





A SUCCESFUL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

The 6th Advisory Board Meeting, held from 22 to 25 March 2025 in Brussels, was a truly special event. "We got to express different opinions on things that are important to us. We try to be as suggestive with our problems as possible, so the Platform can improve." – Maria

DURING THIS MEETING WE:

- 1. Reviewed the Work Plan 2025–2026.
- 2. Tested the **Democracy Toolkit** and **Welcome pack**.
- 3. Provided feedback on a new consultation.
- 4. Brainstormed ideas for the General Assembly.
- **5.** Met with **Commissioner Micallef** (child members).

WELCOMING BACK THE CHILD MEMBERS

We were so happy to welcome back the current members of the Advisory Board:

Elisabet (Estonia)

Maria (Romania)

Javier (Spain)

Daniel (Greece)

Ryan (Cyprus)

Léonie (France)

(| Aleksandar (Ireland)

Alexandra (Slovakia)

Unfortunately, this time **Tea** was unable to attend, but remains an active part of the group.

AS WELL AS THE ADULT MEMBERS

Marie Cecile Rouillon (European Commission)

Marta Kuljon (European Commission)

Jane Banham (European Commission)

Marianna Musial (European Parliament)

Emilio Puccio (EP Intergroup on the Rights of the Child)

Anna Laure Beaulieu (Council of Europe)

Laure Pailleau (Children's Rights Action Group (CRAG), Eurochild)

Mathilda Diaz (CRAG), QUEST)

Suzanne Garcia Imbernon (European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC))

Chloë Cauchi (European Youth Forum)

Noemi de Luca (Save the Children)

Lidia Giglio (SOS Children's Villages)

Three Days of Collaboration

DAY 1 GETTING READY

The younger Board members worked together to review and adapt the agenda, ensuring it was clear, accessible, and engaging for all.

They also took part in a creative brainstorm on how new members could be welcomed to the Platform, using drawing, video, and storytelling. They then reviewed a first version of a Welcome pack giving valuable feedback on the format, visual design, wording and topics covered.



The day ended with preparation for the meeting with Commissioner Micallef. Children identified the seven most important topics they wanted to raise:

- Democracy and participation
- Exploitation
- Safety
- Mental health
- Children in care
- Education
- After-school activities



IDEAS IN ACTION

REVIEWING THE WORK PLAN

Board Members used quizzes, group discussions, and presentations to assess how the Platform has progressed so far. The priorities in the 2025–2026 Work Plan were:

- Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Online Safety
- Climate Action

TESTING THE DEMOCRACY TOOLKIT

Led by Alexandra, Daniel, Maria, and Javier, the AB tested five of the Toolkit activities using a live voting system.

Overall feedback

- 57% "Wow, this looks awesome!"
- 43% "Looks cool, I want to test it more"

Top-rated activity: Disinformation Detectives

Feedback:

- Make it mobile-friendly
- Add more follow-up materials
- Include examples of real child changemakers
- Ensure strong visuals and inclusive design

[&]quot;We saw how our feedback helped create the Plan." – Maria

[&]quot;I like it because it has fun games and great visuals." – Aleksandar

CONSULTATION: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Led by Leonie and Elisabet, the AB tested a child-friendly version of the consultation using the Child Guarantee Game.

Suggestions to make consultations more engaging and accessible for all ages:

- Use simplified, child-friendly language
- Include visuals and storytelling to explain complex topics
- Involve children and young people as peer facilitators or co-presenters
- Offer short explainer videos alongside games or questionnaires
- Allow responses to be shared through drawings, recordings, or creative formats
- Use interactive tools (like digital polls, quizzes, and games)
- Make the consultation feel like a conversation, not a test

IDEAS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The AB shared ideas to make the upcoming General Assembly meaningful and welcoming:

- Use of theatre, music, and creative expression
- A Human Library where adults and children share stories
- Icebreakers that help children connect and feel safe
- Outdoor games and sport activities

Creative closing options (voted by children):

- A video message
- A call to action
- A collaborative creative piece

"Games help children feel less anxious." – Léonie





MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER MICALLEF

The final day was dedicated to a child-led conversation with Commissioner Micallef. Maria kicked off with a fun icebreaker to draw each other's faces. It had everyone laughing and set the stage for a relaxed discussion.

"Easily, it's the best icebreaker I've ever seen." – Commissioner Micallef

After that each child asked a question on a topic they felt strongly about. Their words reflected real experiences from their communities and their hopes for change.



DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COMMISSIONER

Democracy and Participation

Elisabet: "How do you make sure that children's voices are not only heard, but also that adults take action?"

Commissioner Micallef explained that children's ideas need to be included from the very beginning, not as an extra, but as a core part of policy-making. "We are trying as hard as we can to make sure that everything we do about children, we do with children and young people. Your ideas help shape how we work - not just what we say."

Exploitation

Daniel: "In Greece, I see companies selling unhealthy things to children just to make money. Social media does this too. How will the EU stop it?"

The Commissioner said that protecting children from this kind of exploitation is a shared responsibility. The EU is working on laws and public education that promote safe choices and stronger regulation. He added, "We have to work together — with governments, civil society, and platforms — to stop harmful practices before they reach young people."

Safety

Aleksandar: "... vapes, drugs, alcohol and even child abduction. I think these are very big problems regarding safety for children. How can we make our spaces safe? Could there be community centres or child-friendly police?"

The Commissioner acknowledged the importance of local safety and stressed the need for education and trust-building at every level. "I think we have to educate people. It's not about rules chasing people – real safety should come naturally from the way we treat each other and support communities."

Mental Health and Online Safety

Alexandra and Léonie:

"Will there be rules linking mental health to online safety?"

"Why don't children know more about mental health strategies?"

Commissioner Micallef shared that this issue is a major priority. The Commission is currently working on an **EU Action Plan on Cyberbullying**, which will include steps to improve mental health awareness, promote safe online behaviours, and provide better support in schools and communities. "The way we have to approach the online safety is not by trying to stop young people from being online or using the internet. Especially after Covid, we know how it's important it is to talk to other. So we need safe spaces offline too, like sports, arts, and youth centres"

> Children in Care

Rayan: "Many children in care don't get enough support. There aren't enough trained people. And what happens when they turn 18? Can the EU promote family-based care?"

The Commissioner agreed that care systems need to feel like home. He stressed the importance of stable, nurturing environments, even after children become adults. "We want children in care to live normal lives, with access to education, health care, and support beyond the age of 18."

Education

Javier: "How do you make sure all children are included in education and have the same chances?"

Commissioner Micallef explained that while the EU doesn't run national school systems, it works with Member States to improve inclusion and quality across Europe. He said, "We push for fairness. No child should be left behind."

After-school Activities

Maria: "We know school can be stressful. After-school clubs help us feel better, but they're expensive. How can the EU support access for everyone?"

The Commissioner gave an example from Poland, where schools stay open after hours with professional coaches and trainers in music, dance, and sport. "These are great models, and we want to help more countries make this a reality - for free."

The meeting ended on a high note, with a thank-you speech from Rayan. Children shared that this was the kind of conversation they wish happened more often - honest, respectful, and full of potential for change.

"We want our voices to make a difference. Today, they did." – Daniel



MEETING WITH MEP VERONIKA CIFROVÁ OSTRIHOŇOVÁ

Children met with MEP Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová and discussed the importance of more attention to children's mental health, coping with harmful content, and safer digital spaces for all young people.



REFLECTIONS AND FEEDBACK

What worked well:

- > Feeling respected and listened to
- > A balance between serious discussion and fun
- > Opportunities to lead sessions and shape the Platform
- Connection through music, games, and team spirit

Suggestions for improvement:

- > More time for discussion and reflection
- > More outdoor or physical activities
- > Rotate groups more often
- > Share topics in advance

"I like discussing my ideas with children but also having feedback from adults. When presenting, it helps to be supported by another child." – Javier



The ideas shared during the meeting will:

- > Improve the Democracy Toolkit.
- > Improve the Welcome pack.
- > Help shape the General Assembly.
- Influence how consultations are run.



#EUChildParticipation



