

JEAN MONNET PROJECT | EUSYP  
"STRATEGIES AND POLICIES ON YOUTH IN THE EU"

## WORKING PAPER

TO WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ACTIVELY  
PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESSES REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE AND  
HOW INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS  
FOSTER AND ENCOURAGE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT  
IN POLICY MAKING?

KARAMANLIS THOMAS



With the support of the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**Jean Monnet Project | EUSYP**

**STRATEGIES AND POLICIES ON YOUTH IN THE EU**

**To what young people actively participate in the decision-making processes regarding climate change and how institutions and governments foster and encourage youth engagement in policy making?**

*Karamanlis Thomas*

All rights reserved.

No part of this paper may be reproduced in any form  
without permission from the author

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication (communication) reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## **Abstract**

This research paper examines the involvement of young people in climate change decision-making focusing on the European Union and the United Nations. The paper highlights the urgency of addressing climate challenge analyzing the strategies used by the UN and the EU to engage young people in policy discussions through the European Green Deal and the Youth 2030 agenda. In addition, it discusses the challenges and limitations of current policies in addressing youth participation effectively. The paper also gives an insight on how the UN and the EU promote youth participation in the highest levels of decision making through summits like the Youth4Climate and the European Youth Event. The Youth Strategy 2019-2027 as well as the Agenda Youth 2030 are examined to assess to what extent do policies include plans regarding youth participation in decision making. Finally, the paper recognizes the progress in involving young people at international levels but calls for more concrete actions, particularly at local and regional levels.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Defining youth engagement	4
<b>2. The European Union and role of the youth</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 EESC: conclusions and recommendations regarding the youth	5
2.2 Youth Strategy 2019-2027	7
2.3 The challenges and failure of European youth policies	8
<b>3 The United Nations and Youth</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Youth 2030	12
3.2 European Youth Event	13
<b>4 Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>5 Bibliography</b>	<b>14</b>

## 1 Introduction

Climate change stands as one of the paramount challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with far-reaching effects transcending boundaries such as age, gender, ethnicity or social class. Although the issue has been growing for years starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, few governments have sought to regulate their carbon emissions as well as their unsustainable economic models of overconsumption and overproduction. The first official environmental conference was held by the United Nations in Stockholm in 1972, with a focus on the Human Environment. The Stockholm conference marked a pivotal milestone, establishing and fostering an open dialogue between developed and developing nations, uniting them in their shared commitment to address environmental concerns, promote well-being, and cultivate global economic growth (U.N). Since Stockholm there have been various environmental conferences of the parties (COPs) that are signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change. The third COP led to the creation of the Kyoto Protocol, which set specific targets for countries regarding their greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the twenty-first COP led to the Paris Agreement which became the cornerstone of environmental policy among the 197 member-states of the UNFCCC. The European Union has also adopted its own plan for reaching carbon neutrality, with the ‘European Green Deal’. All climate agreements advocate similar policies and goals, but they all have a different ‘deadline’. The Paris Agreement is set to reach most of its goals by 2030<sup>1</sup> and the EU green deal by 2050<sup>2</sup>. Given that the effects of climate change will be fully felt in the future and the goals of the agreements are set for the future, it is today's young people who will ultimately have to deal with the climate catastrophe and the repercussions of the activities of the present. Despite that, most climate agreements do not include young people among the decision makers who are deciding their future. Since the Paris agreement though, the role of youth has been increasingly put at the forefront of the fight against climate change, while the EU has taken steps towards youth inclusion recognizing the young generation as agents of change. All these

---

<sup>1</sup> The Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>2</sup> Green Deal: key to a climate-neutral and sustainable EU, 2022, European Parliament,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200618STO81513/green-deal-key-to-a-climate-neutral-and-sustainable-eu?at\\_campaign=20234-Green&at\\_medium=Google\\_Ads&at\\_platform=Search&at\\_creation=RSA&at\\_goal=TR\\_G&at\\_audience=green%20deal%20eu&at\\_topic=Green\\_Deal&at\\_location=GR&gclid=Cj0KCQjwrMKmBhCJARIsAHuEAPRE8KJ1IZzY6CzDy26xssewjYVG\\_gR1LbOUh-3fxyDb3AORknOlti10aAkb5EALw\\_wcB](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200618STO81513/green-deal-key-to-a-climate-neutral-and-sustainable-eu?at_campaign=20234-Green&at_medium=Google_Ads&at_platform=Search&at_creation=RSA&at_goal=TR_G&at_audience=green%20deal%20eu&at_topic=Green_Deal&at_location=GR&gclid=Cj0KCQjwrMKmBhCJARIsAHuEAPRE8KJ1IZzY6CzDy26xssewjYVG_gR1LbOUh-3fxyDb3AORknOlti10aAkb5EALw_wcB)

steps towards youth inclusivity are not only proposed in the agreements but they are gradually being enforced, with the European Youth Event, Youth4Climate as well as Pre-COP26. This working paper focuses on the extent to which young people actively participate in the decision-making processes regarding climate change. With a specific focus on the European Union, this study unravels the different strategies employed by both member-states and the supranational organizations to foster and encourage youth engagement in policy making.

### **1.1 Defining youth engagement**

The active involvement of young people should be prioritized in decision-making processes that shape their future. In order for their participation to be deemed crucial, they must be included in local, national, and global efforts to address climate change. Encouraging their engagement in decision-making and advocacy is essential and can take various forms. These may include providing platforms for young people to voice their opinions and actively participate in political and social matters. To strengthen their impact, young individuals can come together in collective action through youth groups and organizations, supported by government funding and provided with climate experts to produce viable solutions. Moreover, by taking part in national and international climate change negotiations, expressing their views in the media, showcasing their experiences and highlighting issues related to climate inaction and intergenerational justice, the message can be amplified effectively. This way, young people's concerns are properly addressed while their role surpasses the tokenistic and they become active agents of change.

## **2. The European Union and role of the youth**

The European Union is leading the way to sustainability and carbon neutrality, actively pursuing realistic targets and providing the largest climate financing in the world, as highlighted by the EU Council. Among other measures such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the transition to renewable energy sources, and the adoption of circular economic models, the EU places a strong emphasis on the involvement of young people. The European Union not only aims to empower youth through its policies, but it also actively engages various youth stakeholders including youth representatives. Although young people's participation may be considered somewhat indirect, it remains significant. The European Green Deal aims to deliver on the Paris Agreement, with the stark difference being the emphasis that each agreement places on young people. The EU Green Deal perceives young people as agents of change highlighting

their important role in policy making and decision-making processes. The EU reinforces the role of the youth as assets through other ‘agreements’ and reports. For instance, the Council of the European Union have reached several conclusion regarding a Youth Action Plan in EU external action. There are four points of interest related to youth engagement. The first point ‘underlined that young people worldwide are essential and reliable partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other major multilateral agreements and instruments, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change’<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the third and the fourth recognize the importance of cooperation among decision makers and young people by stating that: ‘The Council also acknowledges that the EU and its Member States can learn a lot from youth-led organizations and their participation is key to the formulation of inclusive policy’<sup>4</sup>. While also ‘stressing that young people are powerful agents of change and innovation, including in mobilizing action for climate solutions’<sup>5</sup>. This reinforces the idea of young people being agents of change recognizing their important role in policy making and decision making processes. Finally, the report comes to confirm that the Council of the European Union take youth proposals into account when it comes to discussing issues and forming policies and recommendations, as it ‘Acknowledges the outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe, and notably the structured youth engagement in the European Citizens’ Panels’<sup>6</sup>. All these articles come to show that the European Union actively but indirectly takes part in but also supports youth engagement with decision makers, while at the same time it takes the initiative to establish open communication with young people when it comes to discussing environmental issues, innovations, concerns and policies.

## **2.1 EESC: conclusions and recommendations regarding the youth**

Youth empowerment and engagement are critical for the development and sustainability of societies. Recognizing the potential of young people as agents of change, the EU has taken significant steps to encourage their participation in decision-making processes, dialogue, and

---

<sup>3</sup> General Secretariat of the European Council,2022, Council conclusions on the Youth Action Plan in EU external action,p.2, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15322-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>4</sup> General Secretariat of the European Council,2022, Council conclusions on the Youth Action Plan in EU external action,p.3, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15322-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>5</sup> General Secretariat of the European Council,2022, Council conclusions on the Youth Action Plan in EU external action,p.7, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15322-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>6</sup> General Secretariat of the European Council,2022, Council conclusions on the Youth Action Plan in EU external action,p.4, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15322-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

climate talks. Given that, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) empowers and encourages young people to play an active role in shaping policies, addressing global challenges, and fostering sustainable development. The European Economic and Social Committee has launched a pilot project that will incorporate ideas produced by the EU Youth Test. In addition, the EESC has produced several ‘conclusions and recommendations regarding the role of the youth in the European Union’. The desire of the EU to incorporate young people in decision-making processes is highlighted in several articles of the report on recommendations and conclusions. Given that the EU's fundamental tenet is democracy, Article 1.1 emphasizes the political participation of the youth, which ultimately serves as the foundation of democracy. In this case, democracy is important as it is crucial for young people to have a say in policies that may not be directly targeted towards them for example green investments, but which can still have a significant impact on their lives and the lives of generations to come. Moreover, youth empowerment in decision-making is reinforced through various articles. Firstly, Article 1.6 highlights how youth participation supports ‘better regulation and policies by mapping and understanding current and upcoming trends that impact young people's lives’. By actively engaging youth, policymakers can receive qualitative input that complements secondary data<sup>7</sup>. This empowers young people to contribute their unique insights and perspectives, which ultimately ensures that decisions reflect their interests and concerns.

The report successfully addresses youth and climate change through Article 3.2.1 which mentions the EU's efforts to incorporate youth in its institutions through conferences such as the Youth Climate and Sustainability Round Tables and the EU Youth Climate Summit. These initiatives provide platforms for young people to actively engage in discussions and decision-making related to climate change. The inclusion of youth delegates in official delegations, as mentioned in Article 3.2.1, demonstrates a commitment when it comes to involving young people in climate talks.

In addition to the recommendations and action plan given by the EU to member countries, each country of has adopted different policies aiming to engage youth with policy makers. Germany is an example where the government does not have an official policy regarding supporting young people and their engagement in climate policy-making. Instead the federal states and local

---

<sup>7</sup> Leitane, S.,2022, The EU Youth Test, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-youth-test>

authorities have their own action plans, which means that the action is local and therefore more focused<sup>8</sup>. This only reinforces the opportunities given to young people to make a real change, not necessarily by taking part in decision-making but by taking other forms of action that have a similar effect, like climate education, hosting youth panels centered on climate change and creating youth councils with a local rather than an international focus.

## **2.2 Youth Strategy 2019-2027**

The recommendations and conclusions of the EESC are very important when it comes to elevating the role of young people and successfully incorporating them in the decision-making processes. In addition, the European Union has created a strategy entirely devoted to engaging young people with issues concerning society just like climate change. The agenda of the EU Youth strategy is composed of eleven goals that seek to ‘Engage, Connect and Empower’. The European Union wants to allow young people to engage through programs like Erasmus whose focus is more on the local level, which targets disadvantaged groups, ‘by building on inclusion and diversity’<sup>9</sup>. In addition, the EU Youth Dialogue is a way of embracing alternative forms of participation in the form of online campaigns, consultations via digital platforms connected to the European Youth Portal. At the same time, Member-States are encouraged to focus on: Promoting dialogue and participatory mechanisms at all levels of decision-making, for example through youth councils. While also encouraging social and civic engagement of young people including participation in youth organizations or online activism. Moreover, the EU is also concerned with improving governance by introducing participatory governance. This comes as a new platform that ‘gives stakeholders a greater role in coordinating the implementation of the strategy, offering opportunities to exchange information on activities and results. The Commission will organize dedicated meetings for representatives of youth organizations, civil society organizations, EU institutions, and social partners’<sup>10</sup>. All the suggested actions as well as any established activities seeking to engage the youth are not as effective. This can be seen by the continuation of protests about the climate, with young protesters demanding action by

---

<sup>8</sup> YouthWiki, 2022, National youth strategy, Available from:

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/13-national-youth-strategy>

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, 2018, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, p. 5, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>

<sup>10</sup> European Commission, 2018, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, p. 11, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>



decision makers, while also advocating that in case of inaction the youth will make a difference<sup>11</sup>, by pressuring and holding governments accountable.

### **2.3 The challenges and failure of European youth policies**

All these measures, recommendations and conclusions certainly elevate the role of young people giving them a legitimate role and bringing them closer to decision makers. Although not all policies clearly refer to the issue of climate change, they generally give some guidelines regarding issues that affect society and the future of young people. Furthermore, it is significant that young people are mentioned and encouraged to take part in decision-making. On the other hand, all these fail to address one of the main features of climate change. Although the issue is global and there needs to be coordinated action by all countries, there also needs to be local action to mitigate the repercussions. In order to avert ecological destruction, there needs to be action at all levels; local, national, regional and global. It is difficult for young people to intervene in the policies and activity of certain industries that contribute the most to climate change. For this reason, the EU, UN and national governments have to set limits when it comes to carbon emissions, for example. These restrictions have been put considering the economy and the economic costs that would come with it, the demand in the global market, and the environment. With the above in mind, it is easier for young people to take local action, by taking part in local youth councils and achieving real change, advocating for more green areas, green zones in the cities and the use of green energy instead of fossil fuel to power factories and cars. These are achievable with the support of the EU and governments, and can be in the form of financial support or training. Moreover, climate protests indicate, the Green Deal is not being entirely enforced: “Green New Deal, make it real”<sup>12</sup>. This shows that not only does the EU not carry out its promises regarding the environment, but also that young people have no meaningful influence on the politics of climate change. This forces them to take to the streets and to strive for change from a disadvantaged position.

When it comes to national policies, despite the extensive referral to youth engagement, governments do not specify youth participation in policy-making regarding one of the most

---

<sup>11</sup> Protesting Climate Change,2019, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike, *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html>

<sup>12</sup> Protesting Climate Change,2019, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike, *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html>

important issues on the global agenda, climate change. Instead, their strategies refer vaguely to ‘giving young people social perspectives and opportunities for participation’ while also advocating for the ‘promotion of suitable procedures and structures to enable young people’s involvement in matters that affect them’<sup>13</sup>. Although governments refer to young people and support their engagement in ‘matters that affect them’<sup>14</sup>, they do not provide any specific expectations or promises for youth engagement in climate policy-making.

Therefore, EU mandates fail to address the local challenges of each area, where young people can be important contributors in resolving them. Despite the failure of the EU to support young people in taking local action, the institution encourages young people from various countries and regions to express their concerns about climate change. The discussions reflect local challenges and also highlight the need to address issues locally with young people leading the initiative. In addition, there are several non-EU stakeholders that give emphasis to local youth activism. The Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition, the United Nation’s Department for Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since 2021 have been organizing the Youth4Climate summits, where the youth have the power to take part in decision-making, even affecting international agreements like the Glasgow Climate Pact.

### **3 The United Nations and Youth**

The important role of the youth and the encouragement of their participation in decision-making processes is highlighted in treaties, outlined in national laws and international agreements as well as in national policies. Despite the vast input from the youth a very limited amount of suggestions are put into action. There are governments and institutions though who have taken the initiative and have brought the youth to cooperate with change makers and take part in decision-making processes regarding climate change.

In September 2021 the Italian Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, took the initiative to engage 400 youth climate champions, representing the 198 country signatories of the United Nations, with Ministers attending Pre-COP26. The participants were aged between 15

---

<sup>13</sup> YouthWiki, 2022, National youth strategy, Germany, Available from: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/13-national-youth-strategy>

<sup>14</sup> YouthWiki, 2022, National youth strategy, Germany, Available from: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/13-national-youth-strategy>

and 29 and their goal was to discuss and formulate concrete proposals on the issues of climate change. The conference was multi-level and the participants addressed the most urgent issues and priorities of climate action by working around four themes: 1) Youth driving ambition; 2) Sustainable recovery; 3) Non-state actors' engagement; 4) Climate-conscious society.

The first working group, ‘Youth driving ambition’, focused on empowering young people to take an active role in climate action at various levels. ‘At the multilateral level, proposals aimed to enhance youth participation in international fora and strengthen their ability to engage meaningfully with other countries’<sup>15</sup>. At the national level, guidelines and recommendations were provided to involve young people in climate decision-making processes. Additionally, the category included proposals for fostering youth participation at the local level, where the EU fails to foster meaningful participation, recognizing the importance of local climate action and its potential impact on a global scale.

The second group was centered on ‘Sustainable recovery’, ‘emphasizing the urgency for a sustainable recovery that addresses climate change’<sup>16</sup>. The proposals covered various aspects of this effort, including driving the energy transition and creating green jobs. The focus was on enhancing adaptation and resilience to climate change, overcoming barriers, and highlighting the role of young people in this endeavor. At the same time, nature-based solutions were explored, recognizing the connections between nature and climate change and their contribution to sustainable development. Moreover, there were suggestions for realigning financial flows to support a low-carbon and climate-resilient future, as well as guiding the recovery of the tourism industry while ensuring sustainability in light of its impact on climate change.

The third area of focus was the ‘Non-state actors' engagement’. This working group was centered on the involvement of non-state actors in climate action. The aim of the proposals was to make food systems less impactful and more resilient to climate change, engaging the industry in raising awareness about the links between climate change and food behaviors. It also focused on fostering transformation processes and promoting climate technology markets through

---

<sup>15</sup> Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, 2021, Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition - Four major themes at the center of the discussion among the young protagonists of the climate action, <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-four-major-themes-center-discussion-among-young-protagonists>

<sup>16</sup> Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, 2021, Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition - Four major themes at the center of the discussion among the young protagonists of the climate action, <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-four-major-themes-center-discussion-among-young-protagonists>

entrepreneurship. Additionally, the category highlights reducing the climate impact of the sports and fashion industries while encouraging their role in climate change awareness. Furthermore, it explored ideas to enhance the engagement of the arts industries to amplify the visibility of climate change issues.

Finally, one of the groups worked towards creating a more ‘Climate-conscious society’, with inclusive and equal participation. ‘Proposals advocated showcasing the impacts of climate change, recognizing the leadership and rights of local communities, indigenous peoples, and women in finding climate solutions’<sup>17</sup>. Education plays a vital role, and the category identifies ways to incorporate environmental education in schools and universities. It also considered public awareness and mobilization, emphasizing innovative actions to make climate science accessible to everyone and encouraging engagement between individuals and governments. The group also addressed the issue of youth engagement not only globally but also locally and nationally, aiming to create meaningful engagement between young activists and governments.

The conference allowed the young participants to create policies with the aim of achieving the goals set out by the Paris Agreement but also to establish new ones. They had the opportunity to present concrete ideas concerning climate action to various G8 leaders and high-ranking officials, including the Italian Prime Minister, the Prime Minister of the UK, the US’s Special Climate Envoy, and the EU Commission’s Vice-President responsible for the European Green Deal. This conference was the first time that young people were given a meaningful role in an international, high-level climate convention. Having direct communication and a debate with senior officials was very important since young people could apply public pressure and they were given the opportunity to make concrete proposals that would be embedded in national and international policies. Therefore their presence was not only tokenistic, as their ideas were valued by ministers, UN officials and heads of state, while a significant number of the policies, were embedded in the Glasgow Climate Pact. In addition, the proposals put forward by the young participants are now available for the subsequent international negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the debates in ECOSOC and in the UNFCCC<sup>18</sup>.

---

<sup>17</sup> Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, 2021, Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition - Four major themes at the center of the discussion among the young protagonists of the climate action,

<https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-four-major-themes-center-discussion-among-young-protagonists>

<sup>18</sup> Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, 2021, Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition - Four major themes at the center of the discussion among the young protagonists of the climate action,

<https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-four-major-themes-center-discussion-among-young-protagonists>

Therefore, when it comes to assessing the extent that international intergovernmental organizations and states include young people in decision-making, the Youth4Climate initiative held in the margins of the ministerial meeting of Pre-COP26, to a great extent effectively engaged the youth in policy making. This was achieved not only by allowing young people to propose ideas and discuss them, but by creating a safe and inclusive space, guided by experts such as the UN Youth Envoy and Youth Advisors of the UN Secretary General, while at the same time bringing them to collaborate directly with climate decision makers.

### **3.1 Youth 2030**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a plan for creating a more improved and enduring future for everyone. These goals directly tackle the significant worldwide issues we encounter regarding poverty, disparity, shifts in climate, damage to the environment, as well as the promotion of peace and fairness<sup>19</sup>. Comprising of 17 interlinked objectives, these goals must all be accomplished by 2030 to ensure that no individual is overlooked. The agenda Youth2030 functions in harmony with and acts as a driving force towards achieving the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The upcoming SDG Summit scheduled for September 2023 presents a distinctive chance for various stakeholders to unite and formulate a rescue strategy for both people and the planet. This involves collaborating with young people not only as beneficiaries but as full-fledged partners. As the midpoint towards 2030 is being reached, numerous efforts are already in progress at global and national levels to secure policy and financial pledges, along with critical steps to expedite progress by 2030. Engaging youth in the process of attaining national and global commitments for SDG transformation and involving them in post-summit activities remains essential. Various actions that could be taken into account include: “Mobilizing youth as a key stakeholder group in the run-up to the summit and building momentum around SDGs in national and local contexts; (b) Engaging youth in UNCT advocacy for domestic policy and financial commitments for SDGs and climate action; (c) Advocating for inclusion of youth in national SDG delegations; (d) Listening to and working with youth in the scope of the political declaration at the SDG Summit for Member States to renew commitment to the SDGs and undertake transformative actions to accelerate to 2030”<sup>20</sup>. The 2023 Youth

---

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<sup>20</sup> UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, 2023, pp. 88, [https://www.unyouth2030.com/files/ugd/b1d674\\_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf](https://www.unyouth2030.com/files/ugd/b1d674_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf)

Progress Report shows a strong support of UN institutions to the youth, with all ‘100% (31 of 31) of UN organizations aided governments in enhancing national policies and initiatives related to youth or integrating youth concerns into specific sectorial policies, in accordance with their assigned tasks’<sup>21</sup>. In addition, in a ‘similar trend to the 2020 baseline where 74% (96 out of 130) of UNCTs were involved, 76% (99 out of 130) of them continued to enhance Governments’ capabilities to improve the consistency of youth-centered policies for sustainable development’<sup>22</sup>

Given that data there is significant progress in the Agenda 2030, with the UN giving a lot of support to governments to foster the achievement of the goals. Among the goals is also the engagement of youth in decision making processes. Most policies may not be created with the help of youth, they are increasingly becoming youth-centered which shows that there is still an indirect influence from young people who seek to get represented and their problems be addressed.

### **3.2 European Youth Event**

The European Union has been organizing several events placing the youth in the center. While most of the events may not be climate-centered, climate is one of the main pillars. In 2020, young individuals had the opportunity to shape European Green Policy by actively participating in the European Youth Event, which revolved around key themes such as climate change, sustainability, and the future of the EU. The European Parliament organizes events like the European Youth Event (EYE) to give young people a platform to express their views on climate change and other pressing issues. The EYE facilitates dialogue between young people and policymakers, enabling their voices to be heard.

The EYE 2023 had the environment as a core issue. The European Parliament organized various seminars centered on the environment and climate action. An example of EU encouraging youth participation in policy making is the seminar for creating a sustainable future for travel. It essentially acknowledges the importance of sustainable travel and tourism policies in creating stable, peaceful, and prosperous societies. Moreover, the EP held a seminar regarding the environmental future of the Union. Climate-proofing the EU highlights the increasing risks of

---

<sup>21</sup> UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, 2023, pp. 34, [https://www.unyouth2030.com/\\_files/ugd/b1d674\\_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf](https://www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, 2023, pp. 38, [https://www.unyouth2030.com/\\_files/ugd/b1d674\\_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf](https://www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf)

extreme weather events due to climate change and emphasizes the need for EU-wide mitigation and preparedness measures. By involving young people in discussions on climate-proofing the EU, decision-makers can tap into their innovative ideas and fresh perspectives to build resilience and tackle the root causes of climate change. Engaging young people in this process strengthens their participation in shaping climate policies, while it also important to give them the opportunity to voice their ideas from a legitimate forum.

## 4 Conclusion

Climate change is a multi-level issue that concerns the economy, the financial system, human interaction and the environment as well as energy. Given these factors, the solution to climate change is complex, and the efficiency of any current policies and measures to contain a climate catastrophe from happening remain unknown. For there to be efficient action there has to be effective communication between institutions, governments, citizens and corporations. Despite the complexity of the issue, young people will live in the world shaped by the decisions of today. According to the policies, conferences and the initiatives of the UN and EU, young people are regarded as agents of change and, to a great extent, are influencing decision-making processes regarding environmental policies, mostly international ones like the Glasgow Climate Pact. In addition, as the agenda Youth 2030 is being effectively realized young people are becoming more powerful as they take part in decision making processes shaping the future of the world.

## 5 Bibliography

“1.3 National Youth Strategy.”

National-Policies,<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/13-national-youth-strategy>

“EU Youth Strategy | European Youth Portal.” Youth.europa.eu, youth.europa.eu/strategy\_en.

“EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 | European Youth Portal.” Youth.europa.eu, youth.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2010-2018\_en.

“Protesting Climate Change, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike.” The New York Times, 20 Sept. 2019, [www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html).

Espinosa, P., 2021, PROGRESS IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NAPS, UNFCCC, Available from:

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/UNFCCC-NAP2021-Progress-report.pdf>

European Commission, 2018, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

Available from:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>

European Commission, 2018, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, p. 11,

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>

European Commission, 2019, The European Green Deal, EUR-Lex, Available from:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640>

European Commission, YouthWiki, EU Cooperation In Youth Policy,

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/eu-cooperation-in-youth-policy>

European Union, n.d., EU Youth Strategy: 11 European Youth Goals, Available from:

[https://youth.europa.eu/strategy\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en)

General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, 2018, Resolution on the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, *Council of the European Union*, Available from:

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14080-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

General Secretariat of the European Council, 2022, Council conclusions on the Youth Action Plan in EU external action, p.3,

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15322-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

Green Deal: key to a climate-neutral and sustainable EU, 2022, European Parliament,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200618STO81513/green-deal-key-to-a-climate-neutral-and-sustainable-eu?&at\\_campaign=20234-Green&at\\_medium=Google\\_Ads&at\\_platform=Search&at\\_creation=RSA&at\\_goal=TR\\_G&at\\_audience=green%20deal%20eu&at\\_topic=Green\\_Deal&at\\_location=GR&gclid=Cj0KCCQjwrMKmBhCJARIsAHuEAPRE8KJ1lZzy6CzDy26xsewjYVG\\_gR1LbOUh-3fxyDb3AQRknOlti10aAkb5EALw\\_wcB](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200618STO81513/green-deal-key-to-a-climate-neutral-and-sustainable-eu?&at_campaign=20234-Green&at_medium=Google_Ads&at_platform=Search&at_creation=RSA&at_goal=TR_G&at_audience=green%20deal%20eu&at_topic=Green_Deal&at_location=GR&gclid=Cj0KCCQjwrMKmBhCJARIsAHuEAPRE8KJ1lZzy6CzDy26xsewjYVG_gR1LbOUh-3fxyDb3AQRknOlti10aAkb5EALw_wcB)

Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, 2021, Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition - Four major themes at the center of the discussion among the young protagonists of the climate action,

<https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/youth4climate-driving-ambition-four-major-themes-center-discussion-among-young-protagonists>

Lee, Katharine, et al. “Youth Perceptions of Climate Change: A Narrative Synthesis.” WIREs Climate Change, vol. 11, no. 3, May 2020,

<http://tep-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TEP-A-2020-Policy-Brief-Youth-Engagement-in-Climate-Change-Adaptation.pdf>



Leitane, S.,2022, The EU Youth Test, p1.6,

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/eu-youth-test>

Protesting Climate Change,2019, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike, New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html>

Sengupta, Somini. “Protesting Climate Change, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike.” *The New York Times*, 20 Sept. 2019,

[www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html).

The Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, 2023,

[https://www.unyouth2030.com/\\_files/ugd/b1d674\\_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf](https://www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf)

UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, 2023,

[https://www.unyouth2030.com/\\_files/ugd/b1d674\\_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf](https://www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_8d76708f0eae441bbde4e76e5ae3b998.pdf)

Youth Engagement in Climate Change Adaptation Empowering Youth to Enhance Climate Action, TEP-A,

<http://tep-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TEP-A-2020-Policy-Brief-Youth-Engagement-in-Climate-Change-Adaptation.pdf>

YouthWiki, 2022, National youth strategy, Germany, Available from:

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/13-national-youth-strategy>