



# EU CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION PLATFORM

**CREATE, PLAN, PARTICIPATE**

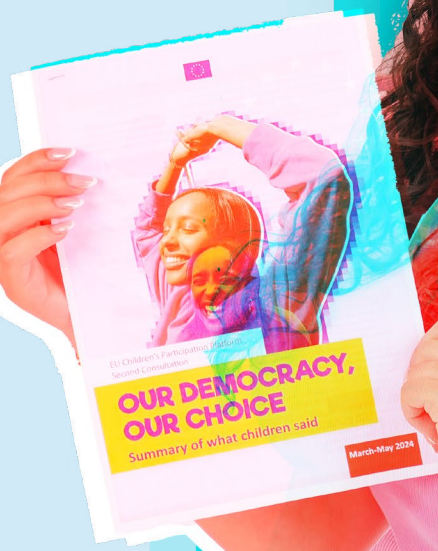
**1ST WORKING MEETING**

27-28 June 2024

**REPORT**



**#EUChildParticipation**





# WHAT WAS THIS MEETING ABOUT?

On June 27-28, the EU Children's Participation Platform (the Platform for short) held its first working meeting in Brussels with 36 children from across Europe between the ages of 11-17.

We looked at what the Platform did over the last two years – see the [Work Plan 2023-2024](#) and we planned the next Work Plan (2025-2026).

Children participated in workshops and discussions about the Platform and talked with adults about the European Commission (the Commission for short). Children also discussed important topics they care about and the Platform should work on.

The meeting was prepared and facilitated by members of the Children's Panel (the Panel for short). **Aurora** (Lithuania), **Eyman** (Sweden), **Gabriel** (Sweden), **Gabrielius** (Lithuania), **Luisa** (Germany), **Maria** (Romania), **Naya** (The Netherlands), **Tea** (Croatia), **Yassmin** (Spain) and **Zahira** (Spain) took a lead in co-moderating the sessions, introducing interactive games and team building activities. They also helped record the meeting with videos and interviews.

**The Platform** works on strengthening child participation all over Europe, encourages children to be active citizens and members of democratic societies. Learn more about our activities on the Platform's website and about this meeting on this [dedicated page](#).

**The Children's Panel** is the Platform's co-creation group whose valuable input helps shape the design and implementation of the [Platform's activities](#).



# WHAT DID WE DO IN 2023-2024

*Objectives: To review what has worked, what could be improved, and what else could be done*

## KICKING OFF THE MEETING

Tea and Aurora and Marie-Cécile Rouillon from the Commission co-moderated the first day. Yassmin presented the Platform and its activities over the last two years: the [first General Assembly](#), [Advisory Board](#) meetings, and the consultations and online meetings on [feeling safe](#) and [democracy](#).

## ABOUT CHILD RIGHTS

A Commission guest, Iris Abraham from the cabinet of Vice-President Dubravka Šuica joined a discussion with Naya from the Panel. Iris responded to Naya's questions and confirmed the EU's ongoing commitment to children's rights. She explained how the EU elections work and that there will soon be a new person named to look after rights and justice in the EU for the next five years. Also, Member States need to take action based on the European Child Guarantee.



Naya shared that children were concerned about the large number of votes for extremist parties during the elections and that it is important to better prepare and involve young people in decision-making.

## CHILDREN CREATING THEIR PLATFORMS

Children worked in six groups and built their own 'platforms' to help discuss the Platform's activities, and shared their views on the topics represented by each of the six pillars:



# ACTIVITIES, INFORMATION AND GROUPS

	ACTIVITIES that could help children participate in government decisions and Platform activities	INFORMATION that children want about the EU and the Platform, and how to communicate with them	GROUPS that children like working in and feel included in, and how children work together in-person and online
What children said	<p>The Platform should be inclusive and offer activities for all children, of all ages.</p> <p>Group work and in-person meetings, visiting EU institutions, lots of discussions at local, national and international level, interactive games and teambuilding activities are the ways forward!</p> <p>Government funded projects, peer mentoring and mixed discussions between children and adults are also important.</p> <p>More meetings led by children, and including more children.</p>	<p>Children want to know how to join the Platform, its origin story, and what child representation is.</p> <p>Children want to learn about the EU, laws and policy-making, what the EU does for children, why, how and on what the EU works,</p> <p>Information should be shared through games, cartoons and interactive formats.</p> <p>The Platform could help children share about EU participation in their countries.</p>	<p>Children are part of many groups, such as sport and school groups, councils, movements etc.</p> <p>Children can work better online if there are clear goals, interactive and dynamic sessions, games and groupwork,</p> <p>Include children in groups, and adults should listen to and communicate with children more and take them seriously.</p> <p>Decision-makers should talk with children more often.</p>





# HOW TO COMMUNICATE CHANGE TO CHILDREN

Together with child participation experts **Laura** and **Lotte**, the children discussed how they feel about the changes made from the input they provide, and how they want this to be communicated to them. The discussion was based on a poster that showed what children said during the [consultation on feeling safe](#) and how the Commission used that input.

Children said that the information on the poster could be more child-friendly by:

- Presenting information with less text and more fun fonts
- Using more colours and visuals
- Using simpler, child-friendly language
- Publishing information online instead of printing posters

## WEBSITE, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

**Jane** from the Commission presented the work done by the website co-creation team and other child members of the Platform. Their suggestions on content categories, the visual look and feel, using less text and more interactive formats are guiding the development of the [Platform's website](#).

The children then chose to join one of three workshops:

- 1. Advocacy – with Lauren from the European Youth Forum (EYF for short):** Children discussed how to influence people in power to make a change. Each child shared an area of change they would like to influence in their countries. Based on the [Advocacy Handbook](#), they looked at the main steps of advocacy: how to choose what to change, find solutions and decide the best methods. Some of the methods were writing a letter, meeting with a decision-maker, organising an information meeting and creating a petition. Lauren shared an advocacy example of the EYF's campaign to lower the voting age to 16 in all elections across Europe.
- 2. Communication – with Jose, a young influencer, singer and activist:** Children shared that social media, online search and school are all good platforms for communicating with children. They suggested sharing information about the Platform at school events, social media and different workshops. Videos and interviews also capture the attention of young people. Children also shared that they trust information from family, friends, and parents the most. They are curious to hear what adults think but said that children need opportunities to voice their own concerns as well.
- 3. Engaging younger children – with Cath and Tove, child participation experts from the Secretariat:** Children under 12 said that they use social media and video channels. Therefore, influencers running workshops in schools and sharing informative, fun videos about the Platform could be good ways to engage with younger children!



# WHAT TO DO IN 2025-2026

*Objectives: To share and discuss children's priorities and proposals for the future work of the Platform*

## PLANNING THE FUTURE

**Naya** and **Gabrielius** and **Marie-Cécile** co-moderated the second day. Children continued working in groups to discuss their preferences for the Platform's future work, and the topics they felt important to be covered. Ideas that children had shared in the first General Assembly and Advisory Board meetings were also included with these ideas.

## WHAT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORKS ON

Adults from the Commission came to speak about different areas of the Commission's work and how they are connected to children. The discussion was co-moderated by **Aurora** and **Marta** from the Commission.

### Safety online and cyberbullying:



- **Marie-Cécile** from DG JUST (Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers)
- **Greta** from DG CONNECT (The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology)

The Commission agrees that adults should work better together, using children's suggestions on how to better protect them, to respect diversity, and to create safer online and physical places. Prevention, and making and implementing plans at local, national and international levels is very important.

The Commission helps to make sure that the digital world is accessible and safe for children by creating new rules to better protect privacy and safety online, including search engines and social media. They also have a [plan to improve the online environment](#), make the internet safer and give support when help is needed on online matters.

### Poverty and inclusion:



- **Stefan** from DG EMPL (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)

1/4 of European children live at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The Commission works on prevention, helping to make sure that parents have good jobs which bring money and make them happy. The Commission published a [recommendation](#) for Member States on how to help families and children at risk of poverty and how to make sure that children have access to the key services, like healthcare.

## Well-being and education:



- **Oana** from DG EAC (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture)

The Commission recently introduced important [guidelines](#) on how to support well-being at school. Children need support to learn how to understand their emotions, respond to conflict, and to find the resources they need. Schools have a role to help children deal with anxiety and mental health issues. Teachers are an important part of this process and need to be supported as well.

## Funding:



- **Valeria** from DG JUST (DG JUST (Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers))

[The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme](#) (CERV for short) is a way that cities, universities and non-profit organisations can receive money from the Commission to work on topics that are important for children. How? First, there is a call. Then organisations apply by presenting their project ideas. After evaluation, the best projects get the money. Children could be involved in the next proposal and help the Commission's experts to understand what topics and projects are important for children.

## Climate change:



- **Elias** from DG CLIMA (Directorate-General for Climate Action)

The Commission helps to get young people engaged in climate action. They can do that by creating a network of children and young people who promote climate action in their communities. In 2024, there will be a new opportunity for young people to apply to become [Climate Pact Ambassadors](#). Children can do lots of things for the climate! They can organise a Peer Parliament, a discussion with other children; and there are toolkits online to see how to do this.

### More highlights

Children took part in a photo shoot for the Platform's new visual identity, and reviewed the new website. There was also a photo booth for them to make memories and a walking tour to explore Brussels.

Accompanying adults participated in workshops on how to improve the Platform and how the website is co-created with children.





# CHILDREN'S PRIORITIES

After discussing what they heard from the Commission, the children chose the most important topics by voting. In groups, they then created short pitch talks and posters about these topics to present back to everyone:

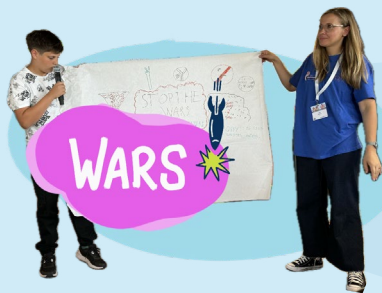


## 1. Environment

Stop wildfires and take care of the environment, so that the effect of the climate change is less!

## 2. Education

Children need more teachers and a modern approach to learning. Children should be taught important and practical things that lead to getting a job.



## 3. Wars

Wars need to stop as there are children involved. We need to bring peace to the world. Communities and countries impacted by wars should receive money and support to rebuild.

## 4. Mental and physical health

A healthy mind in a healthy body! The two are connected. All children need free access to sports, including disabled children. Help from adults should be accessible for children, such as through school healthcare assistants.



## 5. Child's rights

All children should be taught about children's rights and how to use them.

## 6. Discrimination

We should stop unfair treatment of different groups. One solution is to talk about discrimination to policymakers and point out that what they say has an impact.



## 7. Poverty

A child cannot learn when they are hungry. Children who are at risk of poverty should get free meals. No one should be excluded socially or treated differently. Inclusion is key.

## 8. Online safety

Safety on social media is important. Issues like online bullying need to be fixed. You can talk to teachers about online safety.



## 9. Participation in politics

Politicians should engage with younger people more. Important topics to work on are giving the chance to children to vote at 16, making politics more informal and inclusive, and supporting youth organisations so even younger members can be leaders.

# CONCLUSION

The closing session was co-moderated by Naya and Gabrielius and Ingrid from the Commission. Ingrid shared her happiness and enthusiasm about the great work done on the Platform over the first two years and thanked all the children and adults who made it possible.

The work done by the children during the meeting will help create the Platform's next two-year plan:

- The Work Plan 2025-2026 will be developed by the Commission and the Platform's Secretariat, incorporating children's proposals.
- The Children's Panel will review the plan, and the Advisory Board will approve it.
- The Secretariat will inform children if any of their proposed topics are not included and explain why.

**WE ARE EXCITED TO START TWO MORE YEARS OF IMPORTANT WORK WITH AND FOR EU CHILDREN!**

For more information, photos and videos, please visit the [Platform's website](#).





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