50 Policy Recommendations

FOR ENHANCING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUTH

CIVIC EU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of the European project "Civic-EU: Young Civic Monitors for the Future", funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme, is to encourage young people to actively participate in the preparation of local, national and European policies. For this purpose, five organisations from EU countries with expertise in working with and for young people joined the consortium. Each of the organisations led activities in their own country while following the common goal of increasing the involvement of young people in the preparation of policies as well as developed youth communication with decision-makers and encouraged them to actively participate in all aspects of civic life.

The organisations are:

- Romanian Center for European Policies – Romania, lead
- Amapola srl Impresa sociale – Italy
- Pina - Association for Culture and Education – Slovenia
- Transparency International Latvia – Latvia
- 4C - Cooperate, Communicate, Create, Change – Greece

In order to encourage youth inclusion, we developed a series of activities at both local and national levels in each of the five participating countries. These initiatives were designed to effectively promote and support the involvement of young people, including organising events that facilitated youth dialogues between young people, local decision-makers, and representatives of youth organisations.

The EU Youth Dialogue is a structured 18-month cycle process focused on various topics set by the Council of Youth Ministers. The aim of the EU Youth Dialogue is to give a voice to young people in the preparation of EU policies by organising dialogues between young people and youth organisations with experts, researchers and policymakers. The theme of the current goal, which lasts until the end of 2024, is "We need youth" and thus tries to realise Youth Goal number 3: Inclusive Societies. The special focus of the current cycle is to include all young

people, especially young people with fewer opportunities or those who are not currently active.

The youth dialogue events organised within the project were not directly part of the structured EU Youth Dialogue, but they significantly contributed to the achievement of the goal. By organising the events, 583 young people had the opportunity to express their thoughts and views on the development of the local environment. Their voices are now collected in the following report in the form of 50 recommendations.

PREPARATORY EVENTS AND YOUTH DIALOGUES

The set of recommendations is based on preparatory events and youth dialogues, which were organised in each partner country between December 2023 and June 2024. Each of the partners organised two preparatory events and one youth dialogue.

In Romania, after completing the monitoring report on local policies, the Civic-EU monitors under the mentoring of CRPE took proactive steps to foster civic engagement among high school students. In the preparatory events, they were focused on the importance of active participation at the local level. They shared tools and strategies for youth engagement and encouraged participants to present their own solutions. Additionally, a youth dialogue debate was facilitated between students and candidates for the 2024 European elections. The report includes the synthesised suggestions and recommendations made by students, experts, and EU election candidates during these events.

In Italy, the preparatory events and the youth dialogue were seen as further steps in the monitoring activities carried out by the team of young monitors under the guidance of Amapola. The municipalities involved were the same ones already involved in the monitoring activities at the local level so that both young people and policy makers

could continue to work together and learn from each other. They are small and middle-sized municipalities located in the inner area of the Province of Turin where young people have fewer opportunities to take part in such projects. The preparatory events and youth debates focused on promoting youth participation in their communities, environmental protection, migration, and rights. Exchange of views, formulation of recommendations and discussions were encouraged through plenary discussions and small group activities coordinated by Amapola.

In March 2024, TI Latvia, together with four young trainers (16 to 19 years old) from the Dienvidkurzeme district and Liepāja district, went to Aizpute High School and Jānis Čakste High School in Liepāja to talk about volunteering. They also met the representatives of municipalities and national-level non-governmental organisations and institutions. Youth trainers were then involved in organising the youth dialogue event "Youth in voluntary work: investment in the future", where the challenges of volunteering in Latvia were discussed. Participants of the event described the role of the state, municipality and non-governmental organisations in the promotion of volunteering, gave ten recommendations to decision-makers and mentioned what should be improved in volunteering policy in general.

The 4C team organised the youth dialogue event in May 2024 where they included young people (18 to 35 years old) from Athens who were interested in discussing the prospects of youth participation and mobilisation for the best practice of democracy. Representatives of relevant civil society organisations in Athens and 3 decision-makers were invited to the event. The audience was presented with the fantastic work done to analyse the impact of key urban projects in Athens on people's daily lives. The audience had an active role in discussing the specific topics and interacting by giving some suggestions for a greater future in Europe. Participants met the organisation's volunteers and workers and had time to discuss the upcoming European elections, as well as political issues that came up: discrimination, inclusion, participation and gender equality were some of them.

In Slovenia, PiNA organised the events in collaboration with the organisation TiPovej!. The first preparatory event was organised in December. During the event, the young monitors presented the main findings of their research about the municipal youth strategy and invited the students of the Faculty of Social Work to discuss and complete their findings. The second preparatory event took place in April. It was organised with young people (16 to 28 years old) that live in the rural part of the Municipality of Ljubljana and they discussed the needs of the youth from these areas. In the youth dialogue event, these needs were further discussed, and the young people together with the representatives of relevant organisations and decision-makers suggested some solutions for these issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the project activities held until now, various fields that young people found problematic, and where local authorities needed to do more if they wanted to encourage greater involvement of young people in the local environment were identified. Together with young people and relevant representatives of the civic society and municipalities involved in the preparatory events and youth dialogues in all partner countries, 50 recommendations that address these fields were prepared. Most of the recommendations relate to concrete proposals for encouraging a greater engagement of young people as active citizens and the importance of such involvement.

The recommendations are focused on some concrete policies that the municipalities could include in their work; some suggestions regarding the establishment of better communication and a more successful sharing of information; promotion of a volunteering system; inclusion of the youth from the rural areas; building the community with newcomers; and some suggestion for tackling various insecurities that young people have faced recently.

PROGRAMMES TO PROMOTE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The distance between the government and the youth is increasing and the voice of the youth is not heard as it should. One of the problems detected during the project is the lack of space for young people within the government as it is neither youth-oriented nor easily accessible to this target group. The second issue is the transparency of the government, which is frequently criticized by the youth, given the historical challenges related to corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of accountability. This leads to mistrust among young people towards the political system and,

in general, towards the exercise of democracy in a transparent way. For this reason, it is necessary to work in a direction that returns trust in institutions. One way to achieve this is by giving young people concrete experiences of successful participation, where their voices will be heard. This can be done by introducing different initiatives or programmes that engage young people in participatory processes. The following recommendations try to establish an environment where such initiatives and programmes can flourish and young people can be successfully engaged:

01. **Creation of support structures for youth civic engagement.**

Young people need both guidance and financial support in order to put their ideas into practice. The municipalities could prepare a programme that brings together youth workers, experts from civil society, potential investors and young people willing to contribute with innovative ideas. This programme could help young people to evaluate their ideas, check their feasibility by considering different possibilities and limitations (what cannot be done and needs to be modified, postponed, or put aside), and, if possible, give them the support they need (financial, formative, procedural, etc) for their realisation.

02. **Allocation of a budget for projects to the local youth representative structure.**

A budget for projects can be allocated to the youth representative structure, such as the Youth Council, with the mandate to collect, select, and fund ideas from young people for young people. In this way, the youth will be able to express their ideas and contribute to influencing changes in their local communities through concrete actions. The representatives should meet regularly, have a concrete work plan, interact with public officers to evaluate the real feasibility of the proposals, implement the selected proposals, and communicate the results and achievements.

03. Cross-sectoral preparation of public policies.

When preparing public policies, it is important to bring together all the territorial actors that can contribute to developing a holistic set of policies concerning young people (education, employment, housing, mental health, etc.). In the design phase of public policies, young people are often considered as a separate target group. However, they should be taken into account in the design and implementation of all policies using a cross-cutting approach, rather than implementing "vertical" youth policies.

04. Involvement of young people in the analysis of needs on which local policies and strategies are based.

It is important that the young people are involved in the preparation of the policies and strategies from the beginning of the process and not only later. Only in this way will their voices be truly heard and their needs identified. Nobody understands their needs better than them.

05. Increased access to cross-border opportunities.

Cross-border opportunities such as conferences, competitions or job fairs that connect young people from various countries with each other and with European institutions can promote the exchange of ideas and strategies for civic participation. The coming together of different ideas and views gives us more opportunities to find innovative solutions for various social challenges.

06. Making European policies more accessible for the youth.

Initiatives such as Youth Dialogue that give young people the feeling that they are being heard and listened to are important for engaging them in the participatory processes. But for a better participation of the youth in formal politics the level of cooperation between EU deputies and young aspiring politicians needed also to be increased. EU

politicians should serve as role models and mentors for young people and listen to their opinions regarding projects that target the youth.

07. **Engagement of the marginalised young people.**
Young people from marginalised groups often struggle to meet their basic needs due to low living standards, they miss the opportunity to develop their other talents and sides that would be of great service to the community. For this reason, it is important to give them realistic opportunities to develop their ideas. An increase of the funds for programmes targeting marginalised youth, ensuring they have access to education, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities, is recommended.

08. **Supporting the programmes for youth organisations and youth-led groups.**
Through their programmes, youth organisations should offer various opportunities for young people to try out and learn new things and gain independence, both from the point of view of self-care (cooking skills, self-care, etc.), interpersonal relationships (social skills), and as well as the development of skills for employment and active participation in social life.

09. **Use of the non-formal methodologies.**
When working with young people and trying to engage them in some participatory processes it is advised to use non-formal methodologies to support their creativity, group work activities to build their teamwork skills, and gamified approaches to stimulate healthy competition between groups. Choose the suitable methodology based on the target group involved. Consider the possibility of collaboration with experienced trainers or trained facilitators.

10. Digitalisation of the government.
An expansion and optimisation of digital governance could benefit the citizens and society, making cooperation between young people and the local government easier and more efficient. To achieve this, the local governments need training and resources to improve transparency and accountability at the municipal level.

11. Measures tackling gender equality within politics.
A mentoring programme for women in parliament or other governmental institutions could be implemented to tackle the underrepresentation of women in politics. In this way, young aspiring politicians could participate in a mentoring programme with a parliamentarian, engaging in various activities, from learning how to write laws to attending conferences.

12. Paid internships.
Internships offer great opportunities for young people to gain new skills that could help them be more competitive in the labour market. However, the fact that most of these internships are unpaid represents a serious issue for young people. The unequal distribution of opportunities, due to the financial barriers, creates a sense that internship is a privilege of the few. Moreover, employers might use unpaid interns to replace paid positions, reducing overall job opportunities and wages in the market.

13. Coworking spaces.
The municipality should open a coworking space for young citizens, where they can work on their ideas and build networks with other young people or organisations. This coworking space could be also a place where the youth could meet the local authority representatives. The spaces should be open, informal, youth-oriented and bottom-up.

14. **Autonomous spaces.**
The municipality should support and encourage the creation of autonomous youth spaces, where unstructured youth work will take place. The premises should allow socialising, playing different board games and implementation of programmes of various organisations.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

However, offering different programmes or tools for participation is not enough. All too often, it happens that participatory mechanisms exist, but young people do not use them, because they are not aware of them, do not understand all the possibilities they have, or do not know how to pursue their interests through these mechanisms. In order to ensure that young people are better informed, we have prepared the following recommendations:

15. **Informing young people.**
Young people cannot be taken as a single target group. Their needs, interests and opportunities vary greatly according to different factors (e.g. age, gender, origin, social and economic background). Different communication strategies must be used to approach different target groups of young people. Different communication channels and tools (online and offline promotion) can be used as well as a collaboration with different kinds of organisations for a better dissemination of the information.

16. **Social media.**
Social media plays a pivotal role in connecting with young audiences. The effectiveness of information and communication provided by municipalities is a challenge. Some municipalities face great difficulties in exploiting the potential of digital communication tools due to a lack of knowledge, internal skills, resources, and the "generation gap". According to young people, it is crucial that municipalities improve their skills, competencies and channels of communication, especially those most used by young people. Language, speed and immediacy, and style of communication also need to be adapted to the needs of young audiences.

17. **A national/regional/local informative webpage.**
All the information regarding the field of youth should be

gathered in one informative webpage. This webpage should be divided by topic but also by different levels (international, national, local). On this webpage, serious opportunities should be posted but also entertaining events such as concerts, stand-ups, etc.

18. **Publishing where youth hang out.**

How to inform young people is one of the most difficult questions. Posting the information only online has a limited reach as it is limited by the network's logarithms and by the activity of a young person. So those that are active will be informed but for the other is questionable. For these reasons, we recommend publishing the information at points where young people gather, such as bus stops, bars, youth centres, and other organisations where they spend time.

19. **Space for information.**

Young people emphasised that they would like to see more dedicated spaces for information and exchange between decision-makers and young people on the local political agenda and its translation into local initiatives, projects and actions (i.e. regular public meetings, public events with politicians, meetings in the offices of political parties), in order to better understand how political programmes are implemented and how global issues enter into local politics.

20. **Raising awareness of young people about the importance of voting in elections.**

Youth voter turnout has become a problem in various countries, so engaging young people in election processes is essential to ensure their voices are heard in shaping the future of their countries. Training and discussions to educate and motivate youth about the importance of voting can help bridge the gap between political processes and younger generations, strengthening a more inclusive and representative democracy. Initiatives such as educational

programmes, social media campaigns, and youth forums can empower young people to actively participate in their political system promoting informed and engaged citizenship. One concrete initiative that successfully addresses this topic is the "Tinerii Voteaza" Initiative ("The Youth Votes" Initiative) in Romania. This project involved Regional Student Associations partnering with NGOs and political experts to organise civic workshops nationwide to educate students about the political system and emphasise the importance of voting.

21. **Organising open discussions about issues that concern the European Union.**
To include and inform more young people, events such as round tables, public debates, movie nights etc. could be organised. These events will inform the public about the opportunities that they have as European citizens and the challenges that the EU is facing. The participants will understand better how the EU is functioning and how they can participate.

22. **More education about European policies.**
Young people stress the need to hold events at the local level to raise awareness of European policies and citizenship (i.e. how European policy impacts a person's daily life, i.e. mobility, changes in automobile emissions legislation).

23. **Introduction of civic education classes in the school curriculum.**
To ensure the voters will make an informed decision, it is crucial to introduce civic education and democracy classes in schools and high schools. This will help students understand the political system and encourage critical thinking when evaluating political campaigns. Part of the compulsory civic education programme in schools may be

dedicated to promoting youth participation at the local level, learning about the work of the municipality, and discussing young people's needs, expectations, interests, and proposals for active participation. This can help them to get to know and interact with their youth councillor, become familiar with youth organisations and groups active at the local level and to present initiatives, exchange opportunities, and projects to build strong and lasting relationships between young people and decision-makers.

24. **Implementing career orientation programmes.** Career orientation programmes, either through NGOs or as a separate school subject, aim to bring together students with professionals from different fields. Without proper information, young students might follow career paths that might not fit their life goals or values. This programme could help those who are interested in civic participation choose jobs that have an impact on their communities.

VOLUNTEERING AS PROMOTION OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The experience of social action is also very important for the engagement of young people. Voluntary work is one of the forms of civic engagement and can promote the growth of young people and everyone who wants to get involved in it, as well as assist the involvement in political and social processes starting from the municipal level. Thus, the experience of volunteering that young people have can play an important role. Most volunteers are often confronted for the first time with activities whose primary goal is taking care of society, which has a significant impact on their attitude to societal needs and political engagement. Recommendations for supporting and promoting the volunteering system:

25. **Legislation and strategic documents for supporting voluntary work.**
On the basis of legislation and strategic documents, municipalities should create a system of voluntary work and then explain the roles of the municipality, youth centres, youth workers, youth organisations and youth in general in managing volunteering. It is essential to show the connection between voluntary work and civic participation in public communication as well as in national and regional level legislation.

26. **Volunteering as a support of public security.**
Volunteering can be the basis for strengthening public security in various sectors. It is important to be aware of it and promote it to the public in general as well as incorporate it in crisis and security risk management. Accordingly, youth who are considering the possibility of engaging in voluntary work have the potential to be part of a wider societal security system.

27. **Supporting the development of the volunteering system in the NGOs.**
Non-governmental organisations are an important resource in creating the volunteer work environment at the municipality level, as they can not only provide opportunities for volunteer work but also approach the municipality, highlight societal needs and do public services by involving volunteers. For this reason, support should be provided to non-governmental organisations, which are involved in volunteering and offer places to volunteers.

28. **Encouraging volunteering activities in schools and high schools.**
Volunteering activities are an essential part of our society, contributing to the lives of underprivileged people and underlining necessary state policies. Volunteering should be strongly promoted in educational institutions. It is necessary to talk about voluntary work in schools not only theoretically but also by giving practical examples and introducing good practices in the field. This can be achieved by organising meetings with volunteering organisations, representatives of the municipality or active young people who can share their experiences and give practical advice on being a volunteer.

29. **Creation of a portal for the promotion of volunteering.**
In order to provide information about volunteer work opportunities at the national and municipal levels, it is important to create a portal or a system where everyone can find the latest updates on volunteering, volunteering options, and other relevant information.

30. **Awarding the volunteers.**
Organisation of informative campaigns, events and annual ceremonies honouring the volunteer worker of the year should become a standard. The awarding process should take

place not only at the national level but also at the regional level, highlighting the importance of volunteering in local communities and regions.

31. **NGO sector as promoter of the volunteering system.**
Non-governmental organisations in line with municipal needs should develop targeted policies aimed at youth in educational institutions, youth organisations and informal groups, which are their direct target audience, and promote volunteering among them. Municipalities should see volunteering and volunteers as a part of the public service and partnership with society.

32. **Training for volunteers.**
Training and mentoring for volunteers should be part of the volunteering system. In this way it is possible to strengthen the sense of duty and responsibility in young people.

ENGAGING THE YOUTH FROM RURAL AND INNER AREAS

Young people living in rural areas or small communities far from large urban areas have less possibilities to connect with and participate in youth-led associations, groups, and movements in their environment. Activist organisations working on specific issues relevant to them, such as gender issues or the climate crisis, are usually based in large cities and rarely in rural communities. Thus, active young people have to travel to large cities to participate in such activities, losing contact with their communities and losing the opportunity to contribute to their cultural and social development. To tackle these issues the following recommendations were prepared:

33. **Increasing the support for young people from rural areas.**
Before being able to be involved in civic society, various needs must be met, such as access to transportation, housing, and education. Therefore, it is crucial that more funds are allocated to the youth in rural areas to cover their essential needs so they can later engage in civic organisations.

34. **Adaptation of the public transport lines.**
Adaptation of the bus lines to meet community needs in the form of more frequent connections and extension of the operation of lines that drive to more rural areas. Introducing other means of transportation (multi-modal transportation, on-call buses, car sharing, (electric) bicycles, etc.) could also help young people tackle mobility issues.

35. **Subventions for the tickets for young people.**
To support a more frequent use of public transportation, young people should have a discount on bus tickets.

36. **Creation of youth spaces in rural areas.**
Youth centres and other youth organisations should also organise their activities in rural areas and not only in the centre. Local authorities should facilitate the creation and functioning of youth-led associations, groups, and activist movements in their small/rural communities by providing support and physical spaces (which should be accessible and inclusive in terms of gender, citizenship and culture) where young people can meet, explore, organise and experience forms of collective participation and civic engagement. These spaces could be new spaces developed by the youth, spaces shared with public institutions or mobile youth centres that could bring their activities to more remote areas.

BEING ACTIVE FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Migration is an intergovernmental policy involving a variety of institutional levels at the local, national, and European levels. It reflects a wide range of visions, priorities, and interests that are not always easy for individual citizens to understand. Understanding this complex and specialised policy area requires a high level of skills and knowledge. Complexity implies the absence of one-size-fits-all solutions and requires learning to deal with uncertainty and having a holistic vision and a long-term perspective. Small communities usually facilitate proximity and social integration; on the other hand, closed mindsets, prejudice and discrimination against immigrants are usually more present and entrenched in small contexts. The terms used to talk about migration, migrants and new citizens convey meanings as well as prejudice and misinformation. For a more successful integration we suggest the following recommendations:

37. **No participation in war of any kind. Learn to co-exist. No racism!**
The rise of nationalism and xenophobia in the last few years sounds the alarm that calls for a rethinking of tolerance and inclusion in Europe. Many young Europeans are wary of war and conflict, advocating for peaceful resolutions to disputes and emphasising diplomacy over military intervention. The municipalities could give young people the opportunity to express their opinions and their view for a more peaceful and inclusive world where respect, tolerance and solidarity will be the basis for the community. On the other side the municipalities should be stricter in blocking the events that promote hate, racism and xenophobia.

38. **Informative events on migration.**
Young people shared the need for more information and awareness-raising events on this broad issue. Local authorities should therefore act to ensure that young people can be better informed about complex and global issues that affect

their present and future lives so that they can understand the real state of the policies at stake (i.e. difficulties, benefits, opportunities). Young people propose the organisation of conferences, debates, and forums with experts and academics through which they could learn and develop their opinions as citizens based on sound information and in-depth knowledge and add value to their communities.

39. **Developing a sense of belonging and community.** Young people recommend that local representatives pay special attention to inclusive language and to the use of the notion of "community" (avoiding migrant/resident distinction). Policymakers are invited also to invest in local joint initiatives that would help develop a sense of belonging and community.

40. **Cultural and social events.** The municipality could give support to the migrant communities to organise some social events like traditional celebrations, sporting events, food festivals, etc. This will provide the migrants the opportunity to present their culture and to the local community a possibility to better understand the newcomers. These kinds of events will facilitate their integration into the new community.

41. **Learning languages.** Adoption of nudge behaviours and innovative approaches to learning foreign languages. Provision of language courses, open to all to learn the languages of migrants and facilitate mutual communication, would help understanding of the foreign cultures.

42. **Organisation of initiatives.** Organisation of initiatives jointly by resident participants from different migrant communities (not events dedicated solely to a single migrant group) would help people get to

know one another. Working together is the best way to get to know one another, overcome possible issues, and give the immigrants the opportunity to do something for the welcoming community.

43. **Connect the migrants and the local populations.**
The refugee centres are often isolated and closed to the public. Relations with the hosting communities are lacking, leading to fear, insecurity and prejudices towards migrants, refugees and new citizens. In order to increase mutual relations, young people propose that municipalities: develop closer networks between the activities carried out within the reception centres with those carried out outside by the municipality or non-profit organisations; and to provide physical spaces to give continuity to after-school activities and social, play and aggregative activities for migrant minors and children when they are outside the centres.

SOCIETAL CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people also mentioned many other areas that affect their wish to be an active part of society and engage in participatory processes. A sense of safety is essential for young people to participate. For this reason, with the following recommendations we want to tackle the social issue that creates a constant fear of crisis.

44. **Increased mental health support.**
Young people are currently facing increased challenges, from digitalisation to global warming and housing crises. Mental health support is necessary to cope with all these problems. The municipality should strive for high-quality, integrated and quick help in the field of mental health. The municipality should support programmes that provide access to affordable or free psychological help.

45. **Stop ageism.**
Ageism involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. It affects both young and old individuals, but older adults are particularly vulnerable. However, young people can also face ageism, particularly being viewed as inexperienced or uncommitted. Young people are often overlooked for promotions in management positions or leadership roles. For this reason, the municipalities must support the opening of intergenerational centres, where young people and older adults can collaborate and be active together.

46. **Better connection between schools and the local community.**
The formal educational system is becoming unsuitable for younger generations and the fast-changing society. Young people are having increasing difficulty following formal methods of education due to various attention deficits and hyperactivity that is increasing among the younger

generation. For this reason, non-formal methodologies that promote different ways of learning could help them to acquire more knowledge and have better results in schools. Municipalities could help schools by giving them the opportunity to be active in the local community so that their pupils/students could learn from concrete experience of civic participation.

47. No poverty.

The goal of "No poverty" is a central goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the support for local initiatives and community organisations that work directly with vulnerable populations should be mandatory.

48. Subsidise food.

Subsidising food for students could help them handle their living costs. The municipality can promote the subsidised food in restaurants and other food providers that are near the educational institutions and offer local and healthy food.

49. Recreational sport.

Sport is a great way of spending time outside in the local community and sports infrastructure could be an important part of public spaces. The youth would like the municipality to allocate more resources for building recreational sports fields where the young people can play and hang out together without the pressure of professional sports.

50. Apartments and infrastructure.

Opportunities for independent living represent a special challenge due to the lack of apartments on the market and very high rents. The construction of non-profit apartments for young people could be a good solution or at least to prioritise and subsidise them for the renting of the apartments.

AIM OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

These 50 recommendations, which were prepared with the help of young people and representatives of relevant NGOs in local authorities, aimed to engage the young people and successfully include them in decision-making processes at the local level.

Unfortunately, young people are often unjustly criticised for their inactivity and lack of interest in political issues and community development. However, during active work with young people, the opposite is usually observed. They express a great desire to influence the local environment and feel powerless, voiceless, and also unknowledgeable.

The goal of these recommendations is to bridge these two positions by bringing representatives of local authorities closer to young people, and by fostering closer connections between local authorities and the youth. By providing young people with the space and opportunity to participate, we aim to empower them to take an active role in shaping their communities. For these reasons, these fifty recommendations need to be spread among the representatives of the municipality, local policymakers, youth leaders, youth workers, and young people in general. With them, we want to convince the decision-makers that such an approach would help them develop the municipality more inclusively, and we want to encourage young people to start the discussion with the local authorities and actually demand an improvement of their situation and stress the fact that their voice is important.

Only with the beginning of a quality dialogue between local authorities and young people, where they will be characterised by mutual listening, trust, and appreciation of their work and engagement, can we create a better inclusion in a democratic society that has actually served its citizens.

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