



Resolution on the Inclusion of Minority Youth in the European Union Parliament Election Process

The Youth of European Nationalities (YEN), is a European umbrella organisation that represents youth identifying as different ethnic, national and linguistic minorities. YEN provides opportunities for young people to take part in this youth platform and to exchange their practices and needs in promoting, defending and supporting minority rights and cultural diversity.

1. Background

Under a third of all young European Union (EU) citizens (18-24) have voted for the past EU elections of 2014, compared to more than half of the age group above 55 years.¹ Voting however is not the only way to participate in the EU elections, and here youth is also less involved than other age groups. Because of this difference in political participation among youth, the EU has drawn the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the EU Youth Dialogue, which strive for, among others, connecting EU with youth, inclusive societies, constructive dialogue, and space and participation for all, which should promote youth participation on civic, economic, social, cultural and political levels.

To work towards participation of all, differences among youth must be taken into consideration. Youth with a minority background face more social exclusion and marginalisation, hence they are likely to have less trust in governmental authorities and this creates institutions that do not represent them.

Youth participation and especially the obstacles that youth with a minority background face can be addressed on international (EU), national, regional, and grassroots level.

2. Overall objective

With the EU elections coming up, we as YEN underline the democratic opportunity to create an **inclusive European society** which ensures **self-representation** by means of active **youth participation** and **civic empowerment** of **youth with a minority background**.

We want to raise awareness of the contribution of minorities in the cultural heritage of humanity. Moreover, we highlight the added value and input of diverse views and new ideas from the active participation of minority youth as a vital contribution to the democratic process. When youth with a minority background can fully participate and have equal opportunities, we are closer to our ideal of a Europe that enacts human rights and is free from all forms of discrimination.

¹ Post-election survey 2014, EU:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2014/post/post_ee2014_sociodemographic_annex_en.pdf



3. Recognitions

Regarding the future EU elections YEN:

1. considers that cultural diversity is fundamental for the well-being of democratic societies;
2. emphasizes that youth participation and contributions to the public life, including EU election processes, ensures and establishes democratic and sustainable societies;
3. underlines the importance that young people are aware of the potential long-lasting impact of the EU decisions on their daily life;
4. recognizes self-representation, youth participation, involvement in decision making processes, and equal opportunities for youth as a cornerstone of the EU;
5. supports the fact that youth participation is addressed and promoted by EU policies and programmes;
6. approves of the implementation of youth policies and plans of action at local, national, regional and international level.

Nevertheless, YEN also:

7. observes among youth a growing feeling of political exclusion and a lack of opportunity to participate;
8. underlines a lack of acceptance, recognition and equality of young people based on age and experience which minimize the self-determination of youth;
9. notes the negative impact on political participation of youth with a minority background as they face social intolerance and marginalisation, especially in times where nationalism and populism are gaining ground in the political field;
10. notes that inclusion of young minority groups is not completely achieved at local, regional, and national level, which affects the decision-making processes at the EU level;
11. considers that minority issues, cultural diversity and minority rights protection are neither sufficiently recognised nor well incorporated in the political agendas and decisions on all levels;
12. highlights a lack of awareness on social participation, minority issues and cultural diversity in voter education campaigns;

4. Operative clauses

Therefore, YEN

1. *requests all European institutions, member states and civil society organisations, especially those working on civic participation, youth and minority issues:*
 - a. to underline and promote the importance of youth participation in the EU election process;
 - b. to create space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, self-organization, self-representation and participation;
 - c. to strengthen the opportunities and sustainable structures for active dialogue;

YEN JEV

Youth of European Nationalities
Jugend Europäischer Volksgruppen



- d. to actively involve minority youth as stakeholders in the cycles of the electoral process;
- e. to encourage, support and strengthen inclusion of young people from minorities in decision-making policies and processes;
- f. to address minorities and minority issues in the programme of voter education campaigns;
- g. to improve the infrastructures and means of the political process to make it more accessible to youth;
- h. to increase the capacities of minority youth organisations in order to strengthen their participation in decision making processes at the local, regional, national, and international level.

2. *recommends to all minority members and minority grassroot movements:*

- a. to raise awareness of the importance of youth participation;
- b. to support young people to participate in the political and electoral process;
- c. to network among each other and exchange practices and various means to actively participate in the decision-making processes;
- d. to support all young people wishing to contribute to their minority and to underline the importance of young generation in the protection and continuation of their culture, languages and history.

Vielfalt leben!

Living diversity –

Vielfalt leben!