

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Coordinator:	Municipality of Santa Comba
PIC number:	946975596
Project name and acronym:	YOUth and democracy: empowering Europe's next generation – EU4YOUth

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	3rd
Event name:	YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR LOCAL CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT
Type:	Conference
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	Rabat, Malta
Date(s):	December 9-12th, 2024
Participants	
Female:	31
Male:	25
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Austria]:	1
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	1
From country 3 [Croatia]:	2
From country 4 [Cyprus]:	1
From country 5 [Estonia]:	1
From country 6 [France]:	6
From country 7 [Greece]:	1
From country 8 [Hungary]:	2
From country 9 [Ireland]:	1
From country 10 [Italy]:	2
From country 11 [Latvia]:	1
From country 12 [Lithuania]:	3

From country 13 [Malta]:	22		
From country 14 [Portugal]:	5		
From country 15 [Poland]:	2		
From country 16 [Romania]:	1		
From country 17 [Slovakia]:	1		
From country 18 [Spain]:	3		
Total number of participants:	56	From total number of countries:	18

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The third event of the project *"YOUth and Democracy: Empowering Europe's Next Generation"* took place in Rabat, Malta, from December 9 to 12, 2024, bringing together delegates from 18 European countries to foster transnational dialogue on youth participation in democracy. Attended by policymakers, youth leaders, civic organizations, and European affairs experts, the event combined intellectual exchange, cultural immersion, and networking opportunities to explore youth engagement in politics, digital activism, and strategies to increase civic participation. The program was carefully structured to balance discussions on political empowerment, institutional visits, and cultural activities, ensuring a dynamic and impactful experience for all participants.

The event commenced on Monday, December 9, with the arrival of participants at Luqa Malta Airport, followed by check-in at Hotel 115 The Strand and an evening Bulgarian welcome dinner, providing an informal setting for introductions and early networking. On Tuesday, December 10, the day began with a transfer from Gzira to Rabat, where participants were welcomed by Mr. Matthew Chetcuti, Deputy Mayor of Rabat; Ms. Noelia Baleato, Vice Mayor of Santa Comba; and Mr. Sandro Azzopardi, President of the Reġjun Puntent, who emphasized the importance of citizen involvement and European cooperation. The morning session featured the panel discussion "Young Politicians – Vocation, Motivation, Challenges: How Youth Organizations Can Empower Young People to Participate in Politics?", led by Hon. Owen Bonnici, Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts, and Local Government, and Hon. Alison Zerafa Civelli, Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government, followed by a group photo and a guided cultural visit to Rabat. After lunch at Peristyle Restaurant, participants explored Mdina, the "silent city", before attending Natalis Notabilis, Malta's largest Christmas market organized by young people, where youth-led community initiatives were showcased.

On Wednesday, December 11, the day began with a visit to the Parliament of Malta, where participants engaged in a debate on Malta's 20 years in the European Union, featuring Hon. Naomi Cachia, Member of Parliament and Government Whip. This was followed by a session at Malta House, where Mr. Roderick Zerafa, Head of the Malta European Services, led discussions on "Shaping Europe from the Young Generations: What Changes Should the EU Make to Be More Relevant and Attractive to Young People?", addressing key topics such as job opportunities, affordable housing, digital inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The afternoon included lunch at Luciano Restaurant in Valletta, a tour of Saint John's Co-Cathedral, and a guided visit to Upper Baraka and Valletta's old town, reinforcing the cultural and historical context of Malta's democratic evolution. The evening featured a final evaluation session, where participants reflected on key takeaways and future collaborations, before concluding with a farewell dinner. The event concluded on Thursday, December 12, with breakfast, hotel check-out, and participant departures, marking the end of a dynamic and impactful gathering.

Key conclusions emphasized the need to bridge the gap between digital activism and real-world engagement, strengthen youth organizations as a gateway to politics through mentorship programs and civic education, and adapt EU policies to better address youth-specific challenges such as unemployment, affordable housing, mental health, and climate action.

Delegates underscored the importance of local democracy, advocating for youth advisory councils and participatory democracy models, and highlighted education's role in civic engagement, promoting critical thinking and democratic awareness in school curricula. They also recognized the value of cultural exchange in reinforcing a shared European identity and the necessity of sustaining momentum beyond the event through follow-up activities, online platforms, and inter-municipal collaboration.

Key takeaways included proposals to strengthen youth representation, expand political education, advocate EU funding for youth projects, and promote digital civic education. These insights will be compiled into a final publication to guide future youth participation initiatives, with the next meeting set for Paiao, Portugal, in February 2025, continuing the momentum toward empowering young Europeans in democracy and governance.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).