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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the intergenerational dimension in the youth field to foster dialogue and social cohesion

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned conclusions as approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 28-29 November 2022.

Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on promoting the intergenerational dimension in the youth field to foster dialogue and social cohesion

THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE
MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

RECOGNISING THAT:

1. The European Youth Goal # 3 in the EU Youth Strategy, entitled ‘Inclusive societies’, sets out to ‘provide more spaces, opportunities, resources, and programmes to foster dialogue¹ and social cohesion, and combat discrimination and segregation’ and the European Youth Goal # 4 entitled 'Information and constructive dialogue' has the objective to ensure that young people engage in participatory and constructive dialogue.
2. Building on existing possibilities at European, national, regional, and local level, the European Year of Youth (2022) acknowledges the need to empower, honour, support and engage with young people to ensure that their interests and needs are duly taken into account in political actions across policy areas². The intergenerational dimension of youth policies reveals itself crucial to the achievement of the Year’s objectives and securing its legacy in a socially cohesive manner.

¹ For the purposes of these Council Conclusions, ‘dialogue’ is understood to mean ‘intergenerational dialogue’.

² Decision (EU) 2021/2316 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 December 2021 on a European Year of Youth (2022), OJ L462/1.

3. Youth work has, among other things, the potential to help engage young people with diverse backgrounds and living conditions, including those with fewer opportunities, in different types of intergenerational projects and activities and can serve as a valuable instrument for promoting intergenerational dialogue, intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational equity as well as for building positive relationships between people of different generations.
4. Youth councils, youth organisations, youth work structures, youth networks and non-formal groups of young people can play an important role in promoting intergenerational dialogue, equity, and solidarity. With their youth expertise³ and youth know-how they create space for experimentation and can contribute to the discovery of innovative solutions and modes of intergenerational collaboration.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine - which has caused an unprecedented influx of Ukrainian refugees in Europe in 2022 - have shown that volunteers of all ages are important for societies in promoting societal resilience in the face of crisis situations. Young people volunteering in Member States during the pandemic and the influx of refugees have proved their potential to promote intergenerational solidarity and create intergenerational bonds between young people and other age groups⁴.
6. Intergenerational volunteering brings younger and older people together in purposeful, and mutually beneficial activities, programmes and projects that promote solidarity, deeper understanding, and respect between generations, and helps to build more cohesive communities.

³ Youth expertise is understood to mean young people's insights into what they have seen to work and function well.

⁴ Responses of Member States in periodically updated questionnaires on the measures adopted by Member States in the field of education and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic under the HR, DE, PT and SI presidencies.

7. The digital divide illustrates a longstanding inequality in developing skills and providing access to new technologies. The Commission's Green Paper on Ageing acknowledges that 'investing in digital skills, community development and intergenerational cohesion can prevent the deterioration of mental health and well-being and reduce inequalities'⁵. Sharing of digital skills and knowledge is an area where younger people can play a leading role and help create a stronger sense of intergenerational connection with people older than them⁶.
8. EU programmes and initiatives such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, the EU Youth Dialogue, the European Year of Youth 2022, the Conference on the Future of Europe, the New European Bauhaus, as well as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), including ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) under the European Social Fund+ and the European Union Recovery Instrument (NextGenerationEU), have the potential to be valuable instruments for promoting intergenerational dialogue and encouraging intergenerational solidarity in the youth field at local, regional, national and European level. Projects based on volunteering and solidarity activities are living proof of young people's commitment to being actively engaged in intergenerational dialogue and solidarity, among other things.

⁵ Commission's Green Paper on Ageing: Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations, COM(2021) 50 final, OJ C 50, 27.1.2021, p.21.

⁶ EURACTIV special report Golden years: Opportunities for Europe's ageing population, 22 June 2022, with a reference to Edwards Lifesciences' Unifying Generations: Building the Pathway to Intergenerational Solidarity, 21 June 2022.

9. Promoting intergenerational equity through youth-related policies⁷ at all levels is highly relevant, especially in rural, remote, peripheral, less-developed areas and outermost regions. The shrinking proportion of younger generations across different Member States⁸ and the 'brain drain' represent a serious challenge for many of these communities, for which it is crucial to give a higher priority to intergenerational equity by formulating supportive youth-related policies⁹ for ensuring cohesion.
10. Gender equality¹⁰ needs to be ensured when facilitating an intergenerational dimension in youth-related policies and youth work provision. This requires efforts not just by governments, but also by civil society including youth organisations, youth leaders, youth workers, the media, and the private sector.
11. The EU Youth Dialogue as the biggest youth participatory mechanism in the EU and the Council of Europe's co-management system provide spaces for conceptualising intergenerational dialogue as a process in which people of different ages have a space for common reflection and co-production. During the EU Youth Conference in Prague on 11-13 July 2022, young people expressed the view that intergenerational dialogue should not replace a direct youth dialogue with policymakers but should take place alongside it.

⁷ Youth-related policies are policies that affect the lives of young people and whose integral component is the improvement of young people's living conditions and opportunities, alongside support for equal possibilities to participate in economic, social and political life.

⁸ UNECE Policy Brief on Ageing No. 18, March 2017.

⁹ Supportive youth-related policies are based on the assessment of young people's needs and address different aspects of public policies which are not covered by more general policy documents, for instance well-being, mental health, housing, access to infrastructure or services etc.).

¹⁰ The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 provides a framework for the European Commission's work on gender equality and sets out the policy objectives and key actions for the 2020-2025 period. Communication from the Commission, COM(2020) 152 final.

CONSIDER THAT:

12. It is important to promote dialogue both among young people and between them and older generations. The benefits of bringing together the experience and competencies of different generations are significant and contribute to building peaceful and cohesive societies based on mutual respect, empathy, solidarity, and an understanding of the needs of all age groups.
13. The engagement of young people in intergenerational dialogue and in intergenerational solidarity projects, including volunteering activities enables young people to acquire transversal competencies and social skills, which can be applied in other areas of their lives. Active engagement of different generations in intergenerational dialogue contributes to the development of interpersonal skills and reciprocal adaptability and helps build societal resilience and well-being through social engagement, cultivation of social connections and prevention of social isolation.
14. Promoting intergenerational equity through a holistic and forward-looking approach to developing youth-related policies contributes to social cohesion. Policymakers supported by researchers, youth workers, youth organisations, other professionals¹¹ and other relevant stakeholders should demonstrate strong political commitment to act upon inequalities both within and between different generations and address intergenerational challenges. They should have access to existing national or European data and evidence, disaggregated by age, which monitor inequalities between young people from diverse backgrounds and living conditions and across age groups.

¹¹ For the purposes of these Council conclusions, ‘other professional’ is understood to mean a person, usually seen - depending on different national context - as a mentor, educator, academics, instructor or trainer, who provides instruction or training to policymakers, youth workers and volunteers working in the youth field aimed at enabling them to learn the skills they need for their job or activities.

15. Policymakers, youth organisations including local youth councils, young people, youth workers, youth leaders, researchers, educators, and other relevant stakeholders should consider, where relevant, additional measures and innovative approaches that can bring young people together with other age groups in decision-making processes.
16. The heterogeneity of generations, in terms of diverse individual and group characteristics including mental and physical abilities, socio-economic conditions, and the identities they espouse, must be respected so that all generations have an equal opportunity to enjoy full and effective participation in an intergenerational dialogue at all levels of decision-making affecting their personal, professional, and social life.
17. It is important to support paid and volunteer youth workers in the promotion and implementation of the intergenerational dimension in their work. The education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers on the intergenerational dimension should be adapted, where appropriate, to promote intergenerational solidarity and equity in youth work provision and volunteering activities.
18. The involvement of researchers in developing long-term structural measures to promote intergenerational solidarity and justice, for example through the provision of indicators regarding intergenerational equity or through periodical research publications examining intergenerational equity should be explored.

19. Innovative intergenerational dialogue initiatives on developing digital skills can encourage young Europeans to facilitate the involvement of their peers and older people in the digital transition. Such initiatives, aimed at empowering communities to strengthen their digital literacy skills, can reduce community members' loneliness, contribute to their well-being and increase their social inclusion and thus help to build cohesive communities.
20. The concept of sustainable development, as referred to in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the need to strengthen its social dimension, entails the active engagement of citizens of all ages in building safe, inclusive, and cohesive communities. Societal recognition of the diverse needs and responsibilities of various age groups can be reinforced through events and volunteering activities that bring together representatives of different age groups, so as to provide younger and older generations with the opportunity to interact and exchange views on the topics associated with a sustainable Europe.
21. Understanding generational diversity has important implications in terms of building capacities for developing healthy intergenerational relations and social cohesion. To promote dialogue between younger and older generations, the opportunity to engage in intergenerational dialogue should also be provided to children, with a view to creating a shared experience of constructive dialogue whilst developing mutual respect and empathy from an early age.

INVITE MEMBER STATES AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS TO:

22. Raise awareness of intergenerational equity considerations among policymakers and provide them with the evidence, information, data, and other relevant resources needed to reinforce age-based equality in policymaking.
23. Explore possibilities to include in youth strategies and policies, where appropriate, objectives and measures, that reflect the intergenerational dimension. These objectives and measures should be developed on the basis of knowledge, evidence, and good practices, and in consultation with diverse groups of young people, their representative organisations, and other relevant stakeholders, so as to achieve more responsive and inclusive policy outcomes.
24. Promote and facilitate, in close cooperation with youth organisations, youth councils, and local, regional, and national authorities and communities, consultations with young people and their active and meaningful participation in developing, implementing, and evaluating the intergenerational dimension of all youth-related policies.
25. Facilitate the creation of opportunities and accessible spaces for young people to engage in meaningful intergenerational dialogue in public decision-making processes across all policy areas that affect their lives and well-being by implementing targeted measures that enable the involvement, in particular, of young people with fewer opportunities and underrepresented groups of young people.
26. Explore ways to provide space for bringing policymakers, researchers, youth workers and young people together so that they can develop intergenerational dialogue tools such as intergenerational dialogue toolkits and facilitate equal access to information on how young people's voices can be heard through intergenerational dialogue opportunities.

27. Make use of the opportunities provided by the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programmes to support the development and the implementation of capacity-building strategies of youth organisations and young people which help develop community volunteering by creating partnerships that reflect the diversity of the whole community and the needs of different generations.
28. Explore possibilities whereby existing competence-based frameworks¹² for formal and non-formal youth work education, learning and training can help reflect the intergenerational dimension in youth work activities.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF COMPETENCE AND AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVELS, ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

29. Explore the use of existing guidelines, toolboxes¹³ and mechanisms such as citizens panels¹⁴ to support the integration of the youth dimension into sectoral policies and thus enhance policy coherence, so as to deliver policies and services that are more responsive to young people's needs.

¹² Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on youth work.

¹³ OECD (2020), Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations? OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris or United Nations Youth Strategy, youth marker methodology, Youth 2030 Working with and for young people.

¹⁴ COM(2022) 404 final: Citizens' Panels enable citizens to jointly think about topics relevant to them. For example, the European Citizens' Panels were a key feature of the Conference on the Future of Europe. As was the case in this Conference, participants should be randomly selected. But they should also reflect Europe's diversity and demography. Young people should form a third of the participants. Where appropriate, a 'citizen report' will be integrated in the impact assessment, summarising the outcomes of these participatory and deliberative processes. When all participants are young people, this would be dubbed a 'youth test'. The first of this new generation of Citizens Panels will be launched in the context of the 2022 State of the Union address.

30. Continue the use of existing participatory mechanisms and platforms, such as youth parliament simulation sessions and policy dialogue with policymakers at local, national, regional, and European level to promote intergenerational dialogue between young people and stakeholders with decision-making mandates at all levels.
31. Use existing networks and tools, including Eurodesk and the European Youth Portal for promoting user-friendly information about the various EU possibilities for developing and implementing projects and initiatives supporting intergenerational dialogue, intergenerational solidarity, and intergenerational equity.
32. Facilitate the exchange of good practices which cover joint engagement of younger and older citizens in solidarity activities as well as community planning, as developed in programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and lifelong learning through existing EU tools and platforms, in order to increase social cohesion in local communities.
33. Organise mutual learning activities, such as seminars, peer-learning activities, or other relevant forms of cooperation between stakeholders from different policy areas, young people, and youth organisations on promoting intergenerational dialogue, intergenerational solidarity, and intergenerational equity.
34. Within the existing financial framework and programmes, support and, where possible, explore setting up spaces and initiatives for young people. In order to reinforce social cohesion, enable them to develop and participate in activities that promote intergenerational dialogue.

INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF
SUBSIDIARITY TO:

35. Foster synergies between youth policy and other youth-relevant policies and programmes in order to meet the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy, including European Youth Goals # 3 ‘Inclusive societies’, and # 4 ‘Information and constructive dialogue’, with the latter’s targets to include dialogue and social cohesion as well as engagement in respectful and non-violent dialogue.
36. Highlight the role of the EU Youth Coordinator in raising awareness of the need to address intergenerational considerations across all relevant policy areas.
37. Facilitate the exchange of good practices between Member States on fostering intergenerational dialogue and intergenerational solidarity by making use of the European Youth Portal, the Youth Wiki, and EU programmes and initiatives such as Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, Creative Europe and the New European Bauhaus.

INVITE ALL ACTORS INVOLVED IN EUROPEAN COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN THE YOUTH FIELD TO:

38. Promote the European Day of Solidarity between Generations which has been celebrated annually on 29 April since 2009 and provides a good opportunity for the Union to renew its commitment to strengthening solidarity and cooperation between generations in order to promote a fair and sustainable society¹⁵.
39. Stimulate intergenerational dialogue in order to fight age discrimination and ageism by bringing different age groups together and enabling them to get to know each other better, learn from each other and cooperate in their everyday lives.
40. Make joint efforts to implement European Youth Goal #4 by engaging different generations through joint activities aimed at involving local communities in combating targeted disinformation and propaganda campaigns. Where appropriate, media literacy programmes aimed at building societal resilience in the face of targeted disinformation and misinformation campaigns should be evaluated and considered for expansion in both formal education and non-formal learning settings. This is particularly important in the context of disinformation and misinformation campaigns in crisis situation such as in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022.

¹⁵ Decision No 940/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2011 on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012), OJ L 246/5, 23.9.2011.

a) REFERENCES

In adopting these conclusions, the Council and the representatives of the Governments of Member States meeting within the Council have taken note of the following documents:

- Council Recommendation of 5 April 2022 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union, OJ C 157 (2022).
- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on fostering engagement among young people as facilitators of change in order to protect the environment, OJ C 159/07 (2022).
- Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Youth 2022, OJ L 462, 28.12.2021.
- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on safeguarding and creating civic spaces for young people that facilitate meaningful youth participation, OJ C 501 1/04 (2021).
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on strengthening the multilevel governance when promoting the participation of young people in decision-making processes, OJ C 241/03 (2021).
- European Commission, Green Paper on Ageing: Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations, COM(2021) 50 final.
- Council conclusions on mainstreaming ageing in public policies, 6976/21(2021).

- Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on fostering democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe, OJ C 415/09 (2020).
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas, OJ C 193/06 (2020).
- Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue - European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, OJ C 189, (2019).
- Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, OJ C 456, (2018).
- Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012), OJ L 246/5.
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions New European Bauhaus Beautiful, Sustainable, Together, COM (2021) 573.
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, EU strategy on the rights of the child, COM/2021/142 final.

- European Council on Foreign Relations, policy brief, September 2021, Europe's invisible divides: How covid-19 is polarising European politics.
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM (2020) 152.
- European Commission, Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport: final report to the European Commission, Publications Office, 2020.
- European Commission, The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.
- European Commission, The European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles.
- OECD, Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People OECD/LEGAL/0474, 10.06. 2022.

- OECD report on ‘Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for all Generations?’, 22.11.2020.
- OECD report on Youth and Covid-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience, 11.06.2020.
- European Commission, Commission Staff Working document, Better Regulation Guidelines, SWD(2021) 305 final, 3.11.2021.
- United Nations, Youth Strategy Youth 2030: Working with and for young people.
- Deležan Tomaž, Derailing modern democracies: the case of youth absence from an intergenerational perspective, Annales, 2018.
- Deležan Tomaž, Intergenerational dialogue for democracy. International IDEA Discussion Paper 1/2017.
- Letter to EU institutions by the Parents for Future in Europe, 12 June 2020.

b) DEFINITIONS OF THE MAIN CONCEPTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THESE CONCLUSIONS

‘Promoting intergenerational dimension in youth policy-making and youth work provision’ means promoting intergenerational dialogue, intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational justice/equity in the youth field within the mandate of the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 through:

- innovative cross-sectoral youth policies (for instance establishing the intergenerational dimension as one of the horizontal priorities, pillars, or strategic or operational goals in youth policy documents) which foster dialogue in decision-making processes to enable young people to have an equal say in decisions that affect their lives, and thus promote age diversity and age equity in public life at local, regional, national and European level.
- enriching youth work provision by integrating intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational dialogue in youth work activities and volunteering activities.

‘Intergenerational dialogue’ means an interactive and safe participatory space or opportunity that brings together younger and older generations to create shared knowledge and a collective experience. It can be conducted through various mechanisms (e.g., surveys, meetings, roundtables, citizens’ panels, forums, or advisory councils), with the aim of achieving high levels of informed citizenship, shared decision-making, and the integration of intergenerational equity, and justice principles into different levels of governance.

‘Intergenerational equality’ means providing the same level of opportunities and assistance to all age groups in society. It ensures that all age groups have the same rights and responsibilities.

‘Intergenerational equity’ means recognising that different age groups have diverse needs and that adjustments to imbalances must be made. The process is continuous and requires intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures to be identified and overcome. Equity means providing various levels of support and assistance depending on the specific needs or abilities of different age groups. It ensures that all age groups are given the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities.

‘Intergenerational justice’ refers to fairness between generations based on the idea that ‘the pursuit of welfare by the current generation should not diminish the opportunities for a good and decent life for succeeding generations’ (United Nations, 2013¹⁶). In the context of these Council Conclusions, intergenerational justice describes relations between contemporary generations, i.e., between younger and older generations.

‘Intergenerational solidarity’ refers to mutual support and cooperation between different age groups so as to achieve a society where people of all ages have a role to play in line with their needs and capacities and can benefit from their community’s economic and social progress on an equal basis.

¹⁶ United Nations, Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations, Report of the Secretary-General, A/68/322, 2013.

c) SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS UNDER THE 9th CYCLE OF THE EU YOUTH DIALOGUE:

The consultation phase of the 9th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (EUYD9) ran from January to August 2022. This summary of the EUYD9 results covers consultation activities conducted by National Working Groups, the input from International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations participating in EUYD9, and the outcomes of the EUYD9 Youth Conference in Prague, Czech Republic¹⁷. The results of the mid-term collection of good practices¹⁸ are also incorporated.

Results of sub-theme 1: ‘Information and education’

According to the young people who participated in the consultations, sources of information and opportunities to learn about climate change should:

- be youth-friendly, accessible and available in a range of formats and languages.
- show the relevance of climate change to the lives of a diverse range of young people.
- be comprehensive, trustworthy and informed by science, cover a range of environmental topics and show political processes and developments related to sustainability.
- highlight links between climate change and inequality, of which many young people were unaware of in the consultations.

¹⁷ EUYD9 EU Youth Conference in Prague, Czech Republic. Final Conference Report: Deliberations on Sustainability and Inclusion, 25 July 2022.

¹⁸ EUYD9 Mid-Term Report. Good Practices and Consultation Processes, 30 June 2022.

- go beyond information sharing and aim to motivate and empower young people to act in favour of sustainability, including through political action and by making sustainable lifestyle choices.
- avoid ‘apocalyptic messages’ which create feelings of hopelessness, and impact on young people’s mental health.

To increase learning opportunities about sustainability, it was suggested that schools should be better used, and the topic included in their curricula. Though schools were the most widely suggested forum for these opportunities, civil society, youth clubs, youth organisations, digital tools and peer-to-peer programmes were also among the beneficial learning environments identified. The need for funding for youth work and youth organisations in order to expand learning opportunities relating to sustainability was raised.

Results of sub-theme 2: ‘Action and empowerment’

A common opinion among consultation participants was that policy makers and politicians have shown a lack of action on sustainability and environment issues, and that young people have very limited ways to hold decision-makers to account on these topics. There were feelings of mistrust and discontent towards politicians. Many, but not all, young people were able to identify a variety of available participatory mechanisms, (e.g., protests, petitions, civil society organisations). In general, however, these mechanisms were all said to be failing to bring about change on sustainability, due to inaction from the relevant policy makers. No specific types of mechanism were widely identified as more effective. Young people involved in formal structures, (e.g., youth councils, advisory boards) said that these structures did have some impact when embedded in policymaking. However, many young people were not aware of these structures. Opportunities to hold decision-makers to account for were said to be improved by:

- policymakers committing to more extensive action based on outcomes of participation mechanisms.

- improving the accessibility of participation mechanisms, ensuring that they focus on the concerns of marginalised groups as well as majority issues and enable marginalised young people to take leadership roles.
- increasing the number of opportunities for participation on sustainability, especially informal and regular dialogue with elected representatives.
- promoting and protecting youth councils by increasing resources, establishing more local youth councils and ensuring legislative backing.

Results of sub-theme 3: ‘Governance’

The EUYD9 Youth Conferences in France and in the Czech Republic and the informal ministerial meeting of 22 January 2022 in Strasbourg identified concerns from young people about youth washing. The young people that participated in the consultation phase were less familiar with the concept but often able to recognise it. Youth washing was said to be an engagement between politicians or policymakers and young people which has no genuine possibility of creating political change, despite expectations to do so. The consultations identified that participatory mechanisms can reduce youth washing by:

- increasing transparency and visibility by giving young people clear information on the feasibility of implementing their demands and ensuring policymakers' commitments are publicly recorded and promoted.
- providing follow up and feedback to young people on the actions taken by policymakers after participation activities with policymakers publicly reporting on changes achieved or justifying the lack of changes achieved by given deadlines, as well as engaging in ongoing dialogue with young people.
- developing more consistent and stronger links between participation mechanisms and policy sectors linked to sustainability.

Results of sub-theme 4: ‘Mobility and solidarity’

In the consultation, young people from a diverse range of marginalised backgrounds were asked what could enable them to take advantage of EU-wide mobility opportunities related to the environment. Financial barriers or perceived financial barriers were a major issue. These included direct costs, being unable to take a break from employment or risking losing social welfare assistance. Language barriers and a lack of accessible information about opportunities also played a role. Some young people perceived EU mobility opportunities as not intended for young people from their backgrounds. A tendency to focus on immediate life needs or local issues rather than environmental topics was also a factor. The young people consulted identified a need to:

- lower the threshold for accessing opportunities by removing costs, offering short term (two to three days) opportunities, simplifying administrative procedures, and connecting directly via schools or local projects.
- increasing funding and support to the organisations which promote mobility and solidarity projects.
- focus on local environmental initiatives that are connected to and affect marginalised young people's own communities.
- increase publicity and outreach, including delivering mobility opportunities connected to schools as well as by working with organisations, professionals and previous participants who have “bonds of trust” with young people in marginalised circumstances.
- emphasise the personal benefits of taking part, especially with regard to employability and employment skills, and make opportunities more attractive.
- provide flexible, high quality and professional support that is able to meet a variety of different accessibility needs including resourcing organisations working with young people in marginalised circumstances to support environmental mobility opportunities.

Results of sub theme 5: 'Access to infrastructure'

Financial limitations were identified as one of the key factors preventing young people from making more sustainable living choices. The participants consulted called for the development of sustainable infrastructure that is affordable for young people. The general lack of infrastructure in rural areas was also highlighted. The types of infrastructure requested included:

- affordable and improved public transport along with safer and more widespread facilities for cycling, becoming viable options compared to cars.
- financially accessible housing options, as young people said that financial barriers were a major factor for them in making it difficult to consider sustainability when choosing housing.
- more green, open public spaces and promotion of renewable energy.
- affordable sustainable food and consumption options, including recycling and reuse. This was important to many young people but not as high a priority as other suggestions.

The EU Youth Conference in Prague identified a role for youth policy, and the youth sector in supporting young people's participation within the policy areas more directly related to infrastructure, such as transport, housing, urban planning, energy and agriculture.

Results of cross-cutting theme: Intergenerational dialogue

The EU Youth Conference in Prague identified that sustainability and inclusion are not ‘youth issues’, but rather issues that affect all of society. Therefore, it was said that good practice in policymaking required intergenerational dialogue between all generations. There were no strong demands for intergenerational dialogue in the EUYD9 consultations, but there was a degree of support when the topic was introduced to the young people participating. Intergenerational dialogue was said to have potential to:

- legitimise and build recognition for young peoples’ concerns and efforts on sustainability issues.
- build mutual solidarity and support between generations.
- promote intergenerational learning and enable young people to influence older generations’ views on sustainability.

It was said that intergenerational dialogue should not replace existing youth participation mechanisms or direct dialogue between young people and policymakers but should take place alongside these activities.