

WHAT IS Y VOTE

Y Vote is a European wide campaign designed to encourage young people in Europe to make **informed choices** at European Parliament elections. It also aims to empower European youth to stand for the most important social issues in our continent. In its previous editions, it has spread those ideas all over Europe in more than 200 European and local activities.

We believe that young people need to receive better information regarding the European elections, as well as different European institutions and the European Union in general. Currently Europe is mentioned more than ever due to the crisis affecting many member states and the way the European Union is dealing with it. This information is often biased and unclear.

The media and politicians too often use general terms like 'Europe' or 'Brussels', instead of clarifying if they refer to European Parliament, European Commission or the European Council. Moreover, we can observe a lack of understanding of what the European Union really does and how it affects young people on a daily basis. As a result, the motivation of young people to actively participate in European democratic processes decreases. We have observed those problems regarding youth participation in the EU elections.

WHAT IS AEGEE

AEGEE (European Students' Forum) is one of the largest interdisciplinary student associations of the continent, which promotes a **unified Europe**, cross-border cooperation, communication, integration among students and strives to create an **open and tolerant society** of tomorrow.

AEGEE is a voluntary non-profit organization that operates without being linked to any political party. It was founded in 1985 and has not stopped growing since - currently, AEGEE is represented in almost 200 university cities, in 40 countries all around Europe.

AEGEE empowers students and young people in Europe to take an **active role in society**. It creates a space for dialogue and learning opportunities as well as acts as their representative towards decision-makers. Moreover, AEGEE strengthens mutual understanding and brings Europe closer to young people.

40 COUNTRIES

200 CITIES

13K STUDENTS

Y VOTE 2019

We are aware that a great effort needs to be made in order to win back trust from youth on the European Union. That is why we believe that peer learning between young people is one of the best ways to carry it out!

Project activities include a series of small and large-scale actions in diverse formats and through diverse media, with **local, regional, national and European dimension**, designed to challenge political ignorance and disinterest among young people by providing them with information, competences and motivation to become informed voters and, beyond that, active citizens in the political discourse of their communities and at the European scale.

The campaign is designed **by young people for young people**. Policy issues chosen for the campaign were the ones shaping personal and professional realities for prospects for young people (education, employment, mobility, EU social model) as well as the political, economic, social and cultural context they live in, and could live in (citizenship, multiculturalism, creativity, EU and the world, migrations).

Our aim is to **turn first-time voters and students into actors** of the European Parliamentary Elections 2014 by informing and encouraging them to participate. More specifically, we want to:

Reach with our campaign first-time voters and students from the 28 member states
Increase by 30% the voter turnout of the participants of our actions.

Inform students and first-time voters from the 28 members states and students from neighboring countries about the powers of the European Parliament and its impact on our daily lives.

Empower all participants of our actions to make an informed choice by creating a **Voting Guide**.

Strengthen student and first-time voter understanding of Europe and their sense of **European identity**.

Create a Youth Agenda which will present **youth's vision** of Europe.

HISTORY

Y vote was first launched for the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. The campaign included a series of nation-wide actions taking place from October 2008 to June 2009 and won the **European Charlemagne Youth Prize** in Greece. The campaign consisted of five integrated campaign components:

Street Actions

oriented towards general audience

Campus Actions

oriented towards students

Arena Actions

connecting the message to sports and popular culture

Spotlight Actions

spreading the message towards media

Voice Actions

facilitating dialogue with politicians

As the project had a huge success, a second edition was launched in **2014**, adding to the above mentioned actions a series of conventions in each corner in Europe about different policy topics relevant for young Europeans. Still, the voter turnout among young people was dramatically low.

While approaching young people, they identified the following concerns and many more:

Currently, youngsters grow up in a European living space, but are insufficiently aware of the **benefits and opportunities** they can receive from it.

The work of the European Parliament is not visible, its powers are unknown to the general public. At the same time, the work of MEPs is rarely visible in the media, rather being highlighted in a negative perspective. In most European countries it can be observed that the European Union is used as a scapegoat for all unpopular decisions.

Ideological barriers: A rise of Euroscepticism, as well as a rise of **nationalism and xenophobia** can be observed throughout Europe. These radical voices discourage youngsters from getting involved in the democratic processes of the European Union.