



HAVE YOU MET YOUR MAYOR?

Toolkit for getting in touch with your municipality

yvote



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Have You Met Your Mayor?

Yes, we stole that line from “How I met your mother”. But we are curious whether you have already met – have you?

We think that meeting your mayor can be very beneficial – for you, for your local, for your city. For Europe. This toolkit should give motivation, tips, tricks and examples of why and how you can meet your mayor – and what you can get out of it.

The Y Vote Manifesto

AEGEE's statement of principles says that we “recognise that we are the future and present of our society and that our contribution to the construction of Europe is our responsibility”. Let's put this into practice, let use our network, and let's make Europe a better place.

The Y Vote Manifesto is a simple document aiming at a more diverse and integrated Europe. Cities that support it, not only sign to agree with some of our core values, but also vouch to take action for a better Europe.

Why? Ideally, dozens of cities will support the manifesto and agree to take action regarding the topics that are important to young people in the EU. One action in one city is good, 100 are better! Wouldn't this be an amazing bottom-up success?

The Y Vote Manifesto consist of a fixed introduction part about the importance of Europe and the involvement of young people in its creation. It is supposed to be signed by all mayors.

Afterwards follow several points to be carried out by the city administration which are related to the eight areas EU Youth Strategy. Those are ideas of different activities with various difficulties. The mayor should choose together with you at least two of them, possibly more.

As cities differ, the activities can also be adapted to its needs. The examples are designed in a way that the type of activity can be changed to a different topic. For example in “Provide organisational support and resources like free rooms to youth organisations to conduct workshops on first aid and mental health (or another related topic).” the topic can be changed from mental health to social inclusion. You as an inhabitant know the city best and can therefore adapt the activities as well or propose new ones if they are related to the eight areas of the EU Youth Strategy - feel free to do so!

Additionally, you can add in the end of the manifesto concrete cooperation ideas between your local and the city like the free rooms. What is written down, will not easily be forgotten!

A few words about the EU Youth Strategy: The current EU Youth Strategy is running from 2010-2018. It includes eight different areas. You can find them [here!](#)

From 2019 onwards, a new Strategy will lead the way called [#YouthGoals](#). There will be eleven goals which were created during Cycle VI of the Structured Dialogue process. Both are included in the manifesto, so it can be used still in 2019.



Why would you?

Except for joining forces with us in convincing cities to do something for today's youth and support a borderless Europe, you can get valuable contacts for your local! We don't want you to talk only about the manifesto, but use the manifesto to present your work to the municipality and hopefully find a way to be supported by them. Want some examples?

"In Genova, thanks to our Municipality we had the chance to visit several museums for free. And also, since our cooperation went great, they will provide us the facility for our next local initiative: a language course." - Giuseppe Formica, President of AEGEE-Genova

"For almost every local and international event AEGEE-Cagliari gets funding from local institutions. These contribute to the financial wellness of the local and increase the quality of the events." - Lorenzo Ligas, President of AEGEE-Cagliari

"The building of one of our municipalities produces its own electricity and has electric vehicles. In the past years we visited the place in the Summer University and we presented our municipality to our participants while showing our Mayor what kind of audience he is addressing." - Kutay Kaya, AEGEE-Eskişehir

As you can see, there are quite some possibilities – money, free rooms, transportation are just some examples. Your municipality is by far the closest institution to you, able to act fast and change things visibly for you!

Our Manifesto can be an action on itself, but can also be a good way to start a cooperation! Additionally to the city administration you can also cooperate with other youth NGOs.

"Local advocacy - In Sofia, we have the tradition for the past few years to have representatives in different governmental bodies. A few years ago our local became part of several youth organisations in Sofia who started the process of creating an Advisory Youth Council to Sofia Municipality. Today, this council is a reality and during the meeting, the youth organisation representatives have the opportunity to give their opinion on different issues connected with the city and they give their direct feedback to the City Council and the Mayor of Sofia. Also, the City Council is always willing to give their facilities for free for us to use them when we need rooms or halls for events." - Elitsa Hadzhieva, President of AEGEE-Sofia

"Public transport- This kind of cooperation started in 2016 during Summer University – holidays event lasting for around two weeks, consisting on cultural exchange, workshops and integration. The City granted for our participants and organizers free use of public transport. To have it, we needed to send to the city hall the pattern of the badge used during the event. Then they issued the decision saying, that during the event person having the badge is permitted to use public transport just like a person having regular ticket. Worth to mention is that the City seems to be happy with that cooperation. After 2016 edition, in 2017, we simply forgot that such deals were taken. However, it was the City who contacted us, asking if we are doing next edition and if we want to repeat that." - Michał Szyszko, President of AEGEE-Warszawa

Patronage



Apart from single actions, have you ever considered getting a patron for your local? A patron vouches with his or her name for your organization – as a permanent proof you're not just a bunch of random people, but you are trusted by this person.

"In Aachen, we have a long tradition of patrons for our local. Our patrons include our lord mayor, as well as the heads of the two biggest universities in the city. This has several benefits: Firstly, we have a high chance of presenting and including those people in every project we are working on – they know our name and welcome us. Secondly, when we fundraise, known names give a sense of trust to companies, foundations and people you write to." – Philipp Blum, Ex-President of AEGEE-Aachen

As patron, you exchange some rights and obligations and determine whether you want to have the actual person, or the office (s)he holds as patron. For example: If you want your mayor as your patron, it might be beneficial to have "The mayor of City" as patron, instead of "Mr. Genkin". Obviously, it's the same person who signs it, but it can look more professional on paper. Furthermore, mayors change. It will be easier to convince the new person in charge to continue the legacy.



Getting in touch with your mayor

You like the idea, but have no idea where to start? We are here to help you building contact with your municipality.

What do you want?

"First of all, you need to analyze the municipalities very well and offer them something to suit their interests. When you get their support, you need to show them how they contribute to your project and make them proud. Then it is necessary not to neglect to thank you. You should continue this cooperation by following the activities of the company." - Kutay Kaya, AEGEE-Eskişehir

As Kutay points out, a coffee together is nice – but to get results, you have to know what you want. Examples include

- I want my mayor to sign the Y Vote Manifesto and contribute to a better Europe
- I would like to get rooms for my event
- I would like to invite him / her to speak at our event
- I would like our mayor to provide us with a welcome drink for our participants

Build the first contact

After you figure out what you want, make your move. Remember: First impressions count. Use the possibility to introduce yourself nicely and make sure all information is available. Let's imagine our mayor is called Mr. Genkin and his assistant is Ms. Daniele, and we'll walk you through some steps! E-Mail is an accepted way of communication by now almost everywhere – but if you feel like sending a letters, feel free to do so.

Address the right people

In your first contact, address the mayor as well as the secretary or assistant directly. It's good practice to send your mail from professional looking e-mail addresses, such as @aegee-local.org or @aegee.eu instead of @hotmail.com. Furthermore, by putting a team member in CC, you can avoid putting all responsibilities (to notice the email) on one person.

From: yourname@aegee-local.org
To: genkin@city.eu, daniele@city.eu
CC: someonefromyourteam@aegee-local.org
"Dear Mr. Genkin, dear Ms. Daniele,

With this email..."

Be concise

Keep your email short and concise, and make sure what you're asking for is clear – usually that would be a meeting in person. Provide more information about what you will talk about in an attachment. In this example, we ask for a meeting to present the project, and already hint at what we'd like to get from it: Free rooms for our workshops.

Be formal and pay attention to spelling. You are not writing to the king of the world, but certainly you are not writing to your drinking buddy. Tools like [grammar.ly or Boomerang] might help you.



"Dear Mr. Genkin, dear Ms. Daniele,

This summer, 30 international young people from all over Europe will come to City, to take part in an event called: "My car is faster than yours". During two weeks, we'll explore electric cars and transportation, together with Company X. Also, they'll get to know our language, learn to cook traditional national dishes and attend workshops about sustainability.

We would like to meet you, present our project and see if the city can potentially support us in our event, for example with rooms for workshops.

Attached, you can find more information about our association and the event.

We'd be happy to hear from you,

Name
Position
AEGEE-Local"

Attachment: Dossier AEGEE-Local.pdf

Attachment: Summer University "My car is faster than yours".pdf

Wait for an answer

Be patient and wait. Give the people at least one week to reply, rather two. If you didn't hear anything, you might call the mayor's office and refer back to the email. The following is an example of what you could say, but most importantly is to be yourself. Address the person right, refer back to the e-mail and have your calendar ready.

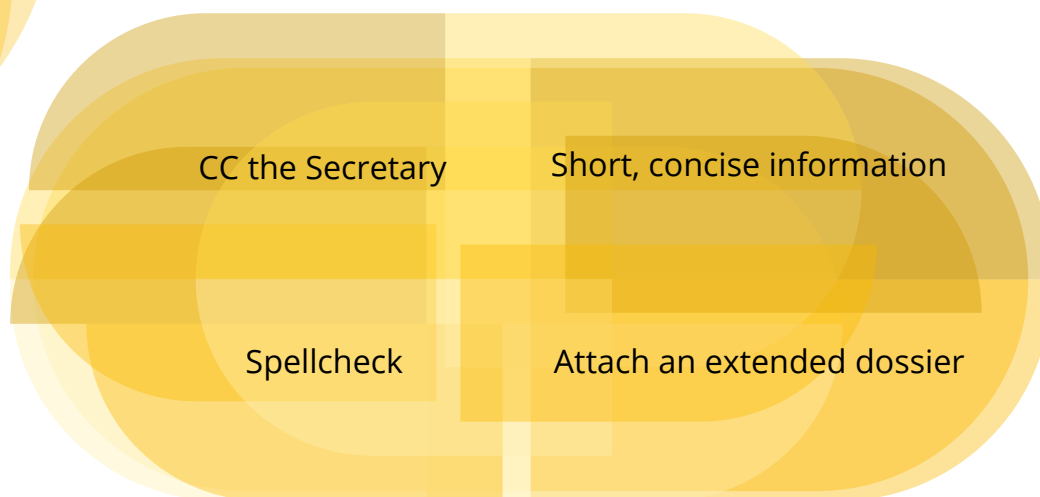
"Hello Ms. Daniele, this is 'Name' from AEGEE-Local speaking. On the 20th of April we sent you a mail asking for an audience with mayor Genkin to present our Summer event of 30 international people. I was wondering if that's possible."

Be fast and take your chance.

If the mayor offers you one or multiple times to meet, don't ask them to check back with your team – have your calendar open and say "Yes" or "No" to the date. In case you can't attend, either know that someone else who is responsible can go or suggest another date.

Didn't get to your mayor?

Depending on how precise your request it, it can be that someone else than the mayor meets you. If you ask for transportation, it might be that you immediately meet the person in charge of transportation in the city. There are positive and negative sides to this, so make the best of it.



Seal the deal

So, you found a date for a meeting, what now? We'll try to give you some tips to be well-prepared.

First and foremost, know what you're talking about – know what you are going to do, and what would be helpful to you.

1. Be on time.
2. You don't have to wear a suit, but it's definitely better to come in a buttoned shirt or blouse than your latest Agora T-Shirt.
3. You might want to go with someone else. This can reduce your stress level, but also – two people hear more than one. One person might take notes, not to forget details.

Wrap up the meeting – take some last minutes to say what you decided, and what both parties promise to do towards each other. Examples often include forwarding contact addresses to each other or providing more information.

While you're on it – why don't you take a picture together? Not only is it a nice memory for you and/or your family, your social media channels will like it too.

Follow up

After you got what you wanted, it's nothing more than normal to say "Thank you", right? Sadly, following up after meetings is a thing that's often forgotten or not treated with importance. All the effort you spent before, might be lost if a follow-up is not done. Writing an email one or two days afterwards including thank you words, what was decided on that meeting and what you promised to do afterwards will make it more likely that you will keep in touch about that in the future.

To find out what can lead to better follow-ups, we did a session with two Members of the European Parliament, and gathered some best practises from our locals, for example:

- Write a handwritten thank you card
- In case you got some fundraising in kind, take pictures of people using these, publish them and make them available
- Give a small present, for example a small mascot or magnet from your AEGEE Local. Flowers and wine are common presents (and there's nothing wrong with it in principle), but they are not very original.

Please note: In many countries, anti-corruption laws forbid officials to take presents, even if they are very small. Don't try to tempt people for a present worth 10€, rather give a handmade card or letter.

Some strategies that other locals use

Some AEGEE locals already have a good cooperation with their municipality. We asked a few to share their experiences with us, so you can get inspired!



AEGEE-Warszawa

"AEGEE-Warszawa cooperates with the City of Warsaw on many fields. Here are their descriptions:

- **Venue rental**

While the public transport case is an individual deal between AEGEE-Warszawa and the City, next ones are city programs, dedicated for NGOs in general.

For organizing workshops etc. the City offers space. Often it's done not directly from the hall, but from local halls of the districts (little administrative info: the City of Warsaw is divided into 18 districts, being administered like little towns creating a region). Often these venues are citizens' initiatives, created in order to increase civic activity or to have space to realise some hobbies. Other possibilities are NGOs and foundations having such venues – the City allows them to promote themselves at their website. Others, like AEGEE, have thanks to the city a great database. Finally, the City and the districts themselves have the venues.

- **The promotion**

As mentioned above, the City offers its website to promote the NGOs and their activities. However, this is not the only possibility. One of most interesting ones are the screens on public transport. Organisations can promote by this way not them itself, but their initiatives. All we have to do is send the multimedia (picture or little video) around month before the event. For a week before the event it will be presented for the passengers of buses, trams, trains and the subway.

- **Money support**

The City opens many contests for initiatives that might be awarded with such supports. Usually there are different ones for different kinds of events, so the participating ones can be compared and the best ones chosen. Also the districts open the contests – so called "little grants". However in their case, they cannot afford such big range of topics – they fund only initiatives from particular, described by them thematic."

Michał Szyszko, President of AEGEE-Warszawa



AEGEE-Bologna

"AEGEE-Bologna is enrolled in the List of Free Associations of the Municipality of Bologna since December 2015. But it's been two years since we deeply start cooperating with a special section of the Municipality of Bologna, called Informagiovani Multitasking that is totally dedicated to young people. It offers them the possibility to study or work abroad, advices about European projects, crowdfunding, young business and so on. That's why Informagiovani follows a peer to peer strategy, and it involves university students but also associations as AEGEE or Scambieuropei. They aim to encourage young people to the mobility and to be in touch with foreigners such as Erasmus students or refugees.

Informagiovani asked us to organize occasional activities as the "Ceremony of the Exchanges". It takes place in October and in that occasion we organize a buffet for high school students and we present AEGEE and how it can lead young people to try cultural exchanges.

But the main project is called "TimeToTandem". Basically, it takes place every year from February to May during 10 meetings. It is completely free, and it gives young people the chance to practice the language that they want to improve.

As AEGEE-Bologna we receive money to organize activities. We take care of the PR strategy, we find the people, we contact them, we form the couples according to the languages they want to practice and then we prepare the activity itself. We try to make the meetings funny with team building games or presenting them the Summer University Project with videos and photos. Sometimes we like bringing unusual things as a real tandem and take them for a ride in the square, but we also try to defeat the fear of the public speaking, and the diffidence that they usually have.

Every meeting has a different topic, according to the organizer's creativity: books, travels, cinema, environment. The most successful one is without any doubts the external one that we organize in a hostel kitchen: the participants are in pairs and each one has to cook the other's traditional receipt. At the end we eat all together and every time it is nice to see how horrible pasta can become if it falls into the wrong hands."

Martina Spinaci, Secretary of AEGEE-Bologna