



Y VOTE FINAL CONFERENCE

TORINO, ITALY

RESULTS BOOKLET



This event is part of the "My Europe, My Say" Project and is organized with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



"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.

Disclaimer: This publication only reflects the view of the author. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information this publication contains



European Parliament

This event is under the patronage of the European Parliament.
European Parliament Elections are May 23-26 2019!

Table of Content

Words of Welcome	1
The Convention	3
Our Agenda for Europe	11
Results in numbers	16
Y Vote	17
AEGEE-Europe	17
How to Vote?	18

Dear reader,

Almost five years ago, I attended my very first event with a youth NGO – a Y Vote Convention about Education & Mobility in Kraków, Poland. A rookie by then, I had no idea if my input would be of any value, but I knew that this topic is something that is dear to me, and something I would like to improve.



Over the past month, we organised several Conventions, in which we tried to connect like-minded people from all over Europe, to develop, empower and involve them in political processes. This conference marks the end of that series, and I am very happy and proud to have seen so many young people engaging in civil society and politics to make Europe a home for all of us. Our Agenda for Europe contains strong points for a more inclusive, borderless and young Europe, and it gives hope for the future.

On behalf of the Y Vote project, I would like to thank every person involved in the project.



Philipp Blum

Project Manager of the Y Vote Project

Dear reader,

not so long ago I was merely an activist going out every sunday to participate in Pulse of Europe demonstrations, during that time I experienced unexpected frustration when looking at the average age of those who attended. One group somehow always failed to come in large numbers, and that group was the youth. Sure there were young people there but nowhere close to the amount there should have been.



Whilst I was still studying Political Sciences, when trying to convince some other students to participate, I mostly ended up in a pro-con ideological debate with students blindly following ideologies branding the EU as a behemoth of bureaucracy and inefficiency, as a slave of big business lobbies or as the main robber of personal freedoms. What my fellow students failed to understand is that the European Union can change for the better, but how can something change if no one goes out there to show support for the idea.

By joining the Y Vote Project team later on I was able to address this issue and this frustration I had with youth not speaking up when it came to the European Union. During all of our previous Conventions I was overwhelmed by the amount of extremely motivated, intelligent and talented young people who were ready to come together and discuss rather complicated issues and create the Recommendations.

Later on we ended up so close to the European elections for the final Convention in Torino with many great participants willing to share and discuss what others had prepared. They were there to follow that vision which we had planned since the start of this project: to show that young people can be informed, that they can come together, speak up and make tough decisions on what the European Union needs to do for the future of youth.

What a time we had! Thank you, to you, the participants, the local organisers, the numerous speakers and of course the whole of the project team.

Leonardo Manganelli

Content Manager of the Y Vote Project

The Convention

As a project, we want to encourage young people to make informed choices at the European Parliament elections and learn more about topics that are relevant for young Europeans. Therefore we organised several Conventions along the topics of the EU Youth Agenda where participants learned about the functioning of the EU and discuss how to become active citizens. In these events, the goal was to

1. Learn about the EU institutions with a strong focus on the European Parliament, voting in the European elections, one of the EU youth agenda topics and its role in the European Union, youth policy in the EU with the focus on Structured Dialogue.
2. Learn about the current work of the EU and its competences in the respective topic and discuss these issues with policy makers.
3. Draft Recommendations in the form of a Youth Agenda that will be brought to policy makers.



With this final Conference, the previously drafted Recommendations were brought together, discussed and finalised. 27 young Europeans and representatives from several NGOs and institutions looked at ways this final paper could be brought to decision-makers and influence the future of Europe for the better.

Furthermore, participants had the chance to meet decision-makers in an intimate atmosphere, talk to people on the streets and enjoy Italian culture in “The city of the car”: Torino.

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

Participation in Society

A society is shaped by its people, but it is necessary that everyone contributes and participates. Especially at a European level it is often not clear how one can get involved. In this session, the participants discussed on ways how to get involved in European politics. Firstly, the importance of being an active citizen for the functioning of a democratic system and how to learn participation. In a fishbowl discussion, the participants talked about why young people do not participate in society and how to learn this. Besides the outcomes it became clear that participation even in a discussion is not easy and possible for everyone as non-information or the feeling of being not an expert is a barrier to take part in it. Additionally, participants reflected on their own participation in society at different levels while answering several questions in a speed-dating game. Afterwards, concrete ideas for participation at local, regional, national or european level were collected to show the variety of possibilities.

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 it a little bit in order to really discuss the influence. After all, the EU institutions are the European peoples' institutions.

In this session, participants learned about the how the European Union works throughout the four European Institutions connected with the decision-making process within the EU, how the law-making is working and the [division of competences](#) between the EU and the member states.

The workshop started with a short presentation on the theoretical part and continued with an activity on where the different policies stand into the division of the competences: exclusive, shared or supportive. It continued with a group discussion on what has the participants identified as a good or a bad thing in the European union and they listed as positive things like open borders, set standards in competition, roaming, stability and peace and educational opportunities. However, on the bad side it was stressed that there is a lack of information about EU activities, lack of democratic representation as the only institution elected by the EU citizens is the European parliament and unclear agenda on how the EU plans to act upon the climate change issue.

As there were a few participants who had already attended our normal Introduction we took them to teach them about a few more technical issues surrounding the EU, specifically the Budget and lobbyism. The participants were given the opportunity to discover in simple terms what percentages of money came from what country and where these funds were invested in. In addition to this, they were introduced to the world of lobbyism which takes place in brussels, allowing them to understand that a lobby can come from any interest group, such as AEGEE-Europe itself as a student organisation. What followed was the opportunity to discuss pro's and con's of the European Union where participants used the previously gained knowledge and the one taken from the workshop to discuss specific topics such as the budget, the erasmus programme and so on.

Citizenship Education

For having active citizens citizenship education is needed. This is a quiet vague field, nevertheless an important one - and is also one of AEGEE-Europe's [focus areas](#). In this workshop the participants were introduced to the concept and how it can be put into practice. The importance of citizenship education was supposed to become clear in the "Citizenship Tower" game. Every group had to build a tower together but lacked major characteristics of a functioning society. The point was to make the participants understand that a society can work only when it all fulfills all aspects of citizenship. To learn this citizenship education is needed. It consists of many different aspects such as media literacy, human rights or conflict resolutions. The participants discovered them through a short game of charades.



There are different approaches to learn citizenship, e.g. in formal or non-formal education. The participants discussed yes-no questions after finding the spot corresponding with their opinion on an invisible line. In a brainstorming session, many aspects concerning different target groups, methods, stakeholders, learning places and competencies were brought up. Different target groups, especially unusual suspects were discussed more in detail. The participants of the Convention belong to an easy to reach group but there are many people who are harder to reach with educational activities. The participants had to develop an educational program for older migrants and one for young children with low socioeconomic status. Lastly, the participants reflected on their civic competences to work on them in the future.

Partners Meeting

For a more sustainable project management, for a more efficient results harvest, and for many more reasons, our [partners](#) were invited to join us in our Final Conference. In a mix of parallel and combined sessions, everyone got the chance to get to know each other, to share and learn from each other.

We were happy to welcome representatives from the European Parliament, POLIS180, the European Youth Forum, European Movement Italy and AEGEE.

Projects Fair

The first part of the before-mentioned sharing included a Projects Fair - in which every partner got the chance to present themselves, their project or campaign for the European Parliament elections and to answer questions. Over two morning sessions, interesting presentations showed the differences - but also similarities - between our different approaches.



World Café: Dialogue with Youth

To give everyone the chance to get a more personal insight into our partner's organisations and campaigns, a world café was organised. The participants and representatives from partner organisations spread to five café tables. After some time they rotated between the tables so that all groups talked to all partner organisations. During the time the people have together, the work styles, the connection to young people - but also anything else that came up - was discussed.

Michael Piccinino, board member of the European Youth Forum, explained the concept of it as an umbrella organisation representing young people in Europe. The participants discussed with Michael what common problems unit Youth in Europe which he named to be unemployment, exchanged arguments on voting at 16 and what they wished to lobby for in the future which is environment and social policy.

Similar discussions happened within the other groups too.

Discussion with Policy Makers

One of the main aims in Y Vote events is to create a dialogue between young people and policy makers. For this final conference, not only our partners joined, but our patron Brando Benifei also made time for an especially intimate session: Beer with an MEP.



Due to the time constraints that one of these discussions usually have the participants collectively chose four Recommendations from Our Agenda for Europe that were presented and discussed with Mr. Benifei - one of the youngest members of the European Parliament with an age of only 33. Although the first discussions were a back-and-forth of ideas and appreciation for each other's work, the intimate and relaxed atmosphere allowed also for critical questions and answers from both participants and Mr. Benifei. Challenging questions for the future were posed such as: Is a doubling of the funds for Erasmus+ enough? Are centralized calls for Erasmus-funding the future, especially for European-wide NGOs? Should there be youth quotas on the ballots for all elections?

The fruitful atmosphere allowed participants to approach other topics close to their hearts, and their future. Is the [Europe 2030](#) feasible? The Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and more are nice but we have high goals for the future and don't even reach our current goals, was said. Nevertheless, climate is high on everyone's agenda, especially the young people.

Project Hub: Social Campaigns

The evening of the Friday and the whole of Saturday was intended to prepare the participants to create their own campaigns and give them a jumpstart to do something creative when coming back to their own cities. Firstly, the participants were grouped and given a series of case studies. One had that the government was Prohibiting abortion, another group was given the topic the Reduction of Erasmus+ from the European Commission the last group got the case that the city council banned LGBTQ+ pride and the last had a country with High regional youth unemployment. The participants were then give one and a half hours to create a basic campaign by following a simple structure that we gave them.

This required the groups to try to understand why a certain government or interest group acts a certain way as well as why the topics we gave them were important for youth. After they were required to plan what kind of a campaign style they wanted to use, what resources they needed, where they would gather support, what the outcomes should be and what the possible risks could be.



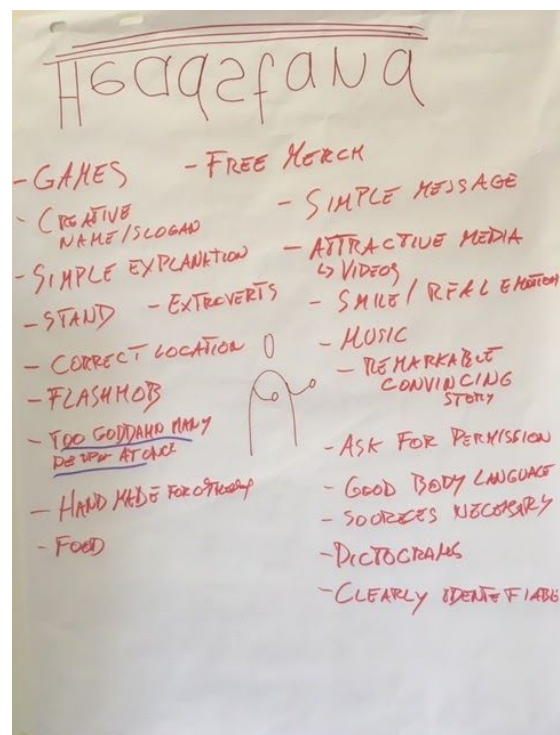
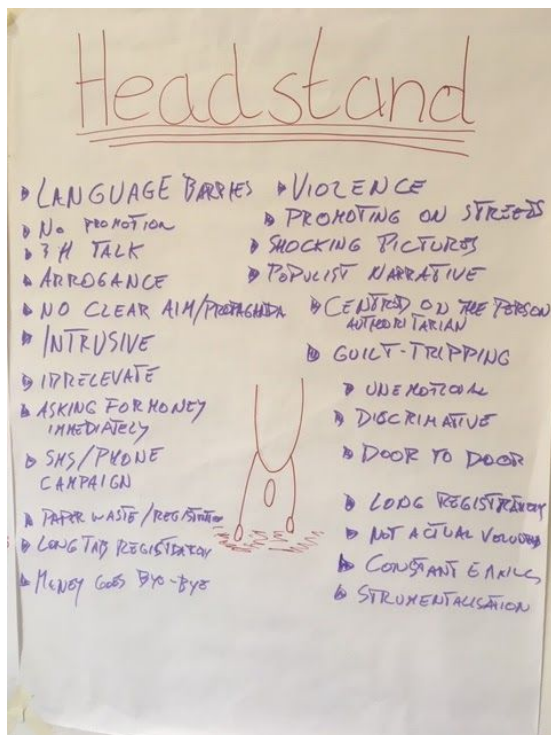
All groups opted to mainly base their campaigns on social media and petitions, almost all also decided that street actions would be extremely effective to involve people. Half of the groups suggested that they seek support with international institutions which could attempt to force a change from a top-bottom methods.

Creative Methods

The creative methods workshop started with a short attempt at improv theater, where participants were encouraged to stop a scene and step into it creating new environments.

We followed this up with a reflection on what methods one should not use when going on the street and trying to convince people to join one's cause. The participants emphasised their annoyance and non creativeness of non-personal approaches such as phone and sms campaigns.

It was also very important to them that when one does street actions that they should not be too intrusive, many times social campaigns as they are rely on people with stands on streets actively trying to get people into conversations, however they insist too much and rather annoy people than convince them to join their cause. The decision of one who is not interested in the first moment should be respected, the personal space should be maintained and not invaded.



After that was the reflection on what would work and what could be used to make an effective campaign, here the participants clearly valued interactivity, it is not just enough to have someone who bombards you with information, it is just dry and that is to be avoided. In addition to that, they put a lot of importance on identifiability, a common jumper, shirt or just design, showing that a singular person is actually part of a group and not just a random person. Simple messages and easily understandable infographics were also quite popular as that would allow one to understand the campaigns better

Street Actions

Last but not least we presented participants with various possible methods that were used by participants in different Conventions for street actions. Out of all of them they selected a clear and quantifiable method. They brainstormed yes/no questions about Europe that could be asked to people in the streets of Torino. After they reduced them to four questions.

The resulting questions were: Are you going to vote in the EU elections? Do you feel European? Do you think your vote matters? And last but not least Do you have trust in the future of Europe?



Participants then split into groups, all having at least one Italian speaker in case translation was needed. They then proceeded to take a flipchart on which they wrote the question and drew the relative fields for yes and no.

They then took post-its and pens, this was to allow anybody who was willing to partake in this question to add or write whatever they wanted to add to the conversation and most importantly adding to the unique experience of the participants. The participants were then left in a busy part of the city and given around an hour to collect all the opinions they could. The results were astonishing, people were very willing to answer.



Our Agenda for Europe

The drafting process

In the previous thematic Y Vote Conventions participants were asked to brainstorm various topics which fitted to the themes of that Convention. These ideas were then grouped together into various overarching clusters. The participants then were able to vote on these various clusters so that they could effectively work together in not too small or big groups. Participants were then allowed to work together in whatever group worked on a cluster.

Following this, the groups were give around one and a half hours to specify and draft a first draft. This would then undergo various stages of feedback given by other participants as well as the trainers. In the end the Recommendations were finalised in with the whole group.

It is important, however, to recognise the fact that the methods used varied from Convention to Convention even if the base structure stayed the same.



During the Convention in Torino the method was very similar except that the topics were substitutes with the already written Recommendations of all the Conventions, the participants could rearrange Recommendations as there were quite a few that fit into multiple topics and fit best into the topics of other Conventions rather than their original one.

The participants were then asked to come up with a priority list of 3-4 and make them more inclusive. Then all together votings on every Recommendations were used to ensure that everyone agreed on the result.

Preamble

During the last election period for the European Parliament, the participation of youth was disappointingly low. Only around 28% of young people went to the ballot boxes and made their voices heard through the casting of a vote.

The apathy of youth has made itself heard over and over in critical decisions that will shape the future of the European Union, if one takes the Brexit referendum about 43% of young voters 18-24 went to vote, following the trend of young people going to vote less and less. We all believe that the European Union can be changed for the better and we all believe in its positive role in our futures.

We believe that the youth has to make its voice heard. There are so many issues and so many problems which affect us young people on a daily basis that we cannot just stand by without giving our input. Only the youth can talk for itself and this is why we present you these recommendations for the betterment of the European Union.

The following Recommendations were edited, and voted on by:

Alex-Adrian Dărbăban, Alexandra Papp, Amira Khalil, Anne Sophie Puers, Daniel Cervera Martín, Diego Frizziero, Ece Mısırlı, Elisa Giunti, Farid Mönkemöller, Hasan Khalid, Irina Baci, Jacqueline Marzinzik, Julia Mayer, Kiki Kuiper, Marilena Höffmann, Marilena Mitre, Ola Mikłasińska, Sabela Virgós Abelleira, Samanta Glorya Pahole, Silvia Herrera Ojeda, Teodora Popa, Tim Milanez, Tomislav Popović, Una Vukotic, Valeria Santaterra and Verena Saccani

Recommendations on Employment & Entrepreneurship

1. We strongly encourage the EU to increase the visibility and accessibility of EU programmes and application processes by implementing a common platform.
2. We strongly encourage the EU to launch and establish a programme and to provide it with economic support so that entrepreneurs might be provided with strategic, legal and financial advice by the experts.
3. We strongly encourage the EU to provide language and soft skill certificates for the youth participating in EU programmes in order to improve transnational recognition of their skills.
4. We strongly encourage the EU to ban unpaid non compulsory internship, to make them accessible for all young people, regardless of their social, economic and educational background.

Recommendations on Creativity & Culture

1. We suggest that the EU support the cooperation between media entities of different European countries in order to foster cultural diversity and transnational cooperation.
2. We strongly encourage the EU to create a platform to connect emerging and established professionals within the cultural industry, in order to provide mentoring and create common projects.
3. We strongly encourage the EU to educate its citizens on cultural diversity implemented in formal and non-formal education.

Recommendations on Education & Training

1. We strongly encourage the European Union to increase funding for projects aimed at increasing media literacy and to support educational institutions, civil society organisations and other relevant parties to take part in educational projects on this issue.
2. We strongly recommend to increase funding and promotion of relevant programmes that enable pupils of all age groups, educational and economic backgrounds as well as teachers to participate in short and long term exchanges between schools, of members and partner countries of the EU.
3. We strongly encourage the European Union to enable training opportunities for teachers on emotional intelligence and soft skills, in order to pass down these competences to the pupils.
4. We suggest that the European Union promote the conversion of Conventional education resources into interactive digital tools, and raise awareness about existing educational materials, on civic education and the other key competences, for formal and non-formal education.

Recommendations on Participation in Civil Society

1. We recommend that the European Union inform citizens about the importance of independent media, avoiding hate speech and recognising fake news by providing non-formal education and awareness raising campaigns.
2. We encourage the EU to coordinate and fund a platform that provides space for discussion among diverse social groups, promoting European values and strengthening social cohesion.
3. We recommend that the EU support NGOs and EU institutions to share best practices, create exchanges and projects that set a positive standard, with non-EU countries that play a major role in environmental issues.

Recommendations on Social Inclusion

1. We encourage the EU to implement funded programs between NGOs and schools to promote education on gender equality and raise awareness.
2. We recommend the EU to expand the projects that encourage voluntary work for school students, providing them with necessary tools and supervisors in order to promote active citizenship.
3. We strongly encourage the EU to improve accessibility to public institutions for everyone according to the European Convention of Human Rights.
4. We encourage the EU to establish a common electoral system for European Parliament elections based on a proportional vote or directly elected candidates, in order to promote democracy and representation.

Recommendations on Youth & the World

1. We recommend the EU to create a standardized recognition process to improve well-being of asylum seekers and refugees in the European Union.
2. We recommend the EU to further support humanitarian aid projects in non-EU countries by increasing funding of locally organized initiatives and fostering volunteering practices.
3. We recommend the EU to increase funds for certification schemes ensuring adequate working conditions regarding the production of imported goods.
4. We recommend the EU to improve the effectiveness in which the rule of law is protected and implemented inside the EU borders.

Recommendations on Health & Well-Being

1. We strongly encourage the EU to support the related stakeholders on the topic of mental health as a part of both formal and non-formal education through monetary and consultative means.
2. We strongly encourage the EU to advocate for the integration of mental health support in every national health system.
3. We strongly encourage the EU to support projects concerning sexual health education, consent, gender equality, LGBTQI+ and patient rights; to provide contraception and anonymous STD-testing, and offer platforms for victims of violence and harassment.
4. We strongly encourage the EU to promote greener infrastructure and to increase the accessibility and availability of public spaces, sport facilities and transportation.

Results in numbers

27

Participants

5

Days

14

Different nationalities

22

Years old on average

28%

is the average increase in knowledge
about the EU Institutions.

33%

Members of AEGEE

96%

Have had the chance to vote

96%

Of these people did vote

More than 94% of participants...

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

...(strongly) agree that the political institutions are of importance.

...(strongly) agree that they gained new knowledge about the EU and its institutions due to the workshops.

...(strongly) agree that the EU is of importance on an individual and societal level and that the gained knowledge will help in their future life.

...(strongly) agree that they are motivated to increase their participation.

...think that active participation of citizens is important or even mandatory.

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

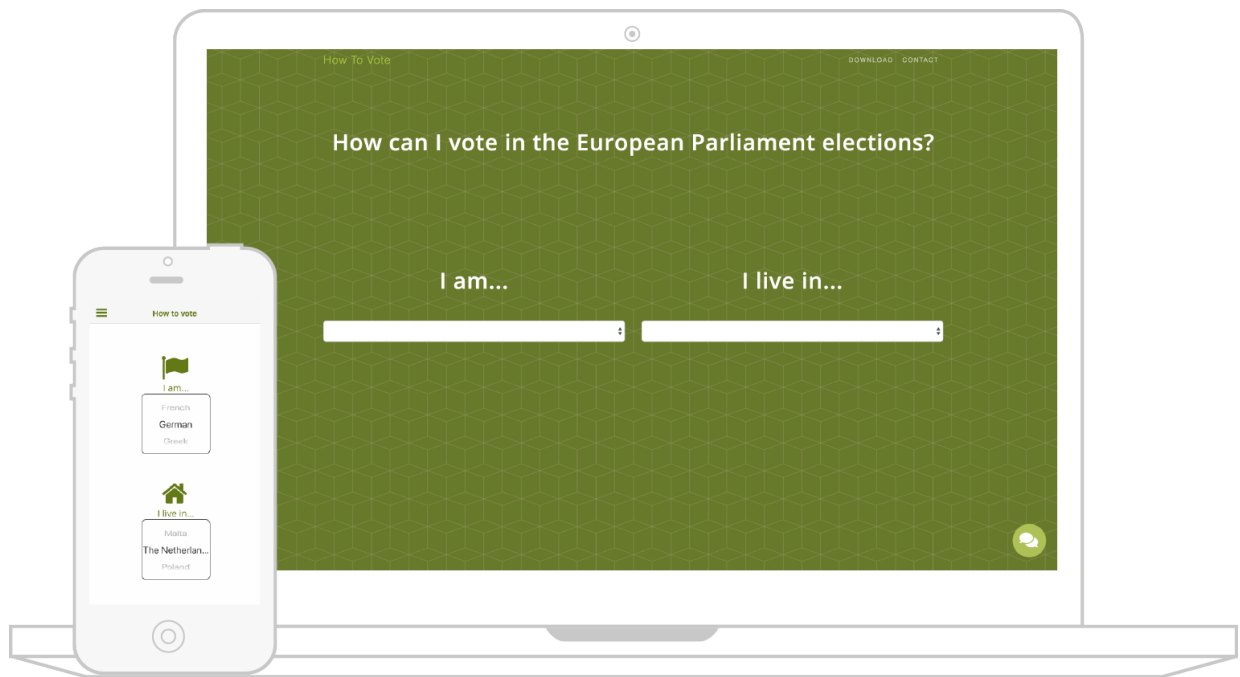
- EDUOpinions
- The European Youth Forum (YFJ)
- Young European Federalists (JEF)
- Erasmus Student Network (ESN)
- European Movement International (EMI)
- This Time I'm Voting – The official campaign of the European Parliament
- The European Parliament
- POLIS 180
- #MEGACampaign by the European Civic Forum
- Eyes on Europe
- World Organisation of the Scout Movement
- EU40

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



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



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Y VOTE FINAL CONFERENCE
TORINO, ITALY

WWW.YVOTE.EU
WWW.AEGEE.ORG