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Lithuania National Level Assessment Report

Findings from the National Level Assessment on the level of awareness, gaps in knowledge, and barriers to participation amongst young people in civic democratic life and decision-making processes in Lithuania and Europe

Mano Europa



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The ParticipACTION Project

The **ParticipACTION** “*Building Inclusive Civic Engagement and Solidarity Among Diverse Young People in Europe*” project is co-funded by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Program (CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV).

The project’s core aims to enhance youth engagement in European decision-making processes and create opportunities for young people to connect with policymakers at local, national, and European levels through research initiatives, roundtables, workshops, and training sessions on policy and advocacy. The project targets young people aged 16 to 23. It seeks to involve not only European citizens but also young individuals with migratory backgrounds or coming from non-EU countries, with a special focus on women and girls. By bringing together these diverse groups of young people, the project aims to foster mutual understanding of shared experiences and barriers to democratic participation, ultimately promoting solidarity. The goal of the project is to equip young people with the tools to influence EU democratic processes, while promoting a bottom-up approach that ensures their lived realities are at the heart of policy decisions.

The ParticipACTION project is implemented in Italy, France, Cyprus and Lithuania by a consortium of five experienced partners. The project runs from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2026.

Project Partners

IRC Italia – Fondazione International Rescue Committee Italia ETS – Coordinator (Italy)

G.F.C. - Generation For Change CY - (Cyprus)

PLACE - PLACE Network - (France)

GLOCAL FACTORY - GLOCAL FACTORY Società Cooperativa Sociale - (Italy)

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Executive summary

The ParticipACTION initiative aims to elevate the voices of young people aged 16 to 23, with a focus on third-country nationals (TCNs), migrant youth, women, and girls, by promoting their involvement in decision-making at the local, national, and European Union levels. This report, informed by desk-based research, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), survey, interviews, interactive seminar and roundtable conducted in Lithuania, examines the levels of awareness, understanding, and participation among youth in democratic processes, the obstacles they face and the solutions they propose.

The findings reveal that many young individuals have limited awareness of EU institutions, however, were quite well informed about EU programmes and initiatives, such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, even though many young people still are not taking part in these programmes. Although some feel increasingly connected to the idea of European citizenship, substantial knowledge gaps remains. Young people are generally more involved in local initiatives, where they feel a greater sense of connection and significance. In contrast, the EU is often viewed as distant and overly complex. A key barrier to participation is the widespread perception among youth that **their voices are ignored, lack influence or fail to have a real impact**. These challenges are even more pronounced for TCNs, who often face additional linguistic and cultural barriers that further hinder their engagement.

Suggestions from both youth and relevant stakeholders consistently emphasize the importance of expanding civic education, **offering firsthand experiences and activities that provide an opportunity to discuss and debate their views and opinions**, encouraging peer-led learning and creating inclusive outreach strategies. Policy recommendations stress the need to reinforce civic learning, develop inclusiveness strategies among different groups, foster trust through open and transparent practices and ensure young people, including TCNs, receive the necessary support and mechanisms to access opportunities fairly and make their voice count.



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1. Background

1.1 National Level Assessment Report Overview

The National Level Assessment Report aims at blending together the various research phases of the ParticipACTION project, including desk research, Focus Group Discussions (“FGDs”), survey, interviews, interactive seminars and national roundtables. It furthers the initial overview, elaborated in the desk research, of the level of awareness, gaps in knowledge and barriers to participation amongst young people from diverse backgrounds in civic democratic life and decision-making processes in Europe, with the original data collected by Mano Europa during WP1, WP2, and WP3. The National Level Assessment Report will also offer an overview of the suggested solutions, offered by the youth themselves, to the obstacles that hinder youth participation.

1.2 The Lithuanian Context

In Lithuania, the civic and political participation of young people, particularly those from vulnerable or underrepresented groups such as third-country nationals (“TCNs”) and young women and girls, is shaped by a combination of socio-cultural, institutional and policy-related factors. Despite being an European Union (“EU”) Member State with established democratic institutions and youth policies, Lithuania continues to face challenges in fostering inclusive youth engagement in civic and political life.

Young Lithuanians often demonstrate low levels of civic knowledge and limited awareness of the mechanisms through which they can influence decision-making. Formal civic education in schools tends to be theoretical and sometimes fails to equip young people with practical skills for meaningful participation. These gaps are even more pronounced among TCNs, who may experience language barriers, unfamiliarity with local institutions, limited social networks.

Additional barriers include a general mistrust of political institutions, a perception that young people’s voices are not valued by decision-makers and insufficient opportunities for youth to engage in inclusive and participatory processes. Socio-economic inequalities and regional disparities (e.g., between urban and rural areas) can further exacerbate exclusion.

2. Methodology

This section details the mixed-methods approach and methodology used for the various research phases, including FGDs, survey, desk research, interviews, Interactive Seminars, and National Roundtables and gives an overview of participants’ demographics.

2.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Mano Europa implemented one Focus Group Discussion (“FGD”) with 20 participants (between 16 to 19 years old and mixed gender - 13 female, 6 male, 1 preferred not to say) which lasted two hours. Participants for the FGD were selected through an open call, ensuring a diverse and voluntary cohort reflective of the different perspectives. Note-taking during the session was conducted manually, with facilitators writing detailed notes that captured key discussion points as well as significant quotes from participants. The FGD was facilitated by experienced youth workers and facilitators from Mano Europa, who guided the conversation using inclusive and participatory methods designed to encourage open dialogue, active engagement and equal opportunity for all voices to be heard. Discussions covered awareness of EU institutions, experiences with civic participation, and proposed solutions. The sessions were semi-structured and based on open-ended questions covering three themes:

- **Knowledge** of EU institutions and strategies
- **Participation** in civic or political life (e.g., voting, protests, volunteering)
- **Proposed solutions** to encourage solidarity and youth engagement

Each session was guided by open-ended questions that encourage peer reflection and personal storytelling.

2.2 Survey

A survey – common to all four countries involved in the ParticipACTION project – was delivered online, with responses collected by distributing the survey link among young people (aged 16-23 years old) through existing communication channels and networks. Social media platforms were also utilised to expand outreach, although this method yielded limited engagement. The data collection took place between November and December 2024.

The survey gathered responses from 50 participants, in terms of gender identity, the majority identified as women (64%), followed by men (34%), and non-binary (2%). All respondents currently reside in Lithuania, although 38% originate from countries other than Lithuania, including Ukraine, Poland, Turkey, Pakistan, Belarus, Russia and England. These individuals are considered TCNs, highlighting the diverse cultural background represented in the sample.

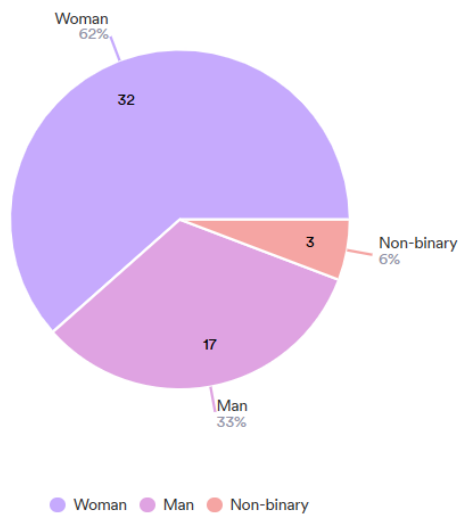


Fig.A

Respondents were requested to answer a total of 20 questions:¹

- 4 demographics questions to disaggregate data at the analysis stage (gender, country of origin, country of residence, age)
- 11 closed and open-ended questions on the topic of awareness of European institutions, action plans, and strategies
- 4 closed and open-ended questions on their participation in European civic democratic life
- 1 open-ended question on the topic of solidarity and the respondents' personal experiences with it

Ethical considerations were a key component of the survey process. A clear information to all participants was provided prior to their participation about the purpose of the survey, how the data would be used and their right to withdraw at any time. All responses were kept confidential and measures were taken to anonymize the data to ensure that individual respondents could not be identified. To promote inclusivity and accessibility, the survey was designed to be mobile-friendly and easy to navigate, by using JotForm and it was available both in English and Lithuanian in order to ensure that young people from different backgrounds and with varying levels of English could participate comfortably.

2.3 Desk research

A systematic review of existing literature was conducted at national-level in Lithuania including grey literature, academic articles and policy documents examining young people's civic knowledge and engagement. Mano Europa assessed the intersectional impact of identity factors (such as migration status, gender and socio-economic background) on knowledge, awareness and participation in democratic life and decision-making processes.

Each subsection of the desk research was guided by a set of dedicated research questions, organised across three core dimensions, which are available in Annex 1. The desk research was compiled in a standalone report, disseminated in April 2025. The insights from the desk research informed the design and implementation of the FGDs (Section 2.1) and survey (Section 2.2).

2.4 Interviews

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. The stakeholders interviewed included an English language teacher actively involved in youth engagement projects and a member of the school's administrative staff responsible for coordinating non-formal education activities for youth. Interviewees were selected based on their direct involvement with young people in both formal and non-formal educational contexts, as well as their experience collaborating with NGOs and youth initiatives. The selection aimed to gather

¹ The full text of the survey can be found in Annex 2



perspectives from professionals who actively contribute to youth civic engagement at the local level. Notes were taken manually during the interviews. Audio recordings were not used to maintain a more informal and comfortable setting for the participants, encouraging open and honest responses.

The interviews were conducted in a conversational format, allowing participants to reflect on their experiences and observations. Questions focused on youth civic participation, perceived barriers, the role of educational institutions and the effectiveness of current strategies and initiatives. The process ensured that each stakeholder could share practical insights based on their daily work with young people.

2.5 Interactive Seminars

As part of the project WP2, two awareness-raising Interactive Seminars were implemented by Mano Europa and involved 26 young participants, the majority of which were female. During these interactive sessions, participants engaged in a voting process to select the themes most relevant to their interests and concerns. A simple majority voting system was employed by using an interactive polling software - Mentimeter, that allowed participants to openly discuss and then cast their votes for preferred topics. As a result of this process, the three themes selected were:

- 1) Education, Culture, Youth & Sport;
- 2) Values, Rights, Rule of Law & Security; and
- 3) European Democracy

However, after incorporating votes from other participating countries and organizations, the final three selected themes guiding the overall project and around which the National Roundtable (2.6) centered are:

- 1) Migration
- 2) Values, Rights, Rule of Law & Security
- 3) Education, Culture Youth and Sport

Gender equality (cross-cutting focus across all themes)

Participants of **Interactive Seminars** were actively involved throughout the sessions which encouraged meaningful dialogue and reflection, 20 people (approximately 87%) out of 23 felt that their opinions and interventions were listened to during the seminar. The democratic voting process at the end of each seminar allowed youth to directly influence the project's focus by selecting the three most important themes for further work. This fostered a sense of ownership and practical participation in decision-making. These themes generated the highest level of interest and engagement among the group, reflecting the participants' strong connection to issues that directly affect their personal development, civic awareness and sense of belonging in the European community.



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2.6 National Roundtables

As part of project's WP3, a single roundtable discussion session was conducted by Mano Europa, bringing together a total of 28 participants - 26 young people aged between 17 and 18 years old and 2 female stakeholders. The session lasted more than two hours and featured a mixed-gender group comprising primarily Lithuanian nationals, along with one participant originally from the United Kingdom. Participants were selected in collaboration with a local school to ensure relevance and engagement.

The discussion was facilitated by two experienced staff members, who guided the conversation using participatory and inclusive techniques to foster meaningful dialogue and ensure that all voices were heard. While no audio recordings were made during the session, note-taking was performed manually, with facilitators documenting key discussion points and significant quotes in real time. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed: informed consent was obtained from all participants, including appropriate consent procedures for minors as well as participants over the age of 18.

3. Challenges and Limitations

Research on youth civic knowledge and participation in Lithuania, particularly among young women and TCNs, presents several unique challenges and limitations linked to the socio-political landscape and structural characteristics of the country.

Throughout the implementation of activities, several challenges were encountered.

- **Recruitment and engagement issues: participant recruitment** posed initial difficulties, particularly in ensuring adequate representation of TCNs. Despite targeted outreach efforts, including direct contact with schools and organizations that specifically work with TCN youth, engagement from these groups remained limited. Many of these institutions did not respond positively or were unable to mobilize participants for the proposed activities. This highlights a broader, well-documented challenge faced by many organizations working in similar contexts: the **difficulty of establishing sustained engagement with TCN youth who may face additional barriers** such as lack of trust, language limitations, competing priorities. Attendance levels at certain sessions fell below expectations, primarily because one of the activities was scheduled on a public holiday. While the day offered an opportunity for young people to participate in a productive activity during their free time, it also coincided with personal plans for some, leading to several last-minute cancellations. Engaging policymakers also proved challenging, as their availability was limited and some were hesitant to commit to dialogue sessions with young participants. However, local stakeholders working with youth were eager to participate and share their views, opinions and experiences.
One key difficulty was maintaining continuity with the same group of participants across the different ParticipACTION events, as some youth had changing commitments or lost



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interest over time. However, from experience in youth work, this is explained by the fact that youth engagement is often fluid. Interest levels can shift due to personal schedules, evolving motivations, or competing priorities like school, family obligations, or extracurriculars. Some participants might initially attend out of curiosity but later choose to disengage, while others may join mid-way and bring fresh perspectives. This dynamic is expected and even welcomed in inclusive youth work, as it reflects the real-life complexities of young people's lives. What matters most is creating an environment where every participant - whether consistent or new - feels equally welcomed, heard and valued.

- **Data collection and analysis limitations:** The small sample size of FGDs and the survey limits the generalisability of findings. In terms of data collection and analysis, language barriers did not emerge. To mitigate researcher and facilitator bias, multiple facilitators were present during focus group discussions to cross-check notes and observations. Additionally, participant surveys were conducted anonymously to encourage honest feedback. These steps were taken to ensure that the insights gathered reflect the genuine perspectives of the youth involved while acknowledging the limitations inherent in the methodology.

4. Key Findings

The synthesis of desk research, FGDs, surveys, interviews, Interactive Seminars and the National Roundtable offers a detailed understanding of youth civic engagement in Lithuania, highlighting areas of **knowledge (4.1)**, participation (4.2) and existing **barriers (4.3)**.

4.1 Knowledge

This section examines how young people in Lithuania understand European institutions, policies, legislative actions, and strategies, as well as possible gaps in their knowledge and current attitudes toward the EU. It relies on the latest data available, policy reports, academic studies as well as testimonials from the youth participants to the ParticipACTION events and findings from the ParticipACTION survey.

4.1.1. Knowledge of European Institutions, Rule of Law and Fundamental Values of the EU

Youth in Lithuania - particularly those from diverse backgrounds - demonstrate a basic awareness of EU institutions and programmes, but there remains a significant gap in deeper understanding, particularly concerning EU values, rights, and democratic processes. Addressing these gaps through targeted educational efforts and inclusive engagement initiatives is essential for fostering more informed and active European citizens.



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FGDs revealed that most participants were able to identify the main EU institutions. Most of them were familiar with institutions such as the European Parliament, European Commission, European Council and Court of Justice. However, very few participants were aware of the European Court of Auditors or European Central Bank. Moreover, while institutional names sounded familiar to them, most participants struggled to identify the key functions and responsibilities of the EU institutions. Moreover, participants to the FGDs were able to name several EU strategies and plans aimed at promoting the democratic and civic participation of young people such as the EU Youth Strategy (2019–2027), European Year of Youth and the EU Youth Dialogue programme. Also, Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes were quite well-known among participants, with some of them sharing their personal experiences in participating in these programmes.

The ParticipACTION **survey** reinforced these findings: while most respondents were **aware of EU institutions** like the European Parliament and Erasmus+, the **depth of understanding** is limited.

- **42%** could name at least some of the EU’s six core values (e.g., *freedom, equality, solidarity*) but many responses were incomplete or vague.
- Only a minority were familiar with the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** or **gender equality frameworks**, with one respondent noting: “*Male and female are equal*”, while others offered more nuanced definitions reflecting **social and political dimensions**.
- Understanding of “**European democracy**” varied - some associated it with voting, others referenced broader civic principles or admitted a lack of knowledge entirely.

Desk research findings showed that documented levels of awareness among Lithuanians regarding EU institutions, policies, legislation and strategies are relatively high, influenced by national surveys, youth engagement and media coverage. However, while there is a relatively high awareness of Lithuanian youth, there is a gap in understanding the EU institutions, policies, legislation and strategies. A 2023 study by the Lithuanian Youth Council reported that 75% of respondents aged 18-25 were aware of major EU strategies, such as the European Green Deal and the Digital Strategy (Lithuanian Youth Council, 2023). However, even if a large portion of youth is aware of major EU strategies, there is a big lack of understanding these strategies and how they impact their life. Moreover, studies highlight a lack of knowledge about the European Parliament, with only 25% of young people familiar with its activities.

Insights from interviewed stakeholders reinforced these conclusions as they agreed that youth aged 16–23 possess basic awareness of the EU and civic processes, particularly those engaged in school or NGO-led activities. Students who participate in local or EU-funded projects showed higher awareness of institutional structures and democratic mechanisms. No significant gender-based differences in civic knowledge were noted. However, an important observation made by a teacher was the role of digital platforms and social media in shaping quick, superficial opinions without encouraging deeper engagement.

The **Interactive Seminar** conducted within the context of the ParticipACTION project contributed to raising awareness about EU priorities and institutional frameworks. By discussing and selecting key themes, participants deepened their understanding of areas such as European Democracy and



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Values, Rights, and the Rule of Law, which many had limited knowledge of beforehand. The majority of participants rated their improvement in knowledge of the five project themes at 3 out of 5, indicating a moderate increase in understanding.

In conclusion, general **awareness on EU institutions and strategies is present on the youth side**, but **critical knowledge is shallow** - especially around values, policies, and rights and this knowledge gap may hinder meaningful participation.

4.2 Participation

4.2.1 Voting, Parties and Representative Structures

Many participants of the **FGDs**, aged 16–17, expressed that they would likely vote if allowed, despite not yet having the legal right. Among those who were eligible to vote, only a few participated in the recent elections, citing reasons such as lack of interest and uncertainty about their political views or candidates. Several participants admitted they lacked sufficient education to understand or identify their political stance.

4.2.2 Advocacy and Non-Electoral Participation

When discussing other forms of civic engagement, volunteering was widespread among the participants of the FGDs, with most young people actively involved in NGOs, community centers or similar institutions. A number of them were also members of schools students union.

Analysis of the **survey** results also showed that the engagement in democratic activities was modest:

- Only a small group reported **voting or petitioning**, with the most common forms of involvement being social media engagement or volunteering at local organizations.
- Inspirations to participate often came from peers or school programs, rather than institutional outreach.
- On a scale of 1 to 5, when asked if there are equal opportunities for youth participation in democratic life, the mean rating was 2.56.

While conducting **interviews with stakeholders**, it was confirmed that the most common forms of civic engagement among youth include volunteering and involvement in school or NGO-led initiatives. Traditional forms of civic participation like voting are less common among younger teens (below 18), though there is general interest in getting involved in various NGOs or school students networks. Interviewees emphasized the need for more structured, long-term engagement - beyond social media or single events - to help youth become consistent civic participants. When disaggregating the data, it emerged that youth from migratory backgrounds tend to participate less frequently, often due to language barriers or lack of confidence.



The **desk research** also showed that the Lithuanian youth are increasingly engaging in political and civic activities, however, challenges remain in sustaining and enhancing this participation. Continued efforts are necessary to address these issues and promote active involvement among young people.

4.2.2.1 The Complex Role of Social Media

Many young people engaging in ParticipACTION events consider themselves “involved” simply by liking or sharing posts online, without further action. For them, digital engagement is seen as a legitimate way of participation - to show support, spread awareness, or feel part of a broader movement. When questioned about this perspective, some participants defended their position by pointing out the influential role of social media in shaping public opinion and quickly reaching large audiences, especially among younger generations. They argued that digital actions, while seemingly small, can have a ripple effect and should not be dismissed as passive behaviors.

In conclusion, youth express **willingness to engage**, but actual **participation remains limited** - often informal or passive.

4.3 Barriers

Numerous barriers consistently limit young people’s ability and willingness to engage with the EU in Lithuania, particularly among marginalized groups, here divided as following among tangible and intangible barriers.

4.3.1 Tangible Barriers

Information gaps, lack of accessible opportunities and systemic exclusion limit youth participation - particularly for TCNs.

Lithuanian youth, including TCNs, are **interested and aware**, but their **knowledge is shallow**, their **engagement minimal** and they face **significant barriers** to full participation. Strengthening civic education, reducing access barriers and promoting inclusion are critical next steps.

4.3.1.1 Legal and Systemic Barriers for Migrants

Desk research showed that Lithuanian laws and policies generally support the participation of TCNs in local civic and democratic life, particularly for those with permanent residency. However, certain restrictions, especially concerning national-level participation and specific eligibility criteria, limit full engagement in all aspects of civic life.

4.3.1.2 Lack of accessibility and clarity of information

Young people participating in FGDs reported struggling to access clear, youth-friendly information about national and EU political issues, often finding the content overly complex or



not knowing where to look. A major concern was the lack of effective civic education in schools, with participants noting that the subject is either absent or poorly delivered, often by educators who lack the tools or motivation to make it engaging. In Lithuania, civic education is integrated into the national curriculum as a mandatory subject, primarily taught in lower and upper secondary schools. It focuses on developing students' understanding of democratic values, institutions, human rights and active citizenship.

Additionally, participants expressed frustration over the lack of direct dialogue with politicians and the complexity of political campaigns, which further lowers their motivation to get involved.

Lack of information was also a barrier mentioned by ParticipACTION survey respondents, with many TCN respondents, in particular, stating they **were not aware of national policies** affecting youth or migration. Moreover, respondents also mentioned **unclear pathways to action**: they noted that while they *wanted* to be involved, they didn't know *how* - one stated: *"I heard a bit about EU policy, but I don't know how to be part of it."*

4.3.1.3 Structural inequality

ParticipACTION survey respondents reported low scores on equal opportunity which suggest **perceived systemic exclusion**, especially among non-native Lithuanians.

Socio-economic background appears to be a significant factor influencing gaps in political and civic knowledge among Lithuanian youth. Low-income individuals or those from rural areas face significant obstacles to participating in political and civic life. According to the European Commission's Eurobarometer survey (2021), young people in rural areas or those with lower socio-economic status in Lithuania are less likely to engage in political and civic activities.

4.3.2 Intangible Barriers

4.3.2.1 Mistrust in Public Institutions and Psychological Barriers

Many FGDs participants reported feeling **their voices are overlooked due to age-related stereotypes and a perceived lack of experience**.

Lack of awareness about where and how to get involved, or discouragement that youth voices do not matter were the key barriers also identified during stakeholders' interviews. Schools try to counteract disengagement by promoting students voices in school planning and by partnering with NGOs to offer hands-on activities. Non-formal education activities, especially those co-funded by EU programs, are seen as effective in motivating less active students.

From the National Roundtables, it emerged that **young people, including TCNs, feel excluded from decision-making spaces and underrepresented in formal institutions**. Participants expressed frustration over not knowing how to get involved or where to find clear, youth-friendly policy information. Some youth feel their participation is symbolic, without real impact or follow-up from policymakers. Language barriers for migrants hinder meaningful participation. Identified



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gaps were a few, one of them is that youth often lack representation, and also that current civic education efforts are often theoretical, lacking the real-world connection needed to prepare youth to engage. Therefore, one of the main recommendations were to support inclusive civic education that combines classroom content with practical experiences in advocacy and decision-making.

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for better outreach, more inclusive consultation processes and capacity-building to empower youth, especially from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to engage them meaningfully. Stakeholders emphasized that youth participation is still too dependent on motivated individuals or NGOs, rather than supported by systematic, institutional processes.

Young people want a more inclusive and practical education system, where civic rights, human rights, and digital literacy are taught in ways that prepare them to act. Stronger recognition of youth-led initiatives and funding support for projects that promote inclusion and community building. Real influence in decision-making, not just consultation or symbolic events. Existing policies could improve by ensuring ongoing feedback loops, where young people can see how their contributions are used in policymaking and that their voices really matter. Also, reviewing and integrating youth participation mechanisms into education and youth development programs.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Across the ParticipACTION desk research, FGDs, surveys and national roundtables, several overarching themes emerge, highlighting both persistent challenges and opportunities for fostering youth civic engagement. A consistent pattern is the gap between awareness and understanding: while many young people are familiar with EU institutions and youth programs like Erasmus+ or the EU Youth Strategy, they often lack deeper knowledge about institutional roles and the practical impact of policies on their lives. Participation in civic life - especially volunteering and NGO engagement - is relatively high, yet formal political participation, such as voting, remains limited due to disinterest, lack of confidence and inadequate civic education. Barriers are particularly pronounced among youth from rural, low-income or migrant backgrounds, who face added challenges such as language barriers, digital exclusion and feelings of symbolic rather than meaningful participation. Civic education, where present, is often theoretical and fails to connect with young people's lived experiences. However, Interactive Seminars and National Roundtables revealed that when youth are offered structured, inclusive and practical avenues for involvement - such as democratic decision-making in seminars or real feedback mechanisms - they are eager to engage. The proposed solutions stress the need for institutional reforms that go beyond ad-hoc initiatives, emphasizing inclusive, experience-based civic education, systemic support for youth-led action and more responsive policymaking that validates youth input across all social and demographic groups.

5. Focus Areas and Solutions

5.1 Youth Proposals to foster solidarity and civic participation

Throughout the project activities, participants were given the opportunity to discuss potential solutions to their concerns and share ideas to better support young people in Lithuania, particularly TCN youth and young women.

The following recommendations aimed at enhancing solidarity and civic engagement within the European context. emerged from discussions with young people held during the FGDs, Seminar, and Roundtable:

1. For policymakers (national level):

- **Integrate youth participation mechanisms into national and local policymaking processes** to ensure sustained and meaningful engagement.
- **Improve civic education policy frameworks** by embedding experiential learning components, such as student councils, youth assemblies and real-world simulations.
- **Invest in youth-friendly communication strategies** to ensure EU and national political content and information are accessible and engaging for all demographic groups, including migrants and rural youth.

2. For educators:

- **Reform civic education curricula** to balance theoretical knowledge with hands-on civic activities and community engagement projects.
- **Equip teachers with tools**, training and motivation to deliver engaging and inclusive civic education.
- **Promote partnerships between schools and NGOs** to expose students to real civic experiences and democratic practices.

3. For youth organizations:

- **Expand outreach to underrepresented groups** by offering multilingual, inclusive programming and leadership opportunities.
- **Support long-term youth engagement strategies**, moving beyond one-off events to sustained involvement in civic initiatives.
- **Facilitate regular feedback loops with policymakers**, ensuring that youth contributions are visible, valued and acted upon.

6. Conclusion



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This country report reveals a multifaceted picture of youth civic knowledge and participation in Lithuania. Young people demonstrate a moderate to high awareness of EU institutions and programs, particularly well-known initiatives like Erasmus+ and the EU Youth Strategy. However,

across all data sources - desk research, FGDs, interviews, interactive seminars and national roundtables - a consistent gap emerges between awareness and meaningful understanding. Many youth are unable to explain the specific functions of EU institutions or understand how policies affect their lives, limiting their ability to engage fully in democratic processes.

Participation trends show encouraging signs: volunteering, involvement in NGOs and participation in school or local initiatives are relatively widespread. Still, formal political engagement - particularly voting among eligible youth - remains low, often due to disinterest, lack of political knowledge or a sense of disconnection from political institutions. Barriers to participation are especially acute among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those in rural areas, low-income communities and migrant groups. These young people often lack access to clear, youth-friendly information, feel excluded from decision-making and perceive their participation as symbolic rather than impactful.

Civic education is a critical area of concern. Findings indicate that current approaches are either lacking or overly theoretical, with limited real-world application or opportunities for active learning. Students often rely on non-formal education or NGO-led initiatives to gain practical civic experience. Interactive seminars and national roundtables affirmed that when young people are given space to participate meaningfully - through voting, open dialogue or collaborative decision-making - they respond positively and are eager to contribute.

In conclusion, Lithuanian youth show strong potential and interest in civic participation when adequately supported. Bridging the gap between awareness and action will require coordinated efforts among institutions, educators and civil society to build inclusive, practical, and empowering systems of engagement.



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Annex 1: Desk Research Questions

1. Knowledge

- What are the documented levels of awareness among the target audience regarding EU institutions, policies, legislation, and strategies?
- Are there any documented gaps in young persons' knowledge of national and EU processes?
 - Are the gaps in knowledge cross-cutting, or is there any documented relationship that emerges between specific identities (i.e., gender, socio-economic background, migratory background...) and levels of awareness and knowledge (or lack thereof) of political, civic, and solidarity mechanisms at the national and/or EU levels?
- What is the current climate regarding Euroscepticism, particularly among young
- people?

2. Participation

- What is the level of youth political and civic participation in the country? Does this level vary between national processes and EU processes? Consider activities such as voting, candidacy, holding office, campaigning, political membership, protests, boycotts, and involvement in policymaking.
- Are there any national policy documents and action plans related to youth democratic participation and political engagement? Include specific records related to the involvement of young TCNs and women and girls.
- Identify any national bodies that focus on youth democratic participation.

3. Barriers

- Are any laws, regulations, or policies supporting or hindering TCNs' participation in civic democratic life?
- Identify practical (non-legal) barriers, such as racism, xenophobia, racial profiling, gendered expectations, and socio-economic obstacles. Are there any stereotypes correlated with political and civic participation (or lack thereof)?
- Are any groups particularly discouraged from engaging in public life due to stereotypes and expectations (i.e., gendered expectations of “calm/nurturing” rather than assertive behavior for women, migrants and stereotypes of being “unqualified” or “uncooperative”,

young people and the

stereotype of “political apathy”)?

Annex 2: Survey Questions

Demographic Questions:

- **Age:**
 - 16
 - 17
 - 18
 - 19
 - 20
 - 21
 - 22
 - 23

- **What gender do you identify as?**
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary
 - Other: _____
 - Prefer not to say

- **What is your country of residence (i.e., in what country do you live?)**

- **What is your country of origin?**

- 1. Which of the following institutions, opportunities, and policies are you familiar with? By familiar, we mean you believe you could somewhat confidently describe their role, duties, or content in the EU. (Multiple Selection Possible)**
 - European Commission
 - European Parliament
 - European Youth Strategy 2019-2027/European Youth Goals



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- Erasmus +
- European Solidarity Corps
- Council of Europe
- Court of Justice of the European Union
- European Court of Human Rights
- None of these/Unsure

2. Below are some ways people can get involved in the work of the European Union. Which, if any, have you heard of? (Multiple Selection Possible)

- Petitions to the European Parliament
- Opportunities to visit the European Parliament
- Events organised by the European Parliament Liaison Office
- Contacting an MEP about an issue
- The European Youth Event (EYE)/EYE Online
- Events or online activities organized by together.eu
- The Charlemagne Youth Prize
- Euroscola
- None of these/Unsure

3. Do you know how the president of the European Commission or the European Parliament is appointed?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

4. Are you aware of the six core values of the European Union?

- Yes
- No
- Some of them

4.1 If you chose “Yes” or ‘Some of them”, can you try to name (some of) them?



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5. Are you aware of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

5.1 If you chose “Yes” or “Somewhat”, can you try to briefly talk about what it is/what it is about?

6. What is your understanding of the term “Gender Equality”?

7. What is your understanding of the term “European Democracy”?

8. Are you familiar with recent developments, policies, plans or decisions of the EU related to migration? What impact do these have in your national/local context?

8.1 Are you familiar with developments, policies, and plans, of the EU related to promoting Education, Culture, Youth, and Sports? What impact do these have in your national/local context?

9. In what ways do you think the EU or your State could promote civic and political participation of young people (EU citizens and third-country nationals) at the local, national, and European levels?

- Broadening electoral eligibility
- Provide greater protection for the right to protest
- Increase civic education opportunities across all educational levels



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- Stronger social media campaigns
- Finance local engagement activities
- Cultural events and festivals
- Other: _____

For the European Union, solidarity is a fundamental principle based on sharing the advantages, i.e., prosperity, and the burdens equally and justly among members ([Eurofund, 2011](#)).

10. In what ways do you believe your country or the EU could support you in expressing more acts of solidarity towards those most vulnerable in your daily life?

- More volunteering opportunities
- Awareness campaigns
- Funding for local initiatives
- More discussion of solidarity and participation opportunities in schools and public spaces
- Other: _____

11. On a scale of 1 to 5, do you think there are enough online opportunities to participate and engage in civic and political action in the EU?

- 1 - No, there are not enough
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 - Yes, there are enough
- I don't know

12. Select all of the activities in which you have taken part in the last year (12 months):



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(Multiple Selection Possible)

- Volunteered Abroad/In EU projects
- Volunteered at a local organization
- Participated in a Protest or Boycott
- Reached out to a representative (email, phone call...)
- Ran for office
- Took part in a political campaign
- Used social media to post/share/create content about a political issue you cared about
- Voted in the last local, national, or European election
- None of them/Unsure
- Other

13. If you ever have, who or what has inspired you to get civically or politically involved in your community or express solidarity with others?