



EU Children's Participation Platform
Second Consultation

OUR DEMOCRACY, OUR CHOICE

Summary of what children said

March-May 2024

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

Democracy means that everyone, including children, can have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Between March and May 2024, children from all over the European Union shared their thoughts about how democracy works for them.



We must be in all spaces where policies are designed that directly affect us.

-Child from Spain

WHO PARTICIPATED?



1,921 children from **23 EU countries** answered questions about their experiences and ideas on democracy in an online survey.



28 children & 3 young activists took part in interviews.



122 children discussed the topic in focus groups.



The Platform's Children's Panel advised on the survey topics.

WHAT DID THE CHILDREN SAY?

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE PLACES

What children said

- Children understand democratic participation as being informed, heard, and able to vote.
- There are more opportunities in cities than in the countryside.
- Older children feel more motivated to participate than younger children.
- Adapt: not enough consideration is given to children at national/EU level (more at local one).

What children want

- To be more invited to participate in or contribute to adult spaces like local, national, EU councils where decisions directly affecting them are made.
- Safe spaces where children feel included, accepted and can express their opinions freely to make a difference in important issues like discrimination and helping their communities.
- Adults to help and mentor children to participate in decision-making.



Safe space

Platforms where children can safely discuss their problems and seek advice from peers and professionals .



There is no debate club in my city at the moment, but I am actively working on this issue to make it happen. When I lived in the city, I was a member of the debate club.

-Child from Lithuania

INFLUENCING DECISIONS

What children said

- Children care about influencing decisions that directly affect their lives like school rules and local community activities.

What children want

- To let children help make school rules, choose exam dates, and find ways to stop bullying.
- To get feedback on their ideas.
- To know if and how adults use children's ideas, what happens with their proposals and the results of their participation.



Environmental Projects

Children want schools and communities to organise more projects focusing on sustainability and protecting the environment.

GETTING INFORMATION

What children said

- Children get information from family, friends, school, social media, and the internet.
- Children like to get information before taking part in activities so that they can prepare and get ready.
- Children know about misinformation and want to help fight it.

What children want

- To know more about democratic participation opportunities through schools, social media, and community groups.
- Schools to play a bigger role in sharing information about democratic participation opportunities.
- Accessible, child-friendly and clear information.
- To learn more about fake news and how children and adults can deal with it, for example how to check information and use trusted sources.
- Adults to stop spreading fake news and instead talk about how important it is to fight misinformation.



...when you create a song, a television program or an online video, you can inform children on how to create a better world together.

-Child from the Netherlands

VOTING

What children said

- Some children want to lower the voting age while others are not sure about children being mature enough with enough information to vote.
- Learning about democracy in schools is important to make wise choices when voting.
- Children need more information and encouragement to participate in democracy.

What children want

- To talk more about democracy in schools.
- More education about voting, democracy, democratic institutions and political processes at an early age.
- To be encouraged to join in decision-making by showing what children can learn and gain from taking part in democracy.



School Parliaments

Many children suggested having student councils or parliaments where they can discuss and vote on school issues.



The best thing about the student s council s petition was how the teachers started to understand us, stand on our side and how our voices were finally heard.

-Focus group from Hungary



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