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Youth involvement in social and civil dialogue in the Mediterranean region

(own-initiative opinion)

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1. Conclusions and recommendations

1.1. This opinion was drawn up together with youth representatives. The EESC recommends involving young people in all stages of the policy-making process, from decision-making to the implementation and evaluation of policies. It is vital to implement robust monitoring, feedback and accountability mechanisms at all stages.

1.2. Social and civil dialogue processes are a cornerstone of democratic participation. However, civil society organisations (CSOs), youth groups, employers' and workers' organisations face difficulties in effectively taking part in decision-making processes. Freedom of association, freedom of speech and, more generally, the capacity for entities representing workers and civil society to defend their rights and express their demands are limited in many MENA ([1]) countries. There is a need to support democratic processes that go beyond elections, creating meaningful participatory mechanisms characterised by civic freedom, transparency, accessibility to information and opportunities for all.

1.3. The experiences and circumstances of young people and youth-led organisations in the MENA region vary greatly. Mono-dimensional definitions of youth must be discarded by recognising the specific features of various youth groups and adopting an intersectional approach to avoid overlooking the geographical and socio-political diversity of young people.

1.4. The socio-economic situation of young people in the Mediterranean region (henceforth referred to as 'the region') is characterised by high levels of unemployment, atypical and informal employment, as well as low wages, a lack of quality jobs and high shares of youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The EESC emphasises the necessity to reform both the labour market and the education systems to address those issues.

([1]) Middle East and North Africa.

1.5. Groups coming from vulnerable backgrounds face additional challenges in terms of representation, access to opportunities, the labour market and other areas. The EESC stresses the need to design support programmes that reach out to these groups.

1.6. The EESC notes that education systems should more strongly promote civic engagement through participatory processes and create supportive ecosystems for the acquisition of appropriate skill sets (e.g. political and digital literacy) enabling young people to engage confidently in institutional processes. Civil society and social partner organisations should further support young people by providing capacity-building workshops, making it easier for them to connect with resources and opportunities for involvement.

1.7. Adequate research on youth is an important prerequisite for identifying challenges and including their interests in participatory processes, for which relevant data is needed. The EESC underlines the importance of research activities focusing on young people's involvement in the labour market, education, participatory processes and community life. Cooperation between educational institutions, academia, the business sector and CSOs including social partners must be strengthened, putting the active involvement of young people at the centre.

1.8. Countries in the region are often characterised by an absence of sufficient frameworks for an effective social dialogue. The EESC emphasises the necessity to reinforce tripartite and bipartite social dialogue, particularly through the comprehensive implementation of the pivotal ILO Conventions on social dialogue.

1.9. The EESC underlines the benefits of youth action plans, which could serve as roadmaps, with specific actions and tools for more inclusive organisational frameworks for youth participation in social partner organisations. Encouraging young workers to take part in collective bargaining and establishing youth-oriented representative structures at company level is an effective way of structurally embedding youth participation in social dialogue structures. The EESC highlights the Youth Trust Councils (YTC) in Austria.

1.10. The EESC calls on the European Commission to support a third phase of the SOLiD ([2]) project to ensure that the instruments developed are sustainably implemented. Moreover, this phase should be used to draw up a Youth Charter analogous to the existing Women's Charter, while also examining the establishment of youth-focused consultative mechanisms.

1.11. Civil dialogue should become more inclusive by engaging diverse groups – including women, minorities and vulnerable communities –through targeted financial support, as well as through more effective and interactive dialogue mechanisms facilitated by professional moderators and co-designed in collaboration with young people.

1.12. The representation of youth organisations and youth councils in discussions with state authorities should be increased by recognising youth workers as key players in consultation processes and providing them with the necessary space and resources to contribute effectively. It is important to develop youth strategies that strengthen the legitimacy of youth involvement in civil dialogue, establish youth councils in countries where they do not exist, and increase youth budgets at all territorial levels, especially at the local level.

1.13. Transparency and equal opportunities in civil dialogue should be prioritised by establishing clear selection criteria for youth participants and ensuring that both recognised youth associations and grassroots movements have a fair chance to engage. It is crucial to develop common standards and a comprehensive regulatory framework that includes dedicated support structures, such as teams and contact points, to ensure that youth involvement in dialogue processes is organised and consistent.

1.14. Youth-led structures must become more interconnected to foster regional cooperation and ensure a greater exchange of ideas and opportunities among heterogeneous groups. The EESC calls on public institutions to secure funding for the support of regional youth networks and youth spaces. Complementarily, it is important to strengthen youth organisations' involvement in the EU's external relations by promoting cooperation with EU delegations and by streamlining visa application procedures for young people in mobility programmes.

([2]) https://solidmed.eu/en.

2. **Background**

2.1. The EESC notes that young people are culturally, economically and politically heterogeneous. The experiences and circumstances of young people vary greatly, so mono-dimensional definitions of youth must be discarded by recognising the specific features of various youth groups and adopting an intersectional approach to avoid overlooking their geographical and socio-political diversity.

2.2. While many institutions and political organisations are built top-down and characterised by highly concentrated power structures, young people tend to be engaged in local bottom-up structures and grassroots movements, mostly around political issues that are subordinated on the political agenda (e.g. climate and social justice, political participation, minority rights, animal rights) ([3]).

2.3. The EESC recognises the various means of communication and forms of political activism commonly used by young people, including disengagement, the boycotting of institutionalised structures and the rejection of formal methods of political activism, which seems to be fuelled by political disillusionment rather than political apathy ([4]).

2.4. The socio-economic situation of young people in the region is characterised by high levels of unemployment, part-time atypical and informal employment, as well as low wages and a lack of quality jobs (including unpaid internships). The region suffers from relatively high shares of NEETs, reaching up to one third of the youth population. The current issue of inflation, as well as low purchasing power regarding housing and high rents, is a pressing issue for young people.

2.5. The high number of school dropouts, especially young women, and the high unemployment rates for graduates in the region indicate a lack of quality in the education systems, especially in rural areas, which fail to teach the necessary skills for the labour market. Accessibility constraints represent a significant challenge, as many families lack the resources to meet the costs of education. Furthermore, the share of highly skilled individuals among the migrating population from the region has increased, suggesting a brain drain.

2.6. The situation of youth representatives in the region is characterised by serious security issues and other obstacles. Moreover, young women, people with disabilities, refugees, migrants, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous young people, young people from rural areas, members of the LGBTQ+ community and other groups coming from a vulnerable background, face additional challenges in terms of political representation, access to opportunities, the labour market and other areas.

3. **Involving youth in participatory processes of social and civil dialogue**

3.1. ***Social dialogue***

3.1.1. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines social dialogue as all types of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers' organisations and trade unions on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It can exist as a tripartite process, with the government as one party, or it may consist of bipartite relations between workers and management. Social dialogue processes may be informal or institutionalised and frequently combine elements of both. They can occur at national, regional or company level and can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of these.

3.1.2. Social dialogue plays a pivotal role in influencing economic, labour and social policies and in promoting convergences in living and working conditions. It is a valuable tool for fostering economic and social resilience, competitiveness and sustainable and inclusive growth, as underlined in EESC opinion SOC/764 ([5]).

([3]) Based on the contributions of youth representatives during the study group meetings and the Anna Lindh Foundation Youth Forum.
([4]) Based on the contributions of youth representatives during the study group meetings and the Anna Lindh Foundation Youth Forum.
([5]) OJ C 228, 29.6.2023, p. 87.

3.1.3. The process of collective bargaining is a crucial tool of social dialogue that aims to guarantee decent working conditions and justice in the workplace. The need to confront new challenges, such as just transition, climate change and youth empowerment, places social dialogue in a pivotal political position, extending beyond wage bargaining. Given that these challenges particularly affect youth, it is vital to ensure that young people play a significant role in social partner organisations and to encourage young people to join them.

3.2. *Social dialogue in the Mediterranean*

3.2.1. 'In the region, workers' organizations such as trade unions face difficulties […] especially in connection with membership, freedom of association, and effectiveness in defending their rights and asserting their demands. Many governments in the MENA region impose restrictions on the freedom of association ([6]).'

3.2.2. Countries in the region are often characterised by the absence of a sufficient framework for an effective social dialogue. While some national social dialogue frameworks ensure the provision of tripartite social dialogue, independent sectoral and bipartite dialogue structures at company level are very limited. Trade union density and collective bargaining coverage remain relatively low. This results in limited capacities of social partners to influence public decision-making and subsequently the socio-economic situation of people, especially young people.

3.2.3. In order to build resilient and successful social dialogue structures, employers' organisations and trade unions need to be elevated to core institutions of the societal framework. The EESC welcomes initiatives such as the South Mediterranean Social Dialogue (SOLiD), which enables interregional exchanges of good practices, and legal and structural frameworks. The EESC calls on the European Commission to support a third phase of the SOLiD project to ensure that the instruments developed are implemented sustainably. Moreover, this phase should be used to draw up a Youth Charter analogous to the existing Women's Charter ([7]), as well as to examine the benefits of establishing youth-focused consultative mechanisms.

3.3. *Civil dialogue*

3.3.1. Though no universal definition of civil dialogue has been adopted, it is widely recognised as a key component of the work of CSOs in ensuring that citizens' voices are heard in decision-making processes, especially given the high level of trust in CSOs, the increasing effectiveness of civil society participation and the decline of traditional participative mechanisms ([8]).

3.3.2. The sectoral, cross-cutting, and horizontal components of civil dialogue promote collaboration and inclusivity in public governance, enhancing the legitimacy and accountability of policies. This is achieved through two complementary dimensions: 1) dialogue among CSOs to exchange views and expertise; and 2) structured dialogue between CSOs and government institutions to ensure that diverse voices are considered in policy-making.

3.3.3. The decline of traditional participative mechanisms highlights the urgent need for innovative civil dialogue processes that align with young people's interests and ways of engaging ([9]).

3.3.4. The EU Youth Dialogue ([10]) and the 'EU Youth Test' ([11]) are strong examples of participatory policy-making instruments that involve youth representatives in consultation, impact assessments and mitigation, fostering youth mainstreaming at institutional level.

([6]) "The future of work: Trade unions in transformation", *International Journal of Labour Research*, 2019, Vol. 9, Issue 1-2 (p. 226).
([7]) https://solidmed.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/Womens-charter.pdf.
([8]) The impact of civil society organisations in Europe, Civil Society Europe, 2019; ii) Future of Europe, Special Eurobarometer 500 p. 19; 2020.
([9]) Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People, European Commission, 2016; Co-deciding with Citizens: Towards Digital Democracy at EU Level, European Citizen Action Service, 2015.
([10]) Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee – Strengthening the EU Youth Dialogue follow-up via monitoring and transparency guidelines (OJ C, C/2024/6866, 28.11.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/6866/oj28.11.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/6866/oj).
([11]) OJ C 486, 21.12.2022, p. 46.

3.4. ***Civil dialogue in the Mediterranean region***

3.4.1. In the context of growing discontent with political institutions, civil dialogue is emerging as a crucial mechanism for bridging the trust gap between the public and decision-makers and addressing the public's frustrations, particularly on pressing issues like unemployment, social cohesion and climate change.

3.4.2. The absence of common standards and a comprehensive regulatory framework is leading to significant variation in civil dialogue practices. Additionally, diverse political contexts, historical legacies, cultural norms and societal structures among countries are resulting in fragmentation, which is causing inconsistency and informality in civil dialogue throughout the region.

3.4.3. Many opportunities for dialogue are limited to one-off consultation events rather than genuine dialogue initiatives, raising concerns about inclusivity, accountability and transparency. While sectorial dialogue occurs with some frequency, transversal dialogue is irregular and lacks structured processes, leading to discontinuity and inconsistency.

3.4.4. The shrinking space for civil society undermines the effectiveness of CSOs, limiting their ability to advocate change. Restrictive legal frameworks, state co-optation, bureaucratic obstacles, selective funding and censorship further erode the autonomy and impact of CSOs in civil dialogue. In some countries it also affects possibilities for cooperation with intergovernmental organisations.

3.4.5. Social media platforms and digital communication tools are transforming the landscape of civil dialogue, providing new avenues for youth engagement. However, challenges related to safety, misinformation, online harassment, and digital divides must be addressed to ensure inclusive and constructive dialogue structures ([12]).

4. Requirements and current challenges in the Mediterranean region for institutional participatory processes from a youth perspective

4.1. Social and civil dialogue processes are a cornerstone of democratic participation. CSOs, youth groups, employers' organisations and trade unions face difficulties in taking part effectively in decision-making processes. Freedom of association, freedom of speech and, generally, the competence and capacity for entities representing employers, workers and civil society to defend their rights and express their demands are limited in many MENA countries. There is a need to support democratic processes going beyond elections creating participatory mechanisms characterised by civic freedom, transparency, accessibility to information and opportunities for all.

4.2. The EESC points out that, despite their enormous potential, young people often remain excluded from participatory processes ([13]). Low youth participation in elections, the scarcity of leaders under 35 in high-level positions, and instances of tokenism or exclusion from participatory processes indicate that young people still face barriers to fully engaging in decision-making. The lack of diversity among decision-makers, particularly the underrepresentation of disadvantaged groups, makes it difficult for young people to find role models they can relate to.

4.3. Social and civil dialogue structures are still rooted in outdated paradigms and methodologies that fail to engage young people. Mistrust and disillusionment with institutionalised structures, driven by the use of pre-set agendas and a lack of capacity to structurally integrate young people into organisational frameworks while adequately reflect youth interests, prevent active youth participation.

4.4. Perceptions of traditional power and leadership structures (such as patriarchal structures) and prejudices against young people are barriers to the engagement of young people. While young women face additional challenges and barriers, it is important to highlight the efforts of women's organisations to overcome oppressive traditional structures.

([12]) See the Euromesco policy brief *Youth deliberation and participation in the Euro-Mediterranean region* (2023).

([13]) Be Seen, Be Heard: Understanding young people's political participation. https://www.youthforum.org/files/UPDATED_UN_REPORT_TBS_Accessible_Version_090622.pdf.

4.5. Adequate research on youth is a prerequisite for identifying challenges and including their interests in participatory processes. The lack of accessibility of data, especially at the local level and the lack of disaggregated data regarding the on-the-ground realities of young individuals, particularly those from rural areas and young women, are major challenges that perpetuate the underrepresentation of youth interests in various policy areas.

4.6. The engagement of young people in social and civil dialogue initiatives is limited by logistical (e.g. mobility and visa issues) factors and infrastructure shortages. The EESC emphasises the need for effective support mechanisms for young people, including economic, social and educational resources.

4.7. The EESC points out the needs of vulnerable youth, including NEETs, young women, people with disabilities, refugees, migrants, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous young people, young people from rural areas and members of the LGBTQ+ community. It also highlights the challenge of engaging with young people in local communities and of including those who are prohibited from participating in political and civil society activities. Local youth projects and initiatives often suffer from low financial resources and political support.

4.8. Organised civil society in MENA countries has shown resilience and a strong commitment to democratic values, advocating for human rights, youth participation, and the rule of law through transnational collaboration. Despite political tensions, security concerns, and resource constraints, many CSOs, including social partners, continue to work towards a shared vision of the Mediterranean as an integrated common space.

5. **Recommendations**

5.1. ***Common recommendations***

5.1.1. Involve young people at every stage of the policy-making process – from decision-making to implementation and evaluation – creating inclusive and transparent structures, like long-term dialogue frameworks facilitated by professional moderators, and co-designing spaces with young people to ensure their active participation. Moreover, it is crucial to establish strong monitoring, feedback and accountability mechanisms throughout the entire process ([14]).

5.1.2. The appointment of the new commissioner for the Mediterranean should facilitate new ways of strengthening the role of youth involvement in EU policy-making, including neighbourhood policy affairs, through the establishment of a permanent youth involvement structure with the participation of the EESC.

5.1.3. The EESC calls for balanced and inclusive selection procedures to prevent the overrepresentation of young people and organisations with privileged access, by ensuring transparent and accessible preliminary selection phases.

5.1.4. Innovative measures for the inclusion of young people in social and civil dialogue structures are important in placing them at the centre of organisational set-ups (the introduction of youth quotas should be discussed). This includes promoting a culture of cooperation instead of competition, managing potential disagreements respectfully and acknowledging young people as experts in their fields by incorporating them into key positions. The use of new forms of communication, in particular digital tools, and the creation of new narratives are crucial to reaching young people. The EESC also advocates breaking down language barriers in international programmes by enabling people to speak in their native language wherever possible.

5.1.5. The EESC highlights the importance of creating capacity-building opportunities for young people, to develop the skills essential for taking up leading roles within organisations and negotiating with decision-makers.

([14]) EESC study on Structured and meaningful youth participation in policy and decision-making processes: mapping local, national, EU and international good practices.

5.1.6. The EU has a crucial role to play in supporting regional integration. Interconnecting youth-led structures is an important step in promoting the (inter-)regional exchange of ideas, cultures and cooperation practices across this diverse region and among this heterogeneous group. The EESC calls for support for regional youth networks and for funding to be secured for youth-related events.

5.1.7. As stated in REX/566 ([15]), it is important to strengthen the involvement of young people in the EU's external relations. The EESC reiterates its recommendation to promote cooperation between youth organisations and EU delegations and to raise awareness about youth policies. Moreover, visa application procedures have to be easily accessible, especially for young people.

5.1.8. The EESC emphasises that, to enable the structural involvement of youth representatives, the security of the participants has to be guaranteed, especially in the fields of human rights, climate justice and workers' rights. The EESC stresses the need to involve representatives of disadvantaged groups in participatory processes and calls for additional efforts to establish accessible structures for diverse representation. Moreover, the design of support programmes that reach out to vulnerable groups is vital. It is important to increase youth budgets at all territorial levels, and especially to support local communities and provide financial support for youth mobility. Programmes like Erasmus+ provide young people, youth workers, and organisations focused on youth work with an opportunity for collaboration.

5.1.9. The EESC notes that education systems should create supportive ecosystems for the acquisition of appropriate skill sets (e.g. political and digital literacy) so that young people can engage more confidently in participatory processes. Civil society and social partner organisations should provide capacity-building workshops for young people as part of their educational programmes and initiatives, including through closer collaboration with academia and the business world.

5.1.10. The EESC underlines the need for research on young people's roles in the labour market, education, participatory processes and community life. Cooperation between universities, research institutes, vocational education and training (VET) programmes and secondary education institutions in the region must be strengthened by putting the active involvement of young people at the centre and creating safe research environments. Local, long-term and rotating field research on local youth structures can provide essential knowledge for effectively integrating young people's interests.

5.1.11. As the share of highly skilled individuals among the migrating population from the region has increased, the EESC urges effective countermeasures to be taken against the brain drain.

5.2. ***Recommendations regarding youth in social dialogue***

5.2.1. The EESC emphasises the need for labour market reforms, with the objectives of facilitating the transition from informal employment to legal and decent work and tackling the problems caused by atypical and precarious forms of work being one of the most pressing issues in the region. The EESC recommends drawing up national action plans together with the social partners in accordance with ILO R204 ([16]).

5.2.2. The EESC emphasises the importance of measures to promote active participation in the labour market and the provision of quality public services, such as good-quality and affordable childcare and long-term care, to encourage young female employment. The EESC also recommends prioritising social rights through the development of national tools.

5.2.3. The EESC emphasises the need to reinforce tripartite and bipartite social dialogue, particularly through the comprehensive implementation of the pivotal ILO Conventions on social dialogue, including ILO C098 ([17]), ILO C135 ([18]), ILO C087 ([19]) and ILO C154 ([20]). It is also essential to reinforce the role of the social partners in the formulation of national policies and strategies. The establishment of observatories for the monitoring of social partner involvement in public decision-making processes could prove an effective instrument for the creation of an adequate framework for social dialogue.

([15]) OJ C 184, 25.5.2023, p. 5.
([16]) ILO R204 – Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No 204).
([17]) ILO C098 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No 98).
([18]) ILO C135 – Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No 135).
([19]) ILO C087 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No 87).
([20]) ILO C154 – Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No 154).

5.2.4. The EESC highlights the benefits of youth action plans, which could serve as roadmaps, with specific actions and tools for more inclusive organisational frameworks for youth participation in social partner organisations. Moreover, the provision of capacity building in organisations regarding training in negotiation skills, as well as specific training to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups, can provide a low-threshold entry point for young people in social dialogue structures. Introducing mentoring programmes could be better than leadership programmes, as it provides an opportunity to meet and train future leaders on an equal footing.

5.2.5. The EESC stresses the importance of supporting the creation of social dialogue structures at company level. Workers' councils are a necessary tool to make companies more resilient, economically successful and able to create decent jobs, as well as to promote democracy at the workplace (see SOC/746 ([21])).

5.2.6. The inclusion of young workers in social dialogue structures at company level is crucial. Encouraging young people to participate in democratic processes at the workplace supports youth engagement and helps them to gain skills and experience in representing their interests. To formalise young people's interests, the EESC recommends encouraging young workers to take part in collective bargaining in order to be able to represent their interests in collective agreements.

5.2.7. Establishing youth-oriented representative structures at company level is an effective way of structurally embedding youth participation in social dialogue structures. The EESC highlights the Youth Trust Councils (YTC) ([22]) in Austria. The YTCs represent the economic, social, health and cultural interests of young employees and apprentices in companies. Every company with five or more young workers is obliged to facilitate the democratic election of the YTC by the Youth Assembly. The members of the YTC have special rights and duties guaranteed by law to represent the interests of young employees. The legitimation of young workers through elections strengthens their credibility at work and enables them to gain skills and experience in worker representation.

5.3. ***Recommendations regarding youth in civil dialogue***

5.3.1. Establish common standards and a comprehensive regulatory framework that provides structured mechanisms for engagement. Institutions should create specific support structures, including dedicated teams and contact points, to facilitate regular and organised dialogue with CSOs. Regular evaluations of civil dialogue processes should be carried out to identify shortcomings and areas for improvement, ensuring that engagement practices remain effective and inclusive.

5.3.2. Ensure that civil dialogue processes are inclusive by actively targeting diverse groups, including women, minorities and vulnerable communities, providing youth organisations with financial support and resources, promoting inclusive strategies and facilitating networking and collaboration among youth.

5.3.3. Strengthen capacity-building initiatives for both young CSO representatives and civil servants. For young representatives, focus on political literacy, advocacy and understanding democratic processes to enable them to more effectively influence policy outcomes. For civil servants, provide upskilling opportunities to increase their capacity to handle civil dialogue effectively.

5.3.4. Increase investment in digital infrastructure to provide new avenues for civic dialogue and address the limited internet access that many young people face. Enhance digital literacy among youth to empower them to express their views, organise campaigns and engage in cross-border collaboration more effectively. Utilise social media and other digital tools to disseminate information, engage a broader youth audience and connect young people across borders, fostering a more inclusive, safe and accessible dialogue.

5.3.5. Invest in fostering a culture of civil dialogue and participation by integrating civic education into school curricula, and by promoting educational campaigns to raise awareness about civil dialogue and solidarity as key elements for social inclusion. Simplify procedures for civil society organisations (CSOs) to carry out civic projects in educational institutions, while reducing government's oversight to allow for more authentic civic engagement.

([21]) OJ C 228, 29.6.2023, p. 43.

([22]) https://www.oegj.at/content/dam/oegj/downloads/dokumente/20220915%20H2JVR%20Brosch%C3%BCre%20WEB.pdf (only in German).

5.3.6. Recognise youth councils as legitimate players and support the establishment of independent youth councils in countries where they do not exist. Increase youth budgets at all territorial levels and establish local advisory committees with youth representatives to increase civil discourse at the local level. Develop youth strategies that strengthen the youth component in civil dialogue processes, providing young people with direct avenues to influence local governance and ensure that their voices are heard in decision-making processes.

5.3.7. Acknowledge the importance of youth work in civil dialogue. Increase the space and representation of youth organisations among the counterparts of the state during civil dialogue initiatives (which typically involve CSOs but not always youth-led CSOs). This includes enhancing the legitimacy of youth workers and ensuring they are recognised as key players to be heard during consultation processes and structured dialogue mechanisms with authorities.

5.3.8. Promote intergenerational dialogue by creating co-leadership mechanisms based on exchange, collaboration, coordination and co-creation. This approach should include guiding older generations on how to work with young people, strengthening solidarity and embracing the dynamic changes that youth bring to civil dialogue. Changing the narrative around youth by recognising their contributions will further legitimise their role in decision-making ([23]).

Brussels, 23 January 2025.

The President
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Oliver RÖPKE

([23]) https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/promoting-european-intergenerational-solidarity-towards-eu-horizontal-approach.