

EUROPE CAFÉ

**YOUTH PARTICIPATION
IN DEMOCRACY**

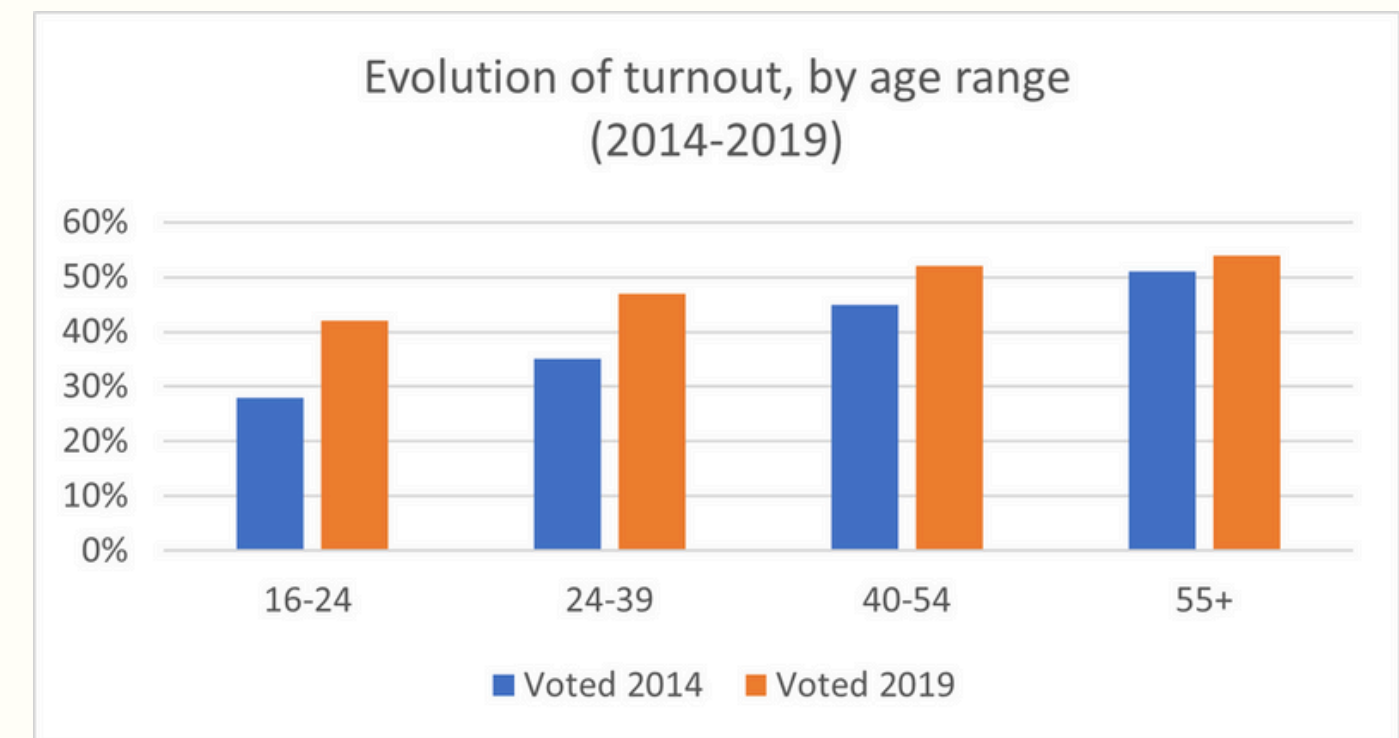
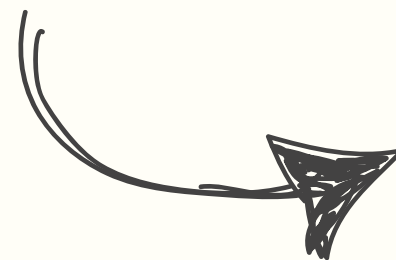
yvote





THE CONTEXT

- *"Young people don't vote, they're not interested in politics"*
- young people feel **underrepresented** by political institutions & their voices are **rarely reflected** in decision-making processes
- yet, in in **2019**, we had a **record turnout** in the European Elections, which was driven by young people





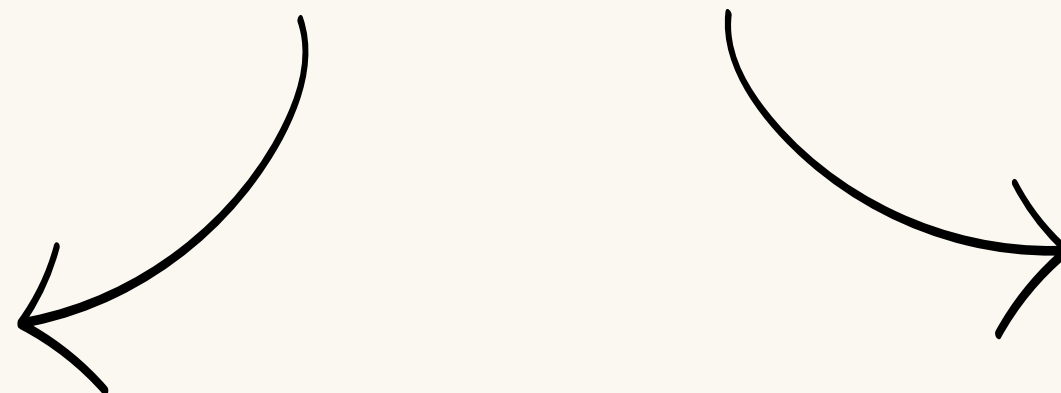
YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

*any activity that shapes, affects, or
involves the political sphere*

EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership

FORMAL PROCESSES

voting, participation in
political parties and their
youth wings, and running for
office



NON-TRADITIONAL FORMS

activism, protests and grassroots
movements to advocate for
change, volunteering in NGOs,
joining councils, parliaments and
events



FROM OUR RESEARCH

- in 2024, the Y Vote Team of AEGEE-Europe did a survey and wrote a policy paper on increasing youth participation in elections
- we asked young people a few questions and the results:

81%

always vote in
elections and
referendums

35%

occasionally
engage in non-
traditional forms

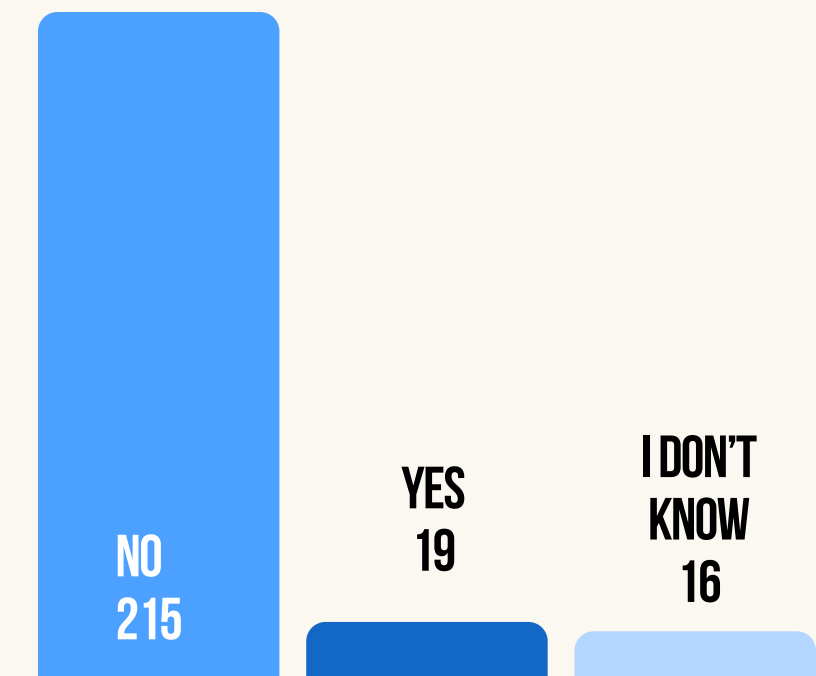


Figure 2: Do you feel that current political leaders in your country represent the interests of young people?



WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE VOTE

- to ensure that existing policies reflect the issues most relevant to them: **climate change, education, and social justice and human rights** as their primary areas of concern
- motivated by a sense of public duty to participate in elections (77% of respondents)
- to prevent right-wing extremist politicians from gaining power
- to challenge the status quo and advocate for systemic change
- to support a specific candidate (30.5%)



YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO BE MORE ACTIVE

- Increased transparency in decision-making (54%)
- clearer communication from political parties and candidates (50%)
- regular events and meetings with elected politicians
- more information on how young people can get involved in political processes
- the presence of a political party that accurately represents their views and values



DO YOUNG PEOPLE GET INVOLVED IN DEMOCRACY?



LET'S DISCUSS

- Do you usually vote in elections? Why or why not?
- What issues do you think young people care about the most when voting?
- What could institutions, schools, or NGOs/AEGEE do better to support young people's political engagement?
- Have you ever taken part in civic or political activities beyond voting (e.g. petitions, protests, campaigns)? If yes, why?

y

THANK YOU!

