

Youth Climate Pact Dialogue (YCPD)

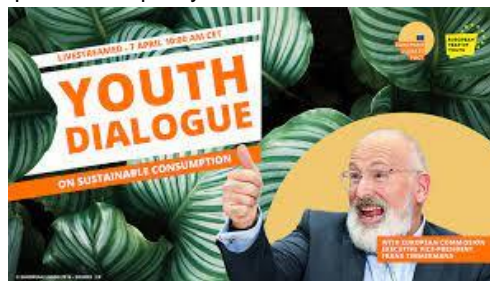
Guidance Document: How to run a Youth Dialogue at local, regional, national or European level and lessons learnt

What is the YCPD?

The Youth Climate Pact Dialogue (YCPD) engages young citizens in decision-making in Europe by giving them the chance to co-create and participate in a discussion in person with high-level officials from the European Commission. A group of young Climate Pact Ambassadors can voice their needs, ask questions and discuss about policy recommendations; personal exchange between young people and European Commission officials is also livestreamed, allowing people across Europe to participate and ask questions virtually.

The YCPD was established in the context of the European Year of Youth under the Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) to foster the engagement between young people and EU policy makers.

The **first YCPD** on sustainable consumption was held on 7th April 2022 between Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, and 14 young European Climate Pact Ambassadors. Find out more about the Dialogue [here](#).



The **second YCPD** on sustainable mobility took place on 13th October 2022 between Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, and 8 young European Climate Pact Ambassadors.

How to run a Youth Dialogue on local, national or European level

A Youth Dialogue offers young people the opportunity to discuss current issues with politicians in person. Such a Youth Dialogue between young people and politicians can be adapted to any political level – **local, regional, national or European level**; for example, by organizing it with a city mayor, a minister or a Member of the European Parliament. The **key elements**, however, should stay the same, so that the format remains recognizable:

- An institutional authority invites a small group of, ideally nine to fifteen, young people to discuss political questions and recommendations with a high-level policy maker;
- The Youth Dialogue is co-created by the young participants;
- The participants share their insights and experience in a clearly defined follow-up process.

Co-Creating a Youth Dialogue

The co-creation process follows three main objectives:

1. **Setting the agenda:** This entails setting a clear agenda and defining roles and responsibilities to ensure that the Youth Dialogue is fruitful. For the agenda, it is recommended to have no more than three thematic blocks or sub-topics. Plan enough time for the question-and-answer sessions, discussion and policy recommendations. Also take into account how to involve other young people at large in your region,

country or even European-wide during the actual Youth Dialogue; they may be able to join and participate virtually.

2. **Defining questions and policy recommendations:** To give the participants a clear framework, the main topic as well as sub-topics of the Dialogue can be determined in advance and adjusted according to the participants' interests. During the co-creation process, the participants develop specific questions they want to raise and also create policy recommendations they will present to the policy maker. Participants should research current local, national and/or European Union policies to ensure their questions and policy recommendations are pertinent and innovative.
3. **Defining and committing to a follow-up process of the Dialogue:** The participants are committed to engaging in a follow-up process shortly after the Dialogue; this could for instance be writing a report of the Dialogue and sharing their insights with other young people in their community or via social media, defining lessons learnt or engaging in further policy exchanges with other policy makers.

We recommend that the co-creation process starts four to five weeks before the Dialogue takes place to give participants enough time to prepare, while keeping the process timebound and relevant. The selected youth participants get together in three sessions (optionally four) to discuss and decide on the above objectives:

- **First co-creation meeting (online or in person):** Introduction of participants to the **institutional actor** (e.g. municipality, ministry) hosting the Dialogue and getting to know each other. The first meeting should rather be conceptualised as an icebreaker and not only as a thematic session. It outlines the process and lays out the frame for co-creating together.
- **Second co-creation meeting (online or in person):** Brainstorming of agenda, sub-topics, questions and policy recommendations.
- **Third co-creation meeting (online or in person):** Decision on sub-topics, questions, roles and expected results of the Dialogue.
- **Fourth co-creation meeting (optional, in person):** Presentation of results of co-creation meetings to a representative of the institutional actor, meeting in person to tie loose ends before the actual Dialogue with the high-level policy maker.

Depending on whether the Dialogue takes place at local, regional, national or European level, it can be organised as a one or two-day programme. Besides getting to know each other, networking and participating in the Dialogue, young people can, for instance, visit the townhall or the national Parliament or meet other officials to learn more about the climate policy.

Tip:

- **Inviting a policy expert to a meeting to provide insights into what exists or is already being done by the local mayor, regional authority, national ministry or the European Commission can be useful to inform young people and help direct their questions and policy recommendations towards more innovative ideas. This could also lead to further policy exchanges after the YCPD.**
- **Use an online tool to collect and share all information and documents (e.g. Trello, GoogleDrive, Slack).**
- **Specify roles and responsibilities (e.g. technical support, moderator) for the co-creation meetings to ensure that the meeting follows a clear structure and time is well used.**

Application and selection process

Participation: We recommend setting criteria for the participation; for example an age limit of thirty years, the place of residence of the participants (local, regional, national, EU Member State).

Requirements: Participants ideally already have relevant experience on the topic of the Youth Dialogue in order to be able to raise concrete questions and contribute to the discussion. It is, however, not necessary that participants have studied or worked in the field of the topic; what is important is that young people commit to participating and remain engaged throughout the co-creation and follow-up process.

Application: For the application, we recommend that the participants fill out an online application form. They can also record a short video in which they explain why they would like to take part in the Dialogue and what experience they bring to it.

Selection: The participants are selected while considering gender, age and geographical distribution.

Tips:

- **The application period should be open for at least six weeks, to ensure that as many young people are reached. Be clear about the conditions to apply.**
- **The institutional actor, hosting the Youth Dialogue, may consider establishing a Youth Dialogue task force of young people within their team to conduct the selection and support the co-creation**

Lessons learnt

- ✓ Be clear in your communication to ensure that participants are committed to a co-creation process in preparation of as well as the follow-up process after the Youth Dialogue.
- ✓ By confirming the agenda of the Youth Dialogue with the cabinet of the high-level official beforehand, you ensure that you stick to the structure on which you have agreed during the co-creation process.
- ✓ Make sure that there is enough time for discussions and introduction of policy recommendations, which also enrich the Youth Dialogue rather than just asking questions.
- ✓ Having sessions and optionally also activities with the young participants before the Youth Dialogue can be very useful to build a community amongst the participants, provide incentives for debate and motivate follow-up initiatives.
- ✓ Communicate and promote as early as possible that the Dialogue is streamed online via social media channels, newsletters, website, etc. Highlight that young people have the chance to join and ask questions to high-ranking policy makers virtually. For the live stream, it is also recommended to use a platform which young people use, such as Instagram or Snapchat.
- ✓ Ensure that the follow-up process happens shortly after the Youth Dialogue. If the participants want to write a report, they should also include expert's statements and publish the report in different languages (where relevant), to ensure that the important outcomes are spread further.