensen. During the Dialogue with the Commissioner Kos, participants proposed incorporation of citizenship education to highlight the benefits of EU membership. Big risk is posed by growing imbalances within societies whereby only few may be knowledgeable of AI. It is crucial that these gaps are bridged so that there is at least good basic understanding of AI. There is also a need to promote vocational education and training (VET) so it is not seen as a second choice, as it equips students with practical, job-ready skills that align with labour market needs, as discussed in the Dialogue with EVP Mînzatu and Commissioner Síkela, where participants called for enhanced work on climate and ecological resilience, to be integrated into vocational training.

Gaining digital skills is also very high on young people's agenda. During the dialogues with EVP Mînzatu, EVP Virkkunen and HR/VP Kallas, participants were rattled by the prominence of disinformation and inflammatory political content on social media. Some wanted large scale reform of campaign finance and influence online, while others raised the promotion of education. Participants agreed that digital and media literacy should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Developing appropriate skills and competences should start from an early age at school,

but also beyond, thus utilising the potential of NGOs and youth workers. Moreover, the discussion with Commissioner Albuquerque also pointed out the lack of financial education in Europe, including for the young generations. In order to teach young people financial literacy skills more effectively, participants proposed to use digital technologies such as gamification and collaborations with financial influencers.

In the dialogue with Commissioner Várhelyi on **EU health policy and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** participants discussed the need for enhanced follow-up and survivor support, which includes counselling and post-treatment care. They also urged the European Commission to accelerate efforts for stricter smoking regulations and initiatives toward a smoke-free generation to reduce tobacco-related cancers, alongside launching public health campaigns to tackle alcohol-related cancers. Additionally, participants called for faster translation of research into practice. Concerns were also raised about disparities in genetic testing for young cancer patients across certain Member States and the potential negative impact of future EU health budget cuts on cancer projects.

The exchanges expanded also to the importance of the **mental health** (in online and offline world). The discussions with EVP Mînzatu and EVP Virkkunen highlighted concerns about the impact of influencers and algorithms on mental health, noting their potential to foster demoralization and radicalization, with special focus on the protection of minors. To address these issues, participants suggested either the establishment of new rights and freedoms specifically tailored to mental health or large awareness campaigns that mirrored past campaigns against tobacco and junk food industries. In the Dialogue with Commissioner Micallef, mental wellbeing issues were also identified as some of the insecurities linked to the career in the field of sports and culture, together with social pressure and low recognition.

The call for **inclusion and equality** was raised in most Dialogues, such as in discussions around social fairness and related topics (e.g. HR/VP Kallas, EVP Mînzatu, Commissioners Brunner, Hansen, Kos, Jørgensen, Lahbib, etc.) as well as in other discussions about the labour market and decision making. The need for public spaces to be more inclusive and easily accessible was addressed during the Dialogue with Commissioner Zaharieva, as well as the topics of inclusive and safe transport and tourism were discussed during the Dialogue with Commissioner Tzitzikostas. The Dialogue with the Commissioner Micallef focused specifically on promoting inclusiveness through sports and culture, highlighting the importance of training for students, adults and professionals to include people with disabilities.

The Dialogues highlighted several pressing concerns and initiatives that reflect the current socioeconomic landscape in Europe. A major focus was on addressing the rising cost of living and affordable housing, particularly impacting young people and students, with innovative solutions like gender-sensitive housing being explored. In the labour market, the need for improved working conditions and adaptation to digital era demands was evident, as well as gender equality remaining a critical issue for young people. Skills and education were a huge priority, with young people emphasizing the need to equip citizens with future-ready skills, including digital and financial literacy, AI knowledge, and vocational training. Lastly, the importance of health and well-being, as well as inclusion and accessibility, were underscored in various sectors, calling for policies that ensure equitable access to opportunities and resources for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

5. A Global Union

The Dialogues addressed the **role of the EU as an international partner**, both bilaterally and multilaterally. In particular, HR/VP Kallas's Dialogue stressed the importance to partner with Youth in EU Foreign Policy with a specific attention to *"The EU & its geopolitical priorities, Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution, Human Rights & Democracy, Global & Climate Diplomacy."* With a focus on trade, cross-border challenges within the European Union were discussed during the Dialogue with EVP Séjourné and Commissioner Dombrovskis, while the Dialogue with Commissioners Šefčovič focused on the global dimension. The participants recognised that the challenging global environment requires a careful calibration of bilateral trade relations with big economic powers like China and the US, neighbouring countries, like Ukraine and Türkiye, and others while also maintaining a rule based global order through bilateral and multilateral agreements. A significant portion of the discussion focused on the EU's role in fostering inclusivity in international trade, particularly within multilateral agreements. Young people expressed concerns about the potential exclusion of smaller WTO members and the risk of creating a fragmented trading system. In the context of economic cooperation, during the Dialogue with Commissioners Kos and Micallef, young people also stressed the need to prioritise European values over purely political or economic interests, as well as the need to further economic cooperation with candidate countries.

During the Dialogue with Commissioner Sikela, participants discussed about the role of the **Global Gateway strategy** as a means to building strong **international partnerships**. They recommended creating a Global Gateway Youth Ambassadors Programme to empower young leaders from diverse regions to educate their peers about the Global Gateway and conduct consultations on its projects. They also proposed setting up Youth-Led Innovation Hubs in partner countries, where young professionals, entrepreneurs, and researchers could work together on initiatives related to infrastructure, climate, and digitalization.

Climate diplomacy was raised in some Dialogues, such as the one with Commissioners Šefčovič, where it was concluded that the EU can act both as a transformative power, driving change through trade and policy, and as a normative power, influencing worldwide standards and shaping international norms on sustainability and competitiveness. To this end, young people taking part in the Dialogues with HR/VP Kallas and Commissioner Hoekstra explored the role of international cooperation, underscoring Europe's responsibility to lead by example and the need to cultivate stronger partnerships with global allies.

Other world powers were discussed in connection with **global social media platforms** during the dialogue with EVP Virkkunen, where participants asked that these platforms are held accountable. Foremost on their minds were the opacity of the moderation practices, business models, and algorithms. Many called for EU action to make social media companies transparent, with some participants even asking about the potential creation of EU competitors to the American and Chinese platforms. Foreign information manipulation and interference also featured strongly in the discussion with HR/VP Kallas.

A lot of attention was given to the **enlargement process**, which appeared to be a very important topic for the participants during several Dialogues, such as the one with Commissioner Serafin where the financial dimension of possible enlargement was discussed, as well as during the Dialogue with Commissioner Roswall, where an overwhelming majority of participants expressed

strong support for a further enlargement of the EU. During the Dialogue with HR/VP Kallas, as well as the joint Dialogue with Commissioners Kos and Micallef, young people from EU Member States, enlargement and neighbourhood countries shared their strong belief that EU enlargement represents a gateway to greater freedom, democracy, and shared values. The participants of the latter Dialogue highlighted the importance of addressing regional disparities and ensuring balanced development across the Union and also underlined the essential role of mobility in fostering connections, emphasising that cultural exchanges and professional networking are key to strengthening a shared European identity. Young people also called for the EU to continue investing in its own unity and resilience, ensuring that enlargement benefits all citizens, both current and future.



Participant from the Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Jozef Sikela



Photo from the Youth Policy Dialogue with HR/VP Kaja Kallas

Supporting human rights, civil society and democracy worldwide was discussed in the Dialogues with HR/VP Kallas and Commissioners Sikela and Brunner, with participants encouraging the EU to enhance its position as a global democratic leader by partnering with young people to address gaps left by other international players. They also highlighted the EU's potential role in establishing enduring peace in the Middle East, along with the critical need to protect human rights.

During the Dialogues, participants emphasised the EU's influential role globally and internally across several areas. As an international/trade partner, the need for inclusive practices and balanced relationships was highlighted, as well as the EU's potential leadership in climate diplomacy, economic development, and human rights. There were calls for more transparency in global social media regulation, including potential EU-based alternatives. Enthusiasm for EU enlargement was accompanied by concerns over regional disparities and political stability. The Global Gateway Strategy was seen as an avenue for youth engagement, advocating for initiatives like ambassador programs and innovation hubs. Lastly, the EU's potential as a democratic global leader was underscored, urging collaboration with young people to address democratic deficits and enhance peace and human rights efforts.

6. Conclusion and key takeaways

In terms of substance, the first round of Youth Policy Dialogues illustrates a clear consensus among young people on the need for a European Union that is democratic, resilient, adaptable and sustainable. Young people envision an EU that is both a competitive economic force and a champion of social equity and global cooperation. The Dialogues addressed both general principles as well as more detailed policy ideas. Young people's perspectives also provide a crucial reminder that the challenges of today require a collaborative, cross-disciplinary approach that fosters greater cooperation across policy areas. Ultimately, these reflections offer support for the Commission to adopt policies that fully reflect the aspirations and values of the younger generation.

IV. The way forward

Looking forward, it is crucial to define the next steps and ensure that this format of connecting young people with EU leadership remains a meaningful, powerful, and long-term mechanism for engagement.



Therefore, **the insights gathered from these Dialogues should be used to feed into concrete policy actions** of the European Commission, ensuring that young people's priorities and concerns meaningfully shape the future direction of the EU. For example, the proposals from the Dialogue with EVP Mînzatu will feed into the Union of Skills and the Digital Education Action Plan Review and will inform the Roadmap on the Future of Digital Education and Training. The outcomes of Commissioner McGrath's Dialogue will feed into the preparation of the European Democracy Shield. The outcomes of the Commissioner Micallef's Dialogue will contribute to the Cultural Compass. The proposals of the participants shared during the Dialogue with Commissioner Hoekstra will feed into the upcoming policy discussions and further stakeholder engagement activities in the run-up to COP30 later this year. The ideas presented during the Dialogue with Commissioner Jørgensen will be involved into the Citizens Energy Package and the proposals of the Commissioner's Hansen Dialogue will serve as an input for the Commission's upcoming Vision for Agriculture and Food.

The insights of the Commissioner's Šuica Dialogue will be relevant for the implementation of the demography toolbox, when working together with the EVP Mînzatu, and in the preparation for the New Pact on the Mediterranean. Similarly, in the case of the Dialogue of Commissioner Kadis, the outcomes will be shared with relevant units within DG MARE responsible for drafting the European Ocean Pact to ensure that the key takeaways and recommendations are duly considered. Additionally, participants' ideas from the Dialogue with Commissioner Zaharieva will be shared with the Mission Board, the Mission Owners Group and the Cities Mission Platform to inform their day-to-day work with cities and to feed into their Community of Practice, and the Working Group of the Strategic Programming Committee.

Some DGs are already planning other events with youth involvement, such as the Series of "Meet an Energy Expert" workshops for Young Energy Ambassadors prepared by DG ENER. DG MOVE will organize a conference on young people and transport jobs and DG AGRI will prepare the first

stakeholder consultation on the Commission's upcoming Generational Renewal Strategy in agriculture. Some of the Commissioners also shared their interest in meeting with young people regularly.

Further reinforcing the commitment to youth mainstreaming, **future Youth Policy Dialogues can be more closely linked to key initiatives in the Commission work programme. The Dialogues can feed into the youth consultation phase of the youth check process.** This would contribute to the implementation of the youth check and at the same time make the dialogues more meaningful. Young people would be able to see that their input is taken into consideration in the design of new policies. Organising the Dialogues during the open public consultation phase of new initiatives would make this link stand out even more. This is also a way to integrate the Dialogues in the Better regulation policymaking framework.

In addition to this, the **conversation** on the main takeaways of the Dialogues **continues online through the Commission's Citizens' Engagement Platform (CEP)**. The CEP supports the Youth Policy Dialogues as an online interactive and deliberative hub for reaching out to citizens beyond the limited number of invited participants. The platform allows citizens to engage in discussions and share their perspectives, enriching the ongoing policy dialogues.

On the CEP, bottom-up online debates can be held to feed into participatory processes on various policies. Thanks to real-time e-translation, these happen in all EU's 24 official languages, creating real cross-national discussions and making participation accessible to a diverse and wide-ranging audience.

More concretely, the CEP consists of two parts:

- One part that gives information on the Youth Policy Dialogues. This is where news, information, links to relevant sites, photos and videos can be found. This is also where some Youth Policy Dialogues have been web-streamed during the 100 days. Please see: https://citizens.ec.europa.eu/debate-youth-policy-dialogues_en
- The second part is the interactive part. This is where the post-dialogue online debates take place and where contributions/ideas, comments on and endorsements of the contributions of other users (not only young people) can be posted. Please see: citizens.ec.europa.eu/participation/processes/youth-policy-dialogues/f/100/proposals

The first of these online debates, building on the Youth Policy Dialogues held during the first 100 days of the new Commission's mandate, were launched on 25 March 2025.

Finally, in accordance with the President's guidelines, the exchanges go beyond a one-time exercise, as the Youth Policy Dialogues with all Commissioners will be held on an **annual basis**. EVP Mînzatu and Commissioners Brunner, Hansen, Kubilius and Micallef have already hosted or are planning to host **multiple Dialogues throughout 2025**.

The Youth Policy Dialogues represent a key step forward in youth engagement at EU level. They can become a powerful and long-term tool for policy engagement between young people and the EU's leadership, ensuring that young people are not just consulted but actively and directly involved in shaping EU policies that will be defining for their own future.

Annex 1 - List of responsible DG, topic and date for each Commissioner's Dialogue

Commissioner	DG	Topic of the Dialogue	Date
Magnus BRUNNER	HOME	Schengen, security, and migration	06/12/2024
Christophe HANSEN	AGRI	Building together the future of farming, food, and rural areas	11/12/2024
EVP Roxana MÎNZATU	EAC	#True #Fake – Unmasking the True in a Digital World	20/01/2025
Glenn MICALLEF	EAC	All in: Promoting Inclusiveness through Sports and Culture	28/01/2025
Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ	TRADE	EU trade and economic security – what is at stake for young Europeans?	03/02/2025
Olivér VÁRHELYI	SANTE	Europe's Beating Cancer Plan	04/02/2025
Wopke HOEKSTRA	CLIMA, TAXUD	The future of EU climate policy; Just transition and skills for the clean transition; Taxation policy contribution to a green, competitive, and fair Europe	06/02/2025
Marta KOS	ENEST	Youth Enlargement Dialogue 2025: Breaking Barriers – Bridging Borders – Growing Together with Commission Glenn Micallef (DG EAC)	08/02/2025
Dan JØRGENSEN	ENER	EU Energy Policies: Shaping a clean, sustainable and fair energy future	18/02/2025
Piotr SERAFIN	BUDG	Future EU priorities. What should the European Union be involved in? The perspective of the young.	18/02/2025
Jessika ROSWALL	ENV	EU environmental policies	21/02/2025
Hadja LAHBIB	ECHO, HERA	Citizen Risk Awareness, Disaster and Health Preparedness	26/02/2025
Costas KADIS	MARE	Future Ocean Pact – Young Voices for the Ocean	03/03/2025
Andrius KUBILIUS	DEFIS	Young Voices in European Defence: Fostering Dialogue and Understanding with Commissioner Glenn Micallef (DG EAC)	04/03/2025
Valdis DOMBROVSKIS	ECFIN	Economic Priorities for the New European Commission Mandate	04/03/2025
EVP Teresa RIBERA	COMP	Empowering Young Talent and Improving Gender Balance in the EU	04/03/2025
Maria LUÍS ALBUQUERQUE	FISMA	The Future of Finance	04/03/2025
HR/VP Kaja KALLAS	EEAS, FPI	Ally with Youth in EU Foreign Policy	06/03/2025

Jozef SÍKELA	INTPA	Youth and Global Gateway – Maximising impact	06/03/2025
Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS	MOVE	Shaping the Future: Expectations and Needs of Young Travellers and Job Seekers	06/03/2025
EVP Stéphane SÉJOURNÉ	GROW	Sustainable prosperity: building a competitive future together	07/03/2025
EVP Raffaele FITTO	REGIO	Involvement of youth in EU affairs and policy making	07/03/2025
Dubravka ŠUICA	MENA, JRC	Demography and Youth	07/03/2025
Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA	RTD, JRC	How do young people envision the cities of the future?	10/03/2025
Michael McGRATH	JUST	Democratic empowerment	10/03/2025
EVP Henna VIRKKUNEN	CNECT	The role of social media in shaping democracy and its impact on young people	10/03/2025

List of the additional Dialogues conducted during the 100 days:

Commissioner	DG	Topic of the Dialogue	Date
Magnus BRUNNER	HOME	30 years of Austria in the EU, Schengen, drugs and their effects on young people, the growing threat of extremism in the EU and migration.	03/03/2025
EVP Roxana MÎNZATU	EMPL	How can we ensure equal access to quality jobs and skills for everyone?	06/03/2025

Annex 2 – Photos from the Dialogues








