



# CREATIVITY & CULTURE

Y VOTE CONVENTION  
PASSAU, GERMANY

RESULTS BOOKLET





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“My Europe, My Say!” is a European project, implemented by a consortium led by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement- Bureau Européen du Scoutisme (WOSM). The consortium includes AEGEE-Europe and 48 independent youth organisations and covers 30 countries. The project encompasses various aspects, all the way from capacity building tracks to large scale youth exchange events to interactive spaces of dialogue between young people and decision makers. This convention was one of the activities under the project, and received the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

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## **Table of Content**

<b>Words of welcome</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Convention</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Program</b>	<b>6</b>
Active Citizenship	6
Introduction to the EU institutions	6
Introduction to Creativity & Culture	7
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>8</b>
The drafting process	9
<b>Panel discussion on whether we need a European public sphere</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Results in numbers</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Y Vote</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>AEGEE-Europe</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How to Vote?</b>	<b>14</b>

Dear reader,

One year ago I had no idea how the European institutions work and got confused over all the councils we have there - let us just say European politics were very far away from me. I just knew that the European elections were coming up and that they would be important. For me, other young Europeans, and the European Union.



When I heard that a few AEGEEans wanted to restart a project especially targeting this by informing young people about the importance of the elections, how they work, and how Europe influences their everyday lives, I got very interested and joined.

So here I am now, one year later, looking back to an event with motivated participants, who were willing to become more informed, who come out of this convention as active citizens and who developed their ideas to create a better and more creative Europe together. I hope that they took as much out of this event as I did and I want to thank them for their commitment and active participation.

I also want to thank the Y Vote team, especially Katharina, who was with me in Passau. Further, I want to thank AEGEE-Passau, Viola from our Comité Directeur, and especially Edina who did an impressive job as the Content Manager.

Anna Süß

Communications Manager  
Y Vote Project

Dear reader,

This year in June I attended a Y Vote Workshop in Passau and I really liked the idea of raising awareness of the upcoming European elections, so I asked Anna whether she still needed some help for the convention in Passau. That is how I became content manager, without even knowing how AEGEE is pronounced correctly. Six months later, I am now a proud member of AEGEE-Passau, and I have learned a lot- (not only) about the European Union, European culture and the importance of active citizenship.



This results booklet shows that great things happen when young Europeans come together to discuss and share knowledge with each other.

The feedback we got from our participants proves that all the preparatory work was definitely worth it: every participant stated that the event has revealed the importance of participating actively in society and everyone is eager to tell others what they have learned about the European Union and the elections.

I want to thank the Y Vote Team for giving me this opportunity and our participants for their contributions that made this weekend an unforgettable experience!

Edina Knabe

Content Manager  
AEGEE-Passau

Dear reader,

On behalf of AEGEE-Passau I will say that it was an honour to host the Y Vote Convention on Creativity and Culture from the 29th of November to the 2nd of December 2018. The contribution of AEGEE-Passau in this event were the logistics, the content was done by the Y Vote Team and coincidentally also by one of our members.



One of the aims of the Y Vote Project is to empower young people in Europe to take an active role in society. It was very nice to see that this has already been a matter of course for all my lovely organizers and helpers. All of them invested a lot of time and did a great job. As our work is voluntary, our motivation was to get more involved in society and support an important project especially for the youth. I am very grateful for the work of everyone who has contributed to this Convention, thank you a lot!

Greetings from Passau,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Mayer". The script is cursive and fluid.

Julia Mayer

Main Organiser  
AEGEE-Passau

## The Convention

As a project, Y Vote wants to encourage young people to make informed choices at the European Parliament elections and learn more about topics that are relevant for young Europeans. One way to achieve this are the Y Vote Conventions that are structured along the topics of the [EU Youth Strategy](#). The participants learn about the functioning of the EU and discuss how to become active citizens.

The V Vote Convention on Creativity and Culture took place from the 29th November to the 2nd December in Passau, Germany, and was attended by 12 participants from all over Europe. With a focus on the eighth topic on the EU Youth Strategy, [Creativity and Culture](#), the convention consisted of different parts aiming at:

1. Informing the participants about the EU institutions with a strong focus on the European parliament, voting in the European elections, Creativity and culture and its role in the European Union, youth policy in the EU with the focus on structured dialogue
2. Having discussions with and without policy makers about Creativity and Culture. During this part, the participants will learn about the current work of the EU and its competences in this field.
3. Draft recommendations in the form of a Youth Agenda that will be brought to policy makers.



The recommendations are later brought to our final conference in April 2019, which will happen in Torino, Italy. Together with other NGOs and participants from all over the continent, we will gather all recommendations from all conventions into one Youth Agenda for Europe.

In the following pages, you can find a wrap-up of our convention!

## **Program**

### **Active Citizenship**

In our understanding, every inhabitant of one of the 28 EU countries is an EU citizen. How actively are they participating in society? The first workshop of the convention taught the meaning and importance of being an active citizen and the structure of the decision-making process in a political debate.

To get a feeling of what it means not to be able to participate in society, the participants started the session with a game. In a playful way they experienced how hard it is not to have the necessary information to be able to participate.

In a next step, the participants defined the terms active citizenship and civic education more closely by gathering examples and criteria for both terms. The session was continued with a round of speed dating in which the participants talked about questions such as what topics they were most passionate about and why, whether they had ever voted, what their experience was with it and what ideas they had to increase their participation in society.

Moving on to discussing citizens' participation on an EU level, the participants evaluated the voter turnout of the last European elections and with it possible reasons of not going to the polls as well as the consequences of a low voter turnout for a representative democracy.

### **Introduction to the EU institutions**

The European Union with its history and institutions is a complex system that we all heard about somehow, but we need to understand a little in order to really discuss its influence. After all, the EU institutions are the European peoples' institutions. In these sessions, participants learned about four of the main European institutions and their competences as well as the competences of the EU vs. the member states and [how laws are made in the EU](#).

After discussing the [division of competences](#), participants reflected on the good things that already work well in the EU and which points they wished to change. While the free movement of people, a common agriculture policy and European-wide research cooperations were considered positive, hot topics such as developing a common direction on migration, improving the accessibility and distribution of funds and strengthening small local companies, made it onto the wishlist for a better Europe.



## Introduction to Creativity & Culture

In order to introduce the topic of creativity and culture [ESACH](#) (European Students Association for Cultural Heritage) sent Maike Schwiddessen to give an input session about the European year of cultural heritage, and to facilitate the discussion about personal connections with cultural heritage.

The next activity was to discuss some controversial statements within the group, like:

**You either are creative or not. Creativity cannot be acquired.**

**There is no common European culture because European countries are too different from one another.**

**There is no common European culture, only a global western culture, which is the same in Europe and the US.**

Participants had to decide whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement and got together in small groups with people who had a different opinion to discuss the statement and form a main argument to bring forward in the plenum. Answers and reactions were compared with the results of Eurobarometer surveys in which similar questions were asked. This activity helped to make the group think about the connection between culture and the European Union.

The next step was to learn about what the EU is doing already on the topic. The distribution of competences between the EU and the member states was recapped in order to get there. Participants had a look at the [article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty](#) that regulates cultural policy on an EU level to discover that the cultural policy is a supportive competence, in which the EU mainly passes soft law and depends on working methods like the Open Method of Cooperation or the Structured Dialogue.



The participants therefore brainstormed on existing initiatives and programs of the EU that have something to do with culture. Famous initiatives were: [Creative Europe](#), [Erasmus+](#), European Capitals of Culture, and town twinning between European cities. The trainers gave more background information on each initiative that was mentioned to end up with a broad overview of the measures that have been taken by the EU in the cultural field so far. Based on this knowledge, the participants could develop their own recommendations for European policy makers on the following day.

## **Recommendations**

While creativity enriches our lives, culture builds the basis of a society. Through cultural exchanges, citizens get to know each other better in Europe. As youth we are concerned about the status of creativity and culture in political decisions, especially when young people are affected.

We see the need for a better cultural education and to make culture more accessible and interesting for young people. For young professionals in the cultural and creative sector it is really hard to establish trust in their abilities and to build up a career, due to a lack of support and appreciation by societies for people trying to make a living in the field. Further, we see a lack of media cooperation to present the different cultures in Europe, which would help to create dialogues and foster European integration through mutual understanding in the long run.

Therefore we, the participants of the Y Vote Convention about Creativity & Culture, propose the following recommendations:

### **1. Facilitate cultural education**

We strongly encourage the EU to educate EU citizens on culture through methods of formal and non-formal education.

### **2. Increase accessibility**

We strongly encourage the EU to improve accessibility of cultural institutions by supporting digitalisation, new technologies and favourable pricing, in order to include all people, especially people with disabilities, children and the young.

### **3. Increase dialogue**

We strongly encourage the EU to stimulate the advocacy processes with citizens by promoting and informing about the existing opportunities of active citizenship.

### **4. Promote the transnational exchange of media content**

We strongly encourage the EU to support cooperation between media entities of different European countries in order to foster cultural diversity by exchanging and creating contents together.

### **5. Foster creative mobility**

We strongly encourage the EU to promote and support more mobility opportunities for emerging creative professionals in order to share best practices, promote innovation and inspire them to develop their personal career.

### **6. A platform to connect**

We strongly encourage the EU to create a online platform to connect emerging and established creative professionals with the cultural industry, in order to provide mentoring for emerging creative professionals and create common projects offline.

## **7. Provide subsidies**

We strongly encourage the EU to establish a program to offer economic support to emerging creative professionals who demonstrate particular talent and motivation in any field, in order to support their work and stimulate the creative industry in Europe.

Drafted by

Alberto Corsini, Alina-Denisa Begeaca, Chris van Dijk, Daya Morales, Diego Frizziero, Edina Knabe, Gergely Molnár, Jan Postek, Karlo Lončarević, Magdalena Wasilewska, Mariam Tsagurishvili, Nazlı Ece Baltepe and Stephan Dieng.

## **The drafting process**

To make the participants aware of the fact that their input and recommendations would feed in the consultation phase of the new structured dialogue cycle (new EU Youth Dialogue), a presentation on structured dialogue was delivered.

The Saturday was fully dedicated to drafting recommendations connected to the topic of Creativity and Culture. At first, the facilitators recapped the knowledge acquired during the previous two days.

Then participants brainstormed about possible topics and voted upon three of them:

- work in the cultural sector,
- the European public sphere, and
- accessibility of the European cultural heritage.



Participants then entered two rounds of group work in which they drafted the recommendations, followed by a feedback round to express their opinion on the work of the other groups and thus helped improve the other recommendations.

The drafting process included a street action, for which participants took their ideas to the streets to ask people passing by about their opinion on the recommendations drafted. Through this, they also raised awareness on the upcoming elections and distributed flyers of the [This Time I'm Voting](#) campaign,

The finished recommendations were then discussed in the plenary and voted upon.

## **Panel discussion on whether we need a European public sphere**

The panel discussion was co-hosted by the [Young European Federalists Passau](#), circled around why people lack information about the EU and how to possibly tackle this.

The speakers that joined our discussion were:

- Viola Bianchetti, Projects Director of AEGEE-Europe
- Dr. Stefan Skupien, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung
- Thomas Eibl, chair of political science at the University of Passau

The discussion was moderated by Prof. Dr. Lucia Krämer, professor for English studies/Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Passau.

As the [Why European Parliament](#) project has shown, a vast majority agrees (strongly) that the political institutions of the EU are important to young people. Even though many of the political decisions taken on a European level influence our daily life, we have the feeling that we are often not well enough informed about them. Therefore, the speakers discussed why people lack information about the EU and how to possibly tackle this, and what role a European public sphere can have here.



**“A public sphere should not depend on a certain issue but it should be a neutral space where lots of issues can be brought forward.” - Stefan Skupien**

Dr. Skupien pointed out the functions of a public sphere: information is aggregated, later on translated from one sphere to the other, and therefore gives the power to citizens to control the government, and to integrate themselves in the decision making process. While there might not be a European public sphere, the Europeanisation of different public spheres can be observed.

An important factor to feed any public sphere with information is the media, as it does not only function as a guide of opinion but also aggregator.

Thomas Eibl saw the need for a European public sphere to be able to make the debate about European policies more transnational and less framed by national factors. Though it is difficult to say how much integration comes from the public spheres, it would help to steer European integration more towards cooperation by fostering understanding amongst the countries.

The need for across-continental debate was, according to Viola Bianchetti, the main motivator for citizens to form a European public sphere. By raising political awareness, strengthening civic competences and through the creation of an understanding of what a European identity is.



**“We need citizenship in order to get people involved. The youth has to see how they profit from the EU and then they get interested.” - Thomas Eibl**

During the debate, the panelists discussed the ideas we now have of a European public sphere and how to move the ideas from public spheres into power positions.

According to Dr. Skupien, though a strong European media does not exist, frames are developing bottom-up with national media looking increasingly at other countries from a national perspective. The desired European public sphere is thus an example of a translational public sphere, though, through social media, we are already dealing with post-national public spheres. If we step away from the concept of national public spheres, we might be able to see other spheres that already exist. According to Thomas. Eibl, a strong European media depends on how national media systems work. Attempts for transnational European media have been launched, but most of those offers are only consumed by elites.

**“It is difficult to campaign for causes at a European level because of the lack of a European public sphere.” - Viola Bianchetti**

Within the public spheres, the political apparatus and the citizens observe each other, but an opinion needs to be aggregated to be able to lobby for it. The content thus needs to be communicated better by having media correspondents in Brussels that really transport the European debate. The EU does not have the means to stir this, but the national media and the governments have a voice in this. The citizens obligation here is that they need to come together and form alliances to demand this sort of content.

In the end, each speaker gave a short outlook on what they thought would make the debate about the EU more rational:

- Talk to someone who thinks different than you: create spaces to have citizens meet that have different opinions.
- Engage wherever you can and search for political engagement opportunities.
- focus on peer-to-peer education and provide education on the EU over all channels.
- Engagement with Europe will come with time fuelled by further migration between the member states.

## Results in numbers

12

Participants

4

Days

10

Different nationalities

20

Years old on average

27%

is the average increase in knowledge  
about the EU Institutions.

83%

Members of AEGEE

83%

Have had the chance to vote

100%

Of these people did vote

## 100% of participants...

...(strongly) agree that the political institutions of the EU are important for young people.

...(strongly) agree that participation is important and can change outcomes.

...say that the workshops can help increase ones participation.

...see and understand the importance on an individual and societal level of Creativity and Culture.

...would recommend a Y Vote Convention to a friend.

## **Y Vote**

Y Vote is a Europe wide campaign designed to encourage young citizens to make informed choices in the European Parliament elections 2019. This will be reached by improving and developing the knowledge and skills of young people about the elections and European institutions. Y Vote aims at empowering and motivating young people to participate in society and become involved in democratic processes. These actions will tackle the current low understanding of and information on European institutions, mistrust and apathy and the low voter turnout, especially among young people. The project has previously been organised for the 2009 and 2014 European Parliament elections.

Y Vote is AEGEE-Europe project which is supported by various [partners](#), such as

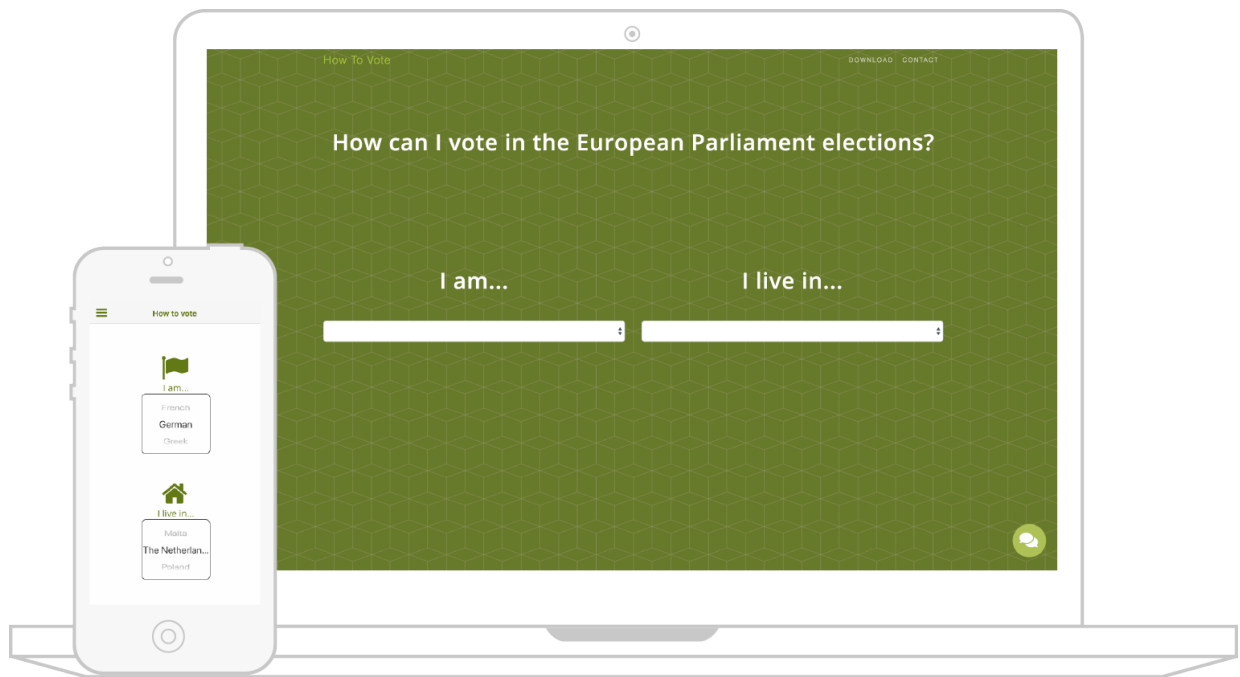
- EDUOpinions
- The European Youth Forum (YFJ)
- Young European Federalists (JEF)
- Erasmus Student Network (ESN)
- European Movement International (EMI)
- This Time I'm Voting – The official campaign of the European Parliament
- The European Parliament
- POLIS 180
- #MEGACampaign by the European Civic Forum
- Eyes on Europe
- World Organisation of the Scout Movement

[www.yvote.eu](http://www.yvote.eu)

## **AEGEE-Europe**

Founded in 1985, the European Students' Forum, "Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe", is now one of the largest interdisciplinary student associations of the continent. AEGEE strives for a democratic, diverse and borderless Europe, which is socially, economically and politically integrated, and values the participation of young people in its construction and development. 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.

[www.aegee.org](http://www.aegee.org)



## I'm an Italian living in Brussels, how do I vote?

This question – or at least in a similar way – will come to the minds of many European Union citizens. The root of the problem is that every member state sets their own regulations for the elections and therefore the conditions vary immensely.

We believe that **voting should be easy.**

For this reason, we have created the “How to Vote” app. By choosing your nationality and country of residence, you will get an overview of the specific regulations you will face for the upcoming elections. Who is eligible to vote? How does the registration process work? What ways of voting from abroad do you have? If you decide to vote in your country of residence, which criteria do you need to fulfil?

Our app is now available on any device. It can either be downloaded for iOS in the App Store, for Android in the Play Store or accessed online at

[www.howtovote.eu](http://www.howtovote.eu)







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