



# FOR YOUTH INFORMATION!

Future-Ready  
Youth Information  
Systems: Evidence-  
Based Policy  
Recommendations



**Partners:**



April 2026

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programe, under the Grant AGREement Number 2024-1-SI02-KA220-YOU-000251355 from the National Agency in Slovenia - MOVIT.



**Co-funded by  
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# YOUTH-INFORMED FUTURES FOR INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES



## 1. Executive Summary

The FYI (For Youth Information) project brought together partners from five European countries (Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Cyprus) to explore how young people perceive the future and how their perspectives can inform more responsive and forward-looking policy development. Through a series of participatory foresight activities implemented at local and national levels, the project engaged young people in structured reflection on long-term societal developments and translated their insights into policy recommendations.



Across all participating countries, foresight workshops, multiplier events, Discord community discussions, and consultations, we created spaces where young people could critically engage with future scenarios, actively create their own, and reflect on the challenges and opportunities shaping their lives. These activities involved diverse groups of participants, including students, young people, and youth workers. In most cases, participants had limited prior experience with foresight methodologies yet demonstrated strong interest and engagement in future-oriented discussions.

The process enabled young people to move beyond short-term perspectives and engage with complex, long-term issues such as technological transformation, education systems, environmental sustainability, governance, and social change. By applying methods such as scenario building, backcasting, and participatory dialogue, participants were able to articulate both desirable and challenging future developments, as well as propose concrete actions for policymakers.

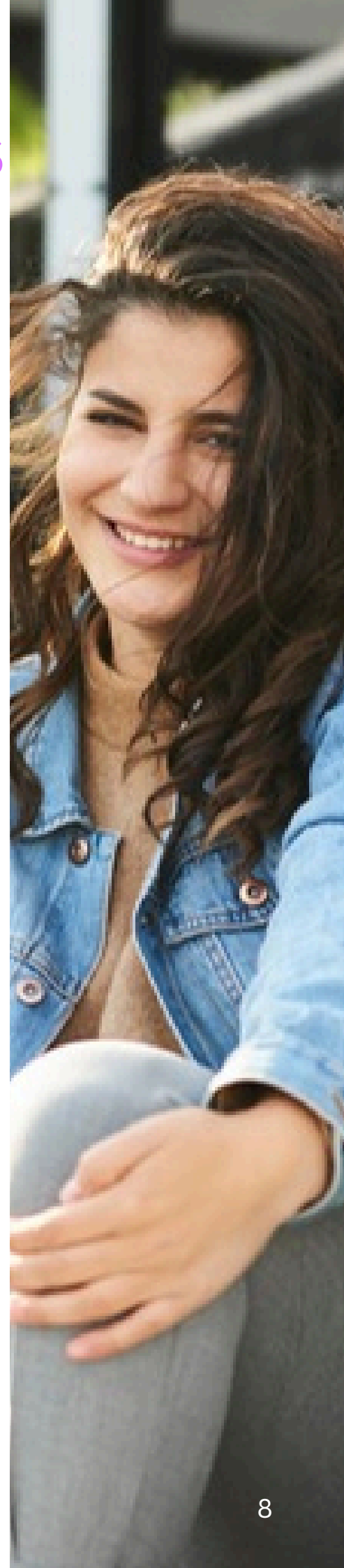
# 1.1 Youth Perspectives on Future Challenges

The insights gathered across all national contexts reveal that young people are highly aware of the complexity and uncertainty shaping their futures. Rapid technological development, evolving labour markets, environmental pressures, and changing social dynamics were consistently identified as key factors influencing future pathways.

At the same time, participants highlighted systemic limitations that affect their ability to navigate these changes effectively. Education systems were frequently perceived as insufficiently aligned with real-life needs, often described as too theoretical and not adequately preparing young people for uncertainty and long-term decision-making. Similarly, opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes were considered limited, contributing to disengagement and reduced trust in institutions.

In several national contexts, young people also pointed to structural challenges that directly affect their life choices and future planning. For example, in Slovakia, access to affordable housing, demographic change, and long-term stability were identified as key concerns influencing whether young people can envision building their future within the country. These issues were closely linked to broader questions of quality of life, institutional trust, and long-term societal resilience.

Mental well-being and social connection also emerged as central concerns. Participants highlighted the increasing impact of digitalisation on social relationships, including risks of isolation, reduced face-to-face interaction, and digital overdependence. These concerns were often linked to broader reflections on community life, belonging, and the need for supportive environments.



# 1.2 Key thematic priorities across countries



Despite differences in national contexts, the foresight activities revealed a strong convergence of priorities across all participating countries. The following thematic areas emerged consistently:

## 1. Future-Oriented Education and Skills Development

Young people expressed a clear need for education systems that better reflect future realities and equip them with relevant competences. This includes not only knowledge, but also critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability to understand and respond to long-term trends. The importance of integrating foresight approaches and future literacy into both formal and non-formal education was strongly emphasised.

## 2. Digital Transformation and Its Societal Impact

Digitalisation was recognised as a defining factor shaping future societies. Participants acknowledged its potential to improve access to information, services, and opportunities, but also highlighted risks related to over-reliance on technology, inequality in access, and the erosion of human interaction. The need for balanced, human-centred approaches to digital development was consistently stressed.

### 3. Youth Participation and Democratic Engagement

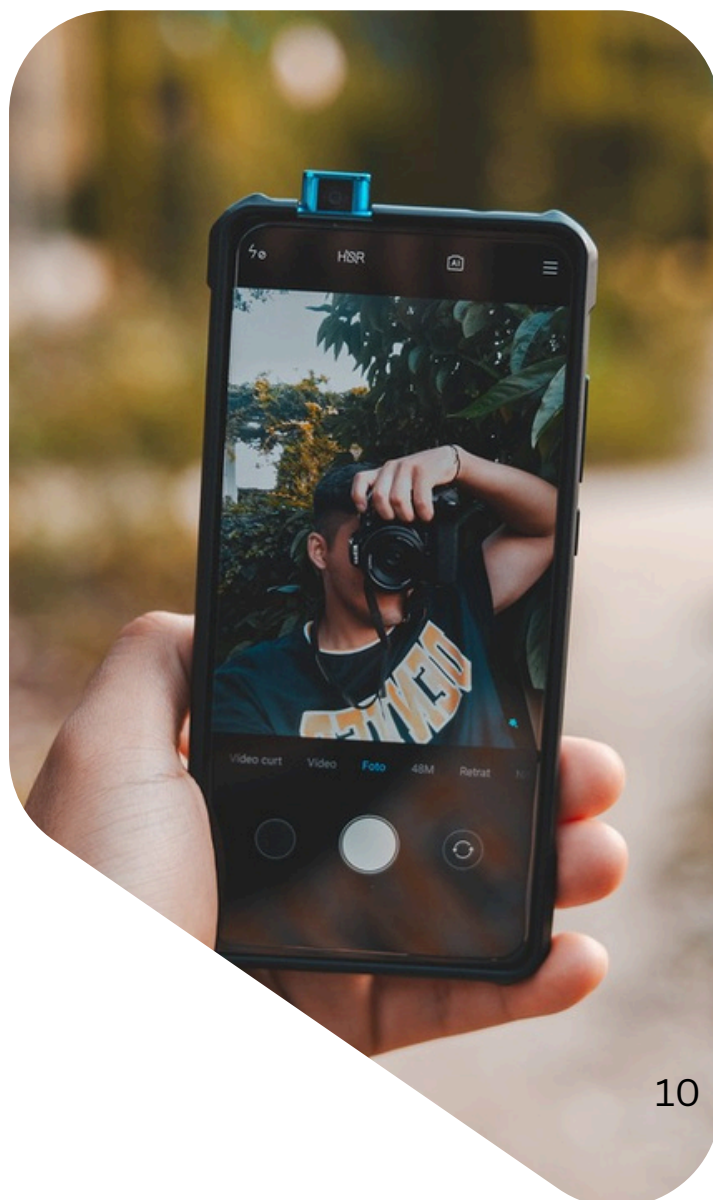
Across all countries, young people expressed a strong desire to be actively involved in shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives. They emphasised the importance of moving beyond symbolic participation toward meaningful engagement, where youth perspectives are genuinely considered in policymaking processes.

### 4. Well-being, Social Inclusion and Community Life

Mental health, social connection, and a sense of belonging were identified as essential components of young people's quality of life. Participants highlighted the importance of accessible community spaces, supportive environments, and initiatives that foster interaction, inclusion, and well-being.

### 5. Sustainability, Innovation and Youth-Led Action

Young people demonstrated strong awareness of environmental challenges and expressed interest in contributing to sustainable solutions. They also highlighted the importance of supporting youth-led initiatives, innovation, and local action as key drivers of positive change.



# 1.3 Value of Foresight-Based Youth Engagement

A key finding across all national reports is the added value of foresight methodologies as tools for youth engagement and policy development. The activities demonstrated that when young people are provided with structured methods and supportive environments, they are capable of engaging with complex issues, thinking critically about long-term developments, and proposing meaningful and actionable ideas.

The foresight approach enabled participants to:

- connect present challenges with future consequences,
- explore alternative development pathways,
- articulate both risks and opportunities and
- contribute to policy-relevant discussions.

Importantly, the process also highlighted that youth participation is most effective when it is integrated early in reflection and decision-making processes, rather than limited to consultation after policies are already defined.

# 1.4 Towards Consolidated Policy Recommendations

The insights gathered through the FYI project form the basis of a consolidated set of policy recommendations that reflect both shared European priorities and specific national contexts. While the recommendations address different thematic areas, they are interconnected and should be understood as part of a holistic approach to youth policy development.

They emphasise the need for:

- more future-oriented and flexible education systems,
- stronger youth participation mechanisms,
- more inclusive and responsible digital transformation,
- improved support for well-being and community life,
- increased investment in youth-led initiatives and innovation and
- targeted responses to structural challenges affecting youth futures.

These recommendations are intended to support policymakers, educational institutions, youth organisations, and local authorities in developing more inclusive, responsive, and forward-looking strategies.

## 1.5 Strategic Relevance

By consolidating youth perspectives from multiple countries, this document contributes to a broader understanding of how young people across Europe perceive future challenges and opportunities. It demonstrates that youth-informed foresight can serve as a valuable tool for strengthening policy relevance, improving participation, and supporting long-term strategic thinking.

The findings highlight the importance of recognising young people not only as beneficiaries of policy, but as active contributors to its development. Their perspectives provide essential insights for designing policies that are better aligned with real needs and capable of addressing future challenges.

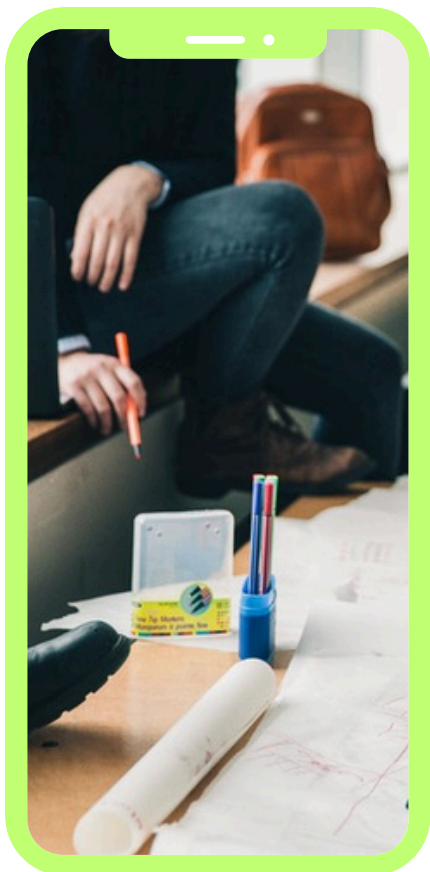
# 2

## INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY



# 2.1 Project Background and Rationale

The For Youth Information (FYI) project was developed in response to the growing need to better understand how young people perceive future societal developments and how their perspectives can be systematically integrated into policy and decision-making processes. Across Europe, young people are navigating increasingly complex transitions shaped by rapid technological advancement, environmental challenges, evolving labour markets, and shifting social dynamics.



These developments create both opportunities and uncertainties. While young people are often at the forefront of innovation and social change, they are also among the groups most affected by structural challenges, including access to education, employment, housing, and participation in democratic processes. Several national reports produced by partners of the FYI project highlight that existing systems do not always adequately equip young people with the competences needed to navigate these complexities or actively shape their futures.

At the same time, opportunities for meaningful youth participation in policymaking remain uneven. In some national contexts, young people report limited access to decision-making processes and low trust in institutions, which can contribute to disengagement and reduced civic participation. These challenges underline the importance of creating new approaches that enable young people to engage with long-term societal issues in a structured and meaningful way.



The FYI project addresses this need by introducing foresight-based methodologies into youth engagement processes. By creating spaces where young people can explore future scenarios, reflect on emerging trends, and connect present-day challenges with long-term developments, the project contributes to strengthening youth participation, improving future preparedness, and supporting more responsive policy development.

## 2.2 Objectives of the Policy Recommendations Document

This document consolidates policy recommendations developed across five partner countries and translates youth-generated insights into structured proposals for decision-makers. The objective is not to replace existing policy frameworks, but to complement them with perspectives grounded in participatory foresight processes.

More specifically, the document aims to:

- present a synthesis of youth perspectives on future societal developments,
- identify common challenges and priorities across different national contexts,
- highlight the added value of foresight methodologies in youth engagement,
- provide actionable policy recommendations based on youth-generated insights and
- contribute to more inclusive, participatory, and future-oriented policymaking.

*The recommendations are addressed to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers at local, national, and European levels, educational institutions, youth organisations, and civil society actors.*



## 2.3 Participatory Foresight Approach



A central element of the FYI project is the use of participatory foresight methodologies. Foresight, in this context, refers to structured approaches that support individuals and groups in exploring possible future developments, identifying emerging trends, and reflecting on long-term implications of present decisions.

Across all partner countries, foresight methods were used to:

- support critical reflection on societal trends,
- explore alternative future scenarios,
- encourage long-term thinking beyond immediate concerns,
- connect individual experiences with broader systemic developments and
- generate ideas and solutions for future challenges.

These methods were applied in a participatory way, ensuring that young people were not passive recipients of information but active contributors to the process.

The workshops demonstrated that foresight approaches can be successfully applied even among participants with limited prior experience. In the Estonian and Slovenian context, for example, the majority of participants reported little or no previous exposure to foresight methodologies, yet showed strong engagement and interest in exploring future developments. This indicates that foresight tools are accessible and adaptable to different groups of young people.



## 2.4 Implementation Across National Contexts



The FYI project was implemented across multiple national contexts, each adapting the foresight approach to local realities, participant groups, and institutional environments. While the structure of activities varied, all partner countries followed a shared methodological framework that ensured comparability and coherence of results.

### Slovenia

In Slovenia, four local foresight workshops were implemented at the Celje Youth Centre, providing a structured environment for young people to explore future societal developments. The workshops engaged participants in discussions on digitalisation, education, mental health, social relationships, and participation.

The local context offered a supportive ecosystem for youth engagement, with strong involvement of youth organisations and community initiatives. The workshops exceeded initial participation expectations, with four sessions involving 90 participants in total. This demonstrates both the relevance of the topic and the capacity of local youth structures to engage young people in future-oriented discussions.



# Slovakia

In Slovakia, foresight activities were implemented through a multiplier event in Nitra and a workshop in Trnava, primarily involving students of public administration and political science. These activities focused on long-term societal challenges such as governance, digitalisation, housing, demographic change, and environmental resilience.

Participants were encouraged to reflect on Slovakia's future up to 2040–2050 and to connect present-day challenges with long-term policy considerations. The discussions highlighted strong interest in strategic thinking and demonstrated that young people are willing to engage with complex policy topics when provided with appropriate formats.

# Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, two foresight workshops were conducted, including “The Future Now” workshop and the “Detectives of the Future” event. These activities explored future scenarios related to youth development, governance, education, and societal change. Participants developed multiple scenarios, including positive, negative, and alternative futures, allowing them to explore both desirable outcomes and potential risks. The process also revealed key concerns related to trust in institutions, participation, and systemic challenges, providing valuable input for policy recommendations.

# Estonia

In Estonia, the foresight workshop was conducted online and engaged participants in discussions on technological development, sustainability, and youth participation. The workshop included a pre-assessment phase, which revealed that most participants had limited prior experience with foresight methods but strong interest in future-oriented topics.

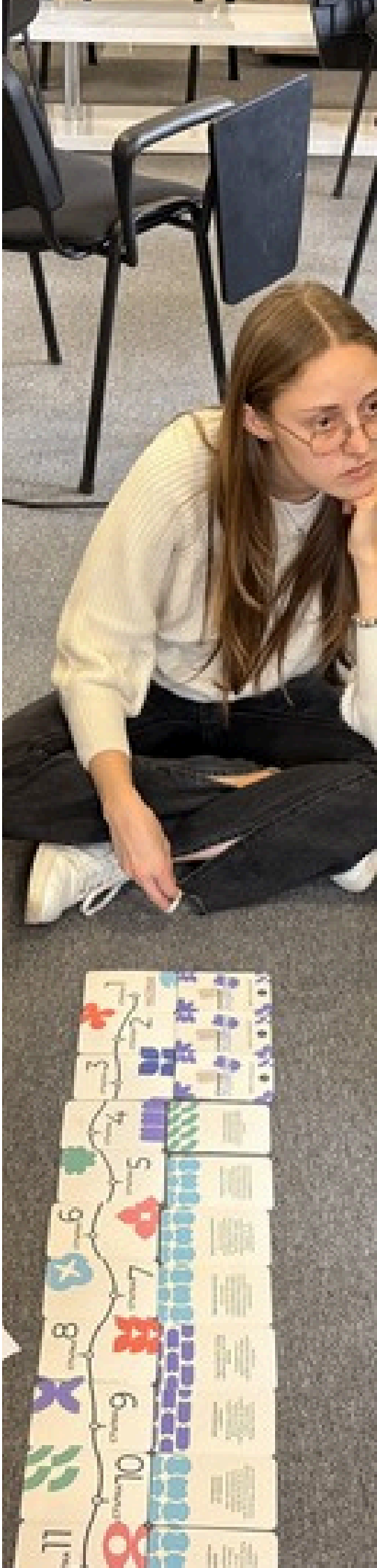
The scenarios developed during the workshop focused on digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and participatory governance, reflecting key priorities identified by participants.

# Cyprus

In Cyprus, one foresight workshop was conducted in person. Foresight activities focused on engaging young people in structured reflection on long-term societal developments through scenario-based discussions. Participants explored different future pathways, including aspects of governance, digitalisation, and broader global uncertainty, and translated their perspectives into policy-relevant insights.

The process emphasised active youth involvement in discussing future challenges and opportunities, with particular attention to how young people can contribute to shaping more inclusive and forward-looking societies. The discussions helped identify key priorities related to education, youth participation, institutional trust, and empowerment.

A distinctive element of the Cyprus activities was the strong link between participation and long-term strategic thinking, with young people expressing the need for more structured and continuous involvement in decision-making processes. These priorities align with broader trends observed across partner countries, while reinforcing the importance of strengthening youth agency and future-oriented policy approaches.



# 2.5 Methods and Tools Used

Across all national contexts, a combination of qualitative, participatory methods was used to engage young people and collect data.

## **Scenario Building**

Participants developed future scenarios that explored possible societal developments. These scenarios often included:

- positive (desired) futures,
- negative (challenging) futures,
- alternative or unexpected futures.

This approach allowed participants to examine both opportunities and risks, and to identify conditions needed to achieve preferred outcomes.

## **Backcasting**

Backcasting exercises were used to connect future scenarios with present-day actions. Participants worked backwards from imagined futures to identify steps that could lead to desired outcomes or prevent negative developments.

## **“Detectives of the Future” Method**

This method involved analysing fictional future situations and identifying underlying trends and causes. It encouraged participants to think critically about complex developments such as digitalisation, social change, and institutional dynamics.

## Group Discussions and Reflection

Facilitated discussions provided space for participants to share perspectives, compare ideas, and collectively reflect on challenges and solutions. These discussions were essential for identifying common themes and priorities.

## Pre-Assessment and Feedback Tools

Pre-assessment questionnaires were used to evaluate participants' familiarity with foresight concepts and to tailor facilitation of planned activities accordingly. Feedback mechanisms were also used to assess participant engagement and learning outcomes.

# 2.6 Data Collection and Analysis

The data used for developing policy recommendations was collected through:

- workshop outputs (scenarios, notes, discussions),
- participant contributions and reflections,
- thematic analysis of recurring ideas and priorities.

The analysis focused on identifying:

- common themes across countries,
- country-specific priorities,
- connections between different policy areas and
- actionable recommendations derived from youth insights.

Rather than relying on quantitative data, the process emphasised qualitative insights and participatory knowledge generated directly by young people. This approach ensures that the recommendations reflect lived experiences, perceptions, and expectations of youth.



## 2.7 Strengths and Limitations of the Approach

### Strengths

One of the key strengths of the methodology is its participatory nature. By actively involving young people in the process, the project ensures that policy recommendations are grounded in real perspectives rather than assumptions. The foresight approach also encourages long-term thinking, which is often missing in traditional policy discussions. It allows participants to move beyond immediate concerns and consider systemic developments and future implications.

Another strength is the adaptability of the methods. The activities were successfully implemented across different contexts, participant groups, and formats (including online and in-person settings).



## Limitations

At the same time, certain limitations should be acknowledged. While foresight methods provide valuable insights, they are based on perceptions and reflections rather than predictive data (since the participants in the workshops are not necessarily experts in the given topics). The scenarios developed represent possible futures rather than forecasts.

Finally, and most importantly, the integration of youth-generated insights into formal policymaking processes depends on the willingness and capacity of institutions to engage with such approaches.

# 2.8 Ethical and Participatory Considerations

The FYI project placed strong emphasis on creating inclusive and supportive environments for participation. Activities were designed to encourage open dialogue, respect diverse perspectives, and ensure that all participants had the opportunity to contribute.

Special attention was given to:

- creating safe spaces for discussion,
- encouraging equal participation,
- valuing different experiences and viewpoints,
- ensuring accessibility of methods and content.

The participatory nature of the process reinforces the principle that young people should be recognised as active contributors to policy development.

The methodology applied within the FYI project demonstrates that participatory foresight is an effective tool for engaging young people in discussions about future societal developments and translating their insights into policy-relevant recommendations. By combining structured methods with participatory approaches, the project successfully captured both shared European priorities and context-specific insights. The results provide a strong foundation for developing policies that are more inclusive, responsive, and aligned with the realities and expectations of young people.

# 3

## CROSS-COUNTRY INSIGHTS





## 3.1 Systemic Gaps Identified Across Contexts

Analysis of the national reports reveals a set of systemic gaps that shape young people's experiences across different countries. These gaps are not isolated but interconnected, often reinforcing each other and influencing young people's ability to plan and act on their future pathways.

**A key cross-cutting gap** relates to the disconnect between education systems and real-life application. Participants across countries consistently described education as insufficiently aligned with practical needs and long-term societal developments. The lack of integration of future-oriented competences (such as critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability to interpret trends) limits young people's preparedness for uncertainty and complex decision-making.

**A second systemic gap** concerns limited institutional responsiveness to youth perspectives. While opportunities for participation exist in some contexts, they are often perceived as formal or symbolic rather than meaningful. Young people expressed the need for earlier and more substantive involvement in policymaking processes, particularly in areas that directly affect their future trajectories.

**A third gap** relates to fragmentation of policy responses. Issues such as housing, employment, education, and demographic change are often addressed separately, despite being closely interconnected in young people's lived experiences. For example, in Slovakia, housing affordability is directly linked to decisions about independence, family formation, and whether young people remain in the country. This highlights the need for more integrated and cross-sectoral policy approaches.

**Finally**, a broader systemic issue concerns limited use of anticipatory approaches in policymaking. The foresight activities demonstrated that young people are capable of engaging with long-term thinking, yet such approaches are not consistently embedded in institutional processes. This results in policies that are more reactive than strategic.

## 3.2 Diverging National Priorities within Shared Frameworks

While common themes are evident across all countries, the national reports also highlight distinct priorities shaped by specific socio-economic and institutional contexts.

In **Slovakia**, the discussions were strongly oriented toward structural conditions affecting long-term life decisions, including housing availability, demographic trends, and retention of young people. Participants linked these factors directly to their ability to envision a stable future within the country, indicating a strong connection between policy conditions and migration intentions.

In **Slovenia**, a more pronounced emphasis was placed on mental well-being, social relationships, and community life, alongside concerns about digital overuse and social isolation. The local context, characterised by strong youth infrastructure, also enabled more concrete reflections on participation mechanisms and community-based solutions.

In **Bulgaria**, the discussions reflected broader concerns about a broader concern with institutional trust, governance, and systemic reform, including issues such as transparency and participation. These concerns were closely linked to perceived limitations in existing structures and the need for more inclusive and accountable governance models.

In **Estonia**, participants focused strongly on digital transformation, innovation, and sustainability, reflecting both national strengths and future-oriented priorities. The emphasis on technological development was accompanied by recognition of the need for inclusive access and balanced development.

In **Cyprus**, discussions highlighted priorities related to youth empowerment, participation, and the role of education in preparing young people for future challenges. Participants emphasised the importance of creating more structured opportunities for young people to actively engage in societal and policy processes, alongside the need to strengthen competences that support long-term thinking and adaptability. Particular attention was given to the role of education and youth work in equipping young people with skills relevant to rapidly changing social and technological environments. These priorities align with broader trends identified across countries, while reinforcing the importance of strengthening youth agency and ensuring that young people are recognised as active contributors to future-oriented policy development.

These variations demonstrate that while policy frameworks can be aligned at European level, effective implementation requires sensitivity to national and local conditions. Also, variations in group demographics can be attributed to some of the differences in priorities (e.g. mostly university students in Slovakia vs. secondary school students in Slovenia). The differences also highlight the importance of combining shared strategic priorities with context-specific policy responses.

## 3.3 Interconnections Between Policy Areas

The foresight processes revealed that young people perceive policy areas as deeply interconnected rather than separate domains. This perspective contrasts with traditional policy structures, which often operate in sectoral frames.

One of the most evident interconnections is between **education and labour market readiness**. Participants linked the relevance of education directly to their ability to navigate employment pathways and adapt to changing economic conditions. This connection was further extended to housing and independence, particularly in contexts where access to stable employment influences the ability to secure housing.

Another strong linkage exists between **digitalisation and social well-being**. While digital tools are recognised as essential for communication, learning, and access to services, participants also highlighted their impact on mental health, social interaction, and community engagement. Concerns about overdependence on digital environments were frequently connected to experiences of isolation and reduced face-to-face interaction.

A further interconnection can be observed between **participation and trust in institutions**. Limited opportunities for meaningful engagement were associated with lower levels of trust, while inclusive and participatory approaches were seen as key to strengthening legitimacy and accountability. This relationship was particularly visible in contexts where governance and transparency were identified as key concerns.

**Environmental sustainability** was also linked to broader questions of **long-term resilience and quality of life**. In Slovakia, for example, water resources were perceived not only as an environmental issue but as a strategic factor influencing national stability and future development.

These interconnections suggest that policy responses should be designed in a holistic manner, recognising the cumulative impact of different policy areas on young people's lives.

## 3.4 Perceptions of Risk and Opportunity

The scenarios developed across countries consistently combined both concerns about potential risks and recognition of emerging opportunities.

Among the most frequently identified risks were:

- increasing dependence on digital technologies and artificial intelligence,
- social isolation and weakening of community ties,
- lack of systemic reform in education and governance,
- limited opportunities for participation and influence,
- structural barriers affecting life stability (e.g. housing, employment).

These risks were often framed not as inevitable outcomes, but as developments that could be mitigated through appropriate policy responses.

At the same time, participants identified a range of opportunities, including:

- the potential of technology to improve access to information, services, and learning,
- the role of education reform in strengthening future preparedness,
- the possibility of more inclusive and participatory governance models,
- increased awareness and engagement in sustainability and environmental action,
- the capacity of young people to drive innovation and community initiatives.

Importantly, many of the opportunities identified are directly linked to the risks. For example, digitalisation is seen both as a risk (overdependence, inequality) and as an opportunity (efficiency, access, innovation). This dual perspective highlights the importance of balanced and context-sensitive policy approaches.

## 3.5 Youth Expectations Toward Institutions

Across all national contexts, young people articulated clear expectations regarding the role of institutions in shaping future societies.

A central expectation is that **institutions should become more forward-looking and responsive to change**. Participants expressed the need for policies that anticipate future developments rather than react to crises, and for decision-making processes that consider long-term implications.

Another key expectation is **the creation of genuine opportunities for participation**. Young people emphasised that participation should not be limited to consultation but should involve active engagement in shaping policies and solutions. This includes access to platforms for dialogue, involvement in planning processes, and recognition of youth contributions.

**Transparency and communication** were also identified as important factors. Participants highlighted the need for clearer information about policies, support mechanisms, and decision-making processes. This is particularly relevant in areas such as digital public services, where trust depends on understanding and accessibility.

Finally, **institutions are expected to support inclusive and supportive environments**, particularly in relation to well-being, education, and community life. This includes investment in youth spaces, support for non-formal learning, and recognition of diverse needs and backgrounds.

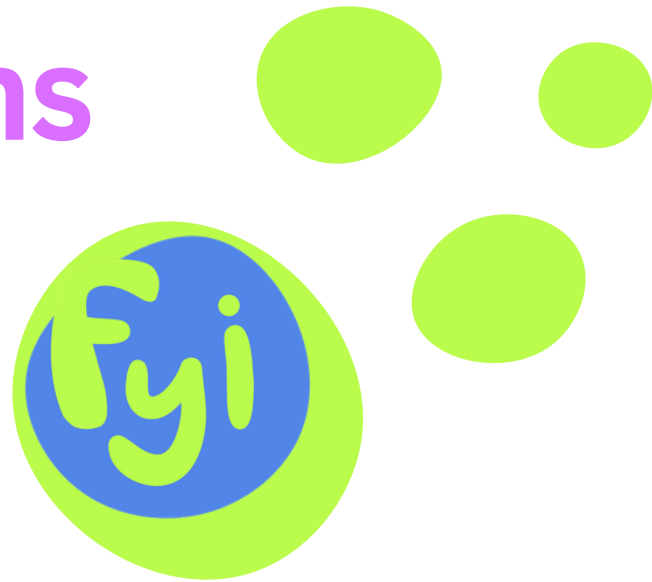
## 3.6 Added Value of Cross-Country Perspective

The comparative analysis across countries highlights both convergence and diversity in youth perspectives. The consistency of key themes across different contexts suggests that many of the challenges identified are not isolated but reflect broader European trends.

At the same time, the differences observed between countries provide valuable insights into how these challenges manifest in specific contexts. This dual perspective strengthens the relevance of the recommendations by ensuring that they are both broadly applicable and adaptable to local conditions.

The cross-country dimension also reinforces the value of shared learning and exchange. By comparing experiences and approaches, the project contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of youth needs and supports the development of more coherent and coordinated policy responses.

# 3.7 Implications for Policy Design



The insights generated through the foresight processes have several implications for policy design.

**First**, policies should move toward more integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, reflecting the interconnected nature of challenges identified by young people.

**Second**, there is a need to incorporate long-term and anticipatory perspectives into policymaking, ensuring that decisions are aligned with future developments rather than limited to short-term considerations.

**Third**, policies should be designed to enable active participation and co-creation, recognising young people as contributors rather than passive beneficiaries.

**Finally**, flexibility and adaptability should be key principles, allowing policies to respond to evolving conditions and diverse local contexts.

These implications provide a foundation for the consolidated policy recommendations presented in the following chapter.

# 4

## NATIONAL CONTEXT HIGHLIGHTS



# 4.1 Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the national context highlights are shaped by a combination of concerns about institutional trust, participation, education reform, and social well-being. The foresight process included both “The Future Now” workshop and the “Detectives of the Future” event, enabling participants to explore positive, negative, and surprising futures, as well as a fictional 2077 scenario involving the sudden disappearance of young people aged 16–18 .

A distinctive element of the Bulgarian report is the strong attention to trust in institutions and inclusive governance. Participants explicitly linked weak institutional support, lack of resources, corruption, and exclusion from decision-making with negative future developments. In contrast, desirable futures were associated with transparent institutions, reduced corruption, and meaningful youth participation. This makes governance quality a particularly central dimension of the Bulgarian context.

Education was also framed in a strongly reform-oriented way. Participants expressed the need for more practical, flexible, and relevant education systems, indicating dissatisfaction with systems perceived as overly theoretical and disconnected from real-life needs. Compared with some other contexts, the Bulgarian report places especially strong emphasis on the need for educational transformation as part of broader systemic change.

The “Detectives of the Future” activity also brought out concerns related to disengagement from formal systems, digital lifestyles, and changing identities and communication forms. This contributes a particularly vivid perspective on the risks of disconnection (both institutional and social) and on the possibility that young people may turn away from traditional structures if they are not perceived as relevant or supportive.


At the same time, the Bulgarian report highlights well-being, belonging, and community life as important priorities. Concerns about social pressure, real-life connection, and mental well-being were integrated with the broader analysis of digitalisation and participation, showing how institutional and social issues intersect in shaping youth futures.

The Bulgarian context is therefore marked by a strong orientation toward systemic reform, institutional legitimacy, practical education, and the rebuilding of trust through meaningful youth inclusion.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM BULGARIA



## MAIN TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



Trust in institutions  
Education reform  
Youth participation  
Digital lifestyles  
Social connection  
Well-being

## KEY FINDINGS



### TRUST MATTERS

transparent institutions, lower  
corruption, accountability,  
inclusion in decision-making

### EDUCATION MUST CHANGE

practical learning, relevant skills,  
critical thinking, future-oriented  
education

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANT REAL INFLUENCE

active participation, stronger youth  
councils, involvement in policymaking

### DIGITAL LIFE NEEDS BALANCE

overdependence on technology,  
disengagement from formal systems,  
weaker real-life connections

### COMMUNITY AND BELONGING ARE ESSENTIAL

stronger social ties, supportive  
spaces, better mental well-being

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS



REBUILD TRUST THROUGH  
TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE

REFORM EDUCATION SYSTEMS

STRENGTHEN YOUTH PARTICIPATION  
STRUCTURES

PROMOTE BALANCED DIGITAL  
DEVELOPMENT

INVEST IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT  
AND WELL-BEING

!!  
Main Message  
Young people believe better  
futures depend on trust,  
inclusion, and systems that  
truly respond to their needs.



## 4.2 Cyprus

In Cyprus, youth perspectives were shaped by reflection on the relationship between technological change, institutional trust, and broader global uncertainty. The scenarios developed in the workshops placed particular emphasis on the conditions needed for an “open and participatory society,” linking desirable futures with transparency, democratic engagement, protection of rights, and meaningful opportunities for youth participation in decision-making processes.

A distinctive feature of the Cyprus discussions is the strong connection between participation and long-term policy planning. Young people did not refer only to participation in general terms, but highlighted the need to be involved in strategic discussions about future societal development. This indicates a preference for more structured and sustained forms of engagement, rather than one-off consultations. The Cyprus national report also links this to existing national priorities related to youth empowerment and the National Youth Strategy 2030, while noting that gaps remain in translating these ambitions into everyday practice.

Cyprus also stands out for the way participants connected digital transformation with ethical governance and trust. In the scenarios focused on artificial intelligence and technological advancement, desirable futures were associated not simply with innovation, but with balanced development, transparency, and responsible governance of technology. This suggests that for participants in Cyprus, the issue is not only access to digital tools, but the wider political and ethical environment in which those tools operate.


Another notable element is the inclusion of broader geopolitical and climate-related uncertainty in the scenario work. Participants reflected on futures shaped by geopolitical stability versus instability and by the intensity of climate change impacts, indicating a wider frame of reference that goes beyond immediate youth policy concerns. Within this, they favoured futures characterised by stability, inclusiveness, and sustainable development, where opportunities are supported by secure and socially cohesive conditions.

The Cyprus report therefore highlights a context in which youth priorities are closely tied to questions of governance quality, institutional trust, ethical digital transformation, and the ability of young people to contribute to long-term strategic decision-making.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM CYPRUS



## MAIN TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



- Youth empowerment
- Democratic participation
- Education & future skills
- Ethical digitalisation
- Institutional trust
- Sustainability

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS



- STRENGTHEN YOUTH PARTICIPATION SYSTEMS
- BUILD TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE
- PROMOTE ETHICAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
- IMPROVE FUTURE-ORIENTED EDUCATION
- SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

## KEY FINDINGS



- YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO BE INVOLVED**  
real participation in decisions, stronger youth voice, structured dialogue with institutions
- TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY ARE ESSENTIAL**  
open governance, accountable institutions, protection of rights, fair opportunities
- TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ETHICS**  
responsible AI use, balanced digital development, human-centred policies
- EDUCATION SHOULD PREPARE FOR CHANGE**  
adaptability, long-term thinking, relevant future skills, stronger youth work support
- STABILITY SUPPORTS OPPORTUNITY**  
social cohesion, sustainable development, resilience in times of uncertainty

**Main Message**

Young people see the strongest future in a society built on trust, participation, and responsible progress.



## 4.3 Estonia

In Estonia, the national context highlights are shaped by a strong focus on technological development, sustainability, and youth participation, reflecting the three main scenario areas explored during the workshop. The workshop was conducted online and involved participants who were largely new to foresight methods, with around 72 % reporting little or no prior experience. Despite this, participants showed strong interest in discussing future societal developments, particularly in relation to technology, sustainability, and decision-making.

A defining characteristic of the Estonian context is the emphasis on digital and technological competence as a future requirement. Participants explored a “digital and technology-oriented future” in which education, employment, and everyday life are increasingly shaped by technological development. The focus here is less on digital risks alone and more on ensuring that young people are equipped to adapt to innovation, participate in technology-related initiatives, and access the tools needed to engage in future labour markets and learning environments.

Estonia also places significant emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility. Participants identified environmental awareness, sustainable lifestyles, and community-level environmental action as central elements of a desirable future. This gives the Estonian report a strong orientation toward green transition and youth engagement in sustainability, with particular attention to the role of education and local initiatives in supporting these goals.

A third key feature is the focus on structured youth participation in public discussion and policymaking. Participants imagined a future in which young people have stronger representation, more opportunities to engage in dialogue, and greater recognition of their perspectives in policy development. Compared with other reports, the Estonian document presents this in a highly structured way, connecting participation directly to platforms, consultation mechanisms, and collaboration between institutions and young people.

The Estonian context therefore, highlights a future-oriented model centred on preparedness for technological change, environmental responsibility, and organised participation structures. It reflects a context in which young people’s concerns are framed less through immediate structural insecurity and more through the need to strengthen capacity, access, and involvement in shaping future developments.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM ESTONIA



## MAIN TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

- Digital transformation
- Innovation & future jobs
- Sustainability
- Youth participation
- Education
- Community responsibility



## KEY FINDINGS

**Future Skills are Essential**  
digital competences, adaptability, critical thinking, continuous learning

**Technology Creates Opportunity**  
innovation, smarter learning, new career paths, modern solutions

**Sustainability Is a Priority**  
environmental awareness, responsible lifestyles, local green action, long-term responsibility

**Young People Want Stronger Representation**  
more dialogue with decision-makers, visible participation channels, recognition of youth perspectives

**Preparedness Matters**  
systems that help young people respond to rapid change and future uncertainty

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

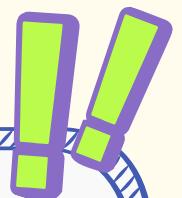
Strengthen future-oriented education

Build advanced digital competences

Support youth role in sustainability transitions

Expand structured participation opportunities

Connect innovation with inclusion



### Main Message

Young people want to be ready for the future and actively involved in shaping it.



## 4.4 Slovakia

In Slovakia, the national context highlights are strongly shaped by concerns about long-term stability, quality of life, and the conditions under which young people can imagine building their future in the country. The discussions were explicitly connected to questions of governance, democracy, digitalisation, housing, demographic change, and environmental resilience, reflecting a broad understanding of how structural conditions influence youth life choices.

A particularly distinctive aspect of the Slovak discussions is the emphasis on youth retention. Participants repeatedly linked their view of the future to whether Slovakia can provide stable living conditions, affordable housing, and a sense that young people's needs are taken seriously. The desired future was framed not only in terms of policy improvement, but in terms of whether the country becomes a place where young people can realistically choose to stay.

Housing was one of the most concrete and repeatedly referenced issues. Young people connected housing accessibility directly to independence, future planning, and family life. The report notes that participants referred to the Vienna model as an example of affordable and stable rental housing supported by public policy, showing that their reflections were not abstract but grounded in identifiable policy inspiration points.

Another national priority in Slovakia concerns human-centred digitalisation of public services. Participants imagined a state that is less bureaucratic, easier to navigate, and more efficient, with digital identity and user-friendly public services playing an important role. Unlike broader digital literacy debates in some other contexts, the Slovak case places stronger emphasis on digital public administration and institutional usability.

The Slovak report also highlights concerns about demographic decline and ageing, which participants understood as complex long-term challenges requiring more serious debate and strategic planning. Closely related to this is the issue of environmental resilience, particularly the strategic importance of drinking water, which participants saw as one of Slovakia's major strengths in the face of climate change and possible migration pressures.

Overall, the Slovak context is marked by a strong focus on structural and systemic conditions: whether institutions can provide stability, whether policy can support long-term life planning, and whether the country can remain a viable place for young people's future.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM SLOVAKIA



## MAIN TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

- Housing affordability
- Youth retention
- Governance & trust
- Digital public services
- Demographic change
- Environmental resilience



## KEY FINDINGS

### Housing Shapes Youth Futures

Housing access is linked with independence, family planning, long-term stability, decision to stay in the country

### Young People Want Reasons to Stay

Future quality of life depends on opportunities, responsive institutions, stable living conditions

### Public Services Should Work Better

Less bureaucracy, user-friendly services, digital solutions that save time

### Long-Term Challenges Need Action

Ageing population, migration trends, need for strategic planning

### Sustainability Is Strategic

Natural resources, especially water, seen as key assets for future resilience

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Treat housing as a youth policy priority

Improve conditions for young people to remain in Slovakia

Modernise and simplify public services

Develop responses to demographic change

Integrate sustainability into long-term planning



### Main Message

Young people see the future through real-life conditions: if stability, trust, and opportunity improve, they are more likely to build their future at home.



## 4.5 Slovenia

In Slovenia, the national context highlights are strongly rooted in the local experience of the Celje Youth Centre and the supportive youth ecosystem in which the workshops were implemented. The report connects broader national challenges related to digitalisation, education, employment, and well-being with a local context that offers active youth programming, non-formal learning, and participatory opportunities.

A particularly distinctive feature of the Slovenian case is the strong emphasis on mental health, social relationships, and supportive communities. Participants repeatedly connected future challenges not only to systems and policies, but to the quality of everyday life, the risks of social isolation, and the importance of spaces where young people can connect and feel supported. This gives the Slovenian report a more relational and community-centred dimension than some of the other national documents.

Another prominent theme is the concern with balanced and responsible use of digital technologies. Young people recognised technology and artificial intelligence as central forces shaping their future, but also expressed concerns about overdependence, reduced social interaction, and declining critical thinking. In the Slovenian context, digitalisation is therefore discussed not only in terms of competence and innovation, but also in terms of social and psychological balance. Slovenia also stands out for the way the report connects youth participation to concrete local practice. The document references participatory budgeting in Celje, where young people have their own category and access to funding opportunities. This provides an example of how local governance mechanisms can already support youth engagement<sup>[1]</sup>, while also illustrating the report's broader call for stronger and more meaningful participation structures.

The scale and implementation of the workshops are also notable. The target was exceeded substantially, with four workshops and around 90 participants in total, suggesting strong interest and receptiveness among young people in this context. This reinforces the Slovenian report's emphasis on the value of youth spaces and non-formal structures in enabling future-oriented discussion.

The Slovenian context is therefore characterised by a strong focus on well-being, digital balance, community support, and practical local participation, framed within an already active youth environment.

<sup>1</sup> Another example of local mechanisms supporting youth in Celje is a document »Local Program for Youth« – by adopting it, the City Municipality of Celje has committed to systematically regulating the youth sector and establishing a better quality environment for the life and development of young people in the long term. The program defines specific measures that will be overseen by the Celje Youth Center as the central institution in the youth sector in the City Municipality of Celje.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA



## MAIN TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

- Digitalisation & AI
- Mental health
- Education & future skills
- Social relationships
- Youth participation
- Community life

## KEY FINDINGS



**Young People Want Future Skills**  
critical thinking, adaptability, planning skills, problem-solving

**Technology Needs Balance**  
Technology brings opportunities, but also risks: overdependence, reduced face-to-face contact, digital overload

**Well-being Matters**  
Supportive environments, safe youth spaces, stronger social connection, community belonging

**Youth Want a Voice**  
Real participation in decisions, opportunities to shape their communities, stronger dialogue with institutions

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduce foresight & future literacy in schools and youth work

Expand meaningful youth participation

Strengthen digital and media literacy

Support transversal skills for uncertain futures

Invest in youth spaces and mental well-being



### Good Practice Example

Celje participatory budgeting includes a dedicated youth category with funding opportunities for young people.



### Main Message

Young people are ready to shape the future, if given the tools, trust, and opportunities.

# FYI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS KEY HIGHLIGHTS



## MAIN THEMES ACROSS COUNTRIES



Future-oriented education  
Digital transformation  
Youth participation  
Well-being & inclusion  
Sustainability & innovation  
Structural youth challenges

## CORE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



INTEGRATE FORESIGHT INTO EDUCATION AND YOUTH WORK

STRENGTHEN DIGITAL AND MEDIA COMPETENCES

EXPAND MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

INVEST IN WELL-BEING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

SUPPORT YOUTH-LED INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

ADDRESS STRUCTURAL BARRIERS SUCH AS HOUSING AND INEQUALITY

## KEY FINDINGS



### YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY TO CONTRIBUTE

Across all countries, participants showed strong ability to reflect on complex future challenges and propose solutions.

### EDUCATION MUST EVOLVE

Young people want systems that build critical thinking, adaptability, practical

### PARTICIPATION MUST BE REAL

Youth expect genuine influence, continuous dialogue, co-creation with institutions.

### DIGITAL PROGRESS NEEDS BALANCE

Technology offers opportunities, but young people also highlighted digital overload, inequality, ethical concerns, weaker social connection.

### WELL-BEING IS FOUNDATIONAL

Supportive communities, safe spaces, and inclusion are essential for youth development.

### LOCAL CONTEXTS MATTER

Shared priorities exist across Europe, but solutions must be adapted to national and local realities.



### Main Message

Young people across Europe are ready to shape the future, institutions must be ready to shape it with them.



# 5

## CONSOLIDATED POLICY AREAS



# 5.1 Future-Oriented Education and Skills Development

Across all national contexts, education emerges as a central system influencing how young people understand and navigate the future. Young people believe that current systems are not sufficiently aligned with the demands of rapidly changing social, technological, and environmental conditions.

A key issue lies in the limited development of forward-looking competences, including the ability to anticipate change, understand complexity, and make informed long-term decisions. While participants demonstrated these abilities during foresight activities, such competences are not consistently embedded within formal education structures.

Another recurring dimension concerns the relevance and applicability of learning. Young people expressed the need for education that connects theoretical knowledge with practical application, enabling them to better understand real-world systems and their role within them. This includes not only labour market readiness, but also broader life skills related to decision-making, adaptability, and critical thinking.

The role of non-formal education and youth work is particularly significant in this area. In several contexts, these spaces provide opportunities for experiential learning, reflection, and participation that complement formal systems. However, their contribution is not always fully recognised or integrated into national education strategies.

This policy area therefore, focuses on strengthening education as a system that prepares young people not only for current conditions, but for navigating uncertainty and shaping future developments.

## 5.2 Digital Transformation and Critical Digital Competences

Digitalisation is consistently identified as a defining factor shaping future societies, influencing access to information, communication, public services, and economic opportunities. However, the analysis highlights that the challenge is not only access to digital tools, but also the ability to engage with them critically and responsibly.

Participants across countries emphasised the need for deeper digital understanding, including awareness of how technologies function, how information is created and distributed, and how digital environments influence behaviour. This reflects a shift from basic digital literacy toward more advanced competences that enable informed and autonomous engagement.

The development of artificial intelligence and automation is perceived as both an opportunity and a source of uncertainty. Young people recognised the potential for increased efficiency and innovation, while also expressing concerns related to dependency, ethical considerations, and unequal access.

In addition, digitalisation is closely linked to social interaction and well-being. Participants highlighted changes in communication patterns, including reduced face-to-face interaction and the potential for social isolation. This indicates the need for balanced approaches that consider both technological advancement and its social implications.

This policy area addresses digital transformation as a multidimensional process, requiring not only technical solutions but also educational, ethical, and social considerations.

## 5.3 Youth Participation and Co-Creation in Policymaking

The analysis reveals a consistent gap between existing participation structures and young people's expectations of meaningful engagement. While formal mechanisms for participation may exist, their effectiveness depends on the extent to which young people can influence outcomes.

Participants across contexts emphasised the need for active and continuous involvement in decision-making processes, rather than one-time consultations. This includes opportunities to contribute to policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

A key element is the shift toward co-creation, where young people are recognised as partners in developing solutions rather than passive recipients of policies. This approach requires institutional willingness to share responsibility and to integrate youth perspectives into decision-making frameworks.

The relationship between participation and institutional trust is also significant. Limited opportunities for meaningful engagement contribute to lower trust, while inclusive and transparent processes can strengthen legitimacy and accountability. Digital tools can support participation by expanding access and facilitating communication, but participants highlighted the importance of maintaining offline and community-based engagement spaces as essential components of participatory processes.

This policy area focuses on redefining participation as an ongoing, structured, and impactful element of policymaking.



## 5.4 Well-being, Social Inclusion, and Community Support

Well-being is identified as a key condition for young people's ability to engage in education, work, and participation. It is understood not only as an individual issue, but as a result of broader social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Participants highlighted the importance of supportive social environments, including access to spaces where young people can interact, collaborate, and build relationships. Youth centres, community initiatives, and non-formal learning environments were identified as important contributors to these processes.

The impact of digitalisation and changing social dynamics on well-being was also emphasised. Increased reliance on digital communication, combined with external pressures, contributes to experiences of stress, isolation, and reduced social interaction.

Social inclusion is closely linked to well-being, particularly in ensuring that all young people have access to opportunities and support systems. This includes addressing barriers faced by young people with fewer opportunities and ensuring that participation is accessible and inclusive.

This policy area therefore focuses on strengthening both structural and community-level conditions that support well-being and inclusion.

## 5.5 Youth-Led Innovation, Sustainability, and Initiative Support

Young people across all contexts demonstrated strong motivation to engage in innovation and contribute to sustainable development. This is reflected in their interest in local initiatives, community projects, and practical solutions to societal challenges.

Sustainability is understood in a broad sense, encompassing environmental responsibility, resource management, and long-term societal resilience. Participants highlighted the importance of aligning individual actions, community initiatives, and policy frameworks to support sustainable development.

Innovation is closely linked to youth-led action, with participants recognising their own role in initiating and implementing projects. However, the analysis also identifies barriers, including limited access to resources, lack of support structures, and challenges in scaling initiatives.

This policy area focuses on creating enabling environments that support young people in moving from ideas to implementation, recognising their role as active contributors to societal development.

## 5.6 Structural Conditions Shaping Youth Futures

In several national contexts, young people highlighted structural conditions that directly influence their ability to plan and build their futures. These conditions operate across multiple domains and are interconnected.

Housing was identified as a critical factor influencing independence, stability, and long-term planning. Limited access to affordable housing affects decisions related to employment, family life, and geographical mobility.

Demographic trends, including ageing populations and migration, were also recognised as long-term challenges requiring coordinated policy responses. Participants demonstrated awareness of how these trends influence economic and social systems.

Environmental factors, particularly the management of natural resources, were linked to broader questions of resilience and sustainability. In some contexts, specific resources were identified as strategically important for future stability.

This policy area highlights the importance of addressing broader systemic conditions alongside individual competences and opportunities.



# 6

## CONSOLIDATED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



# 6.1 Policy Area: Future-Oriented Education and Skills Development

## Recommendation 1: Integrate Foresight and Future Literacy into Education Systems

### Rationale

Across all national contexts, young people demonstrated the ability to engage with long-term thinking, scenario development, and systemic analysis when exposed to structured foresight methodologies. However, such approaches are not systematically included in formal education. This creates a gap between the competences young people need and those currently developed through education systems.

### Proposed Actions

- Introduce foresight-based modules within formal education curricula at secondary and tertiary levels.
- Integrate scenario-building, trend analysis, and long-term thinking into existing subjects.
- Develop teacher training programmes focused on participatory foresight methodologies.
- Support cooperation between schools and youth organisations to implement non-formal foresight activities.

### Key Stakeholders

- Ministries of Education
- Educational institutions (schools, universities)
- Youth organisations and youth centres
- Teacher training institutions

### Expected Impact

- Improved capacity of young people to navigate uncertainty and complexity.
- Stronger alignment between education and future societal needs.
- Increased engagement of young people in long-term thinking and decision-making.

## Recommendation 2: Strengthen the Link Between Education and Real-Life Application

### Rationale

Participants across countries highlighted the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Education systems are perceived as insufficiently connected to real-life challenges, limiting young people's ability to apply knowledge in decision-making, employment, and participation contexts.

### Proposed Actions

- Expand project-based and experiential learning approaches within formal education.
- Encourage partnerships between educational institutions, local communities, and organisations.
- Introduce interdisciplinary learning formats addressing real societal challenges.
- Support the inclusion of practical life skills (e.g. decision-making, problem-solving, adaptability).

### Key Stakeholders

- Educational institutions
- Local authorities
- Civil society organisations
- Employers and community partners

### Expected Impact

- Increased relevance of education for young people's lives.
- Enhanced problem-solving and adaptability skills.
- Improved transition from education to employment and independent living.

# Recommendation 3: Recognise and Integrate Non-Formal Education

## Rationale

Non-formal education and youth work play a critical role in developing competences not fully addressed in formal systems, including participation, critical thinking, and social skills. Despite this, their contribution is not consistently recognised or integrated into broader education frameworks.

## Proposed Actions

- Develop frameworks for recognising competences gained through non-formal education – and give them weight (such as Youthpass certificates).
- Strengthen cooperation between formal and non-formal education providers.
- Provide sustainable funding for youth work and non-formal learning initiatives.
- Include youth organisations in national education and skills development strategies.

## Key Stakeholders

- National and local authorities
- Youth organisations
- Educational institutions
- Funding bodies

## Expected Impact

- Greater recognition of diverse learning pathways.
- Strengthened role of youth work in skills development.
- Increased access to learning opportunities beyond formal education.

# 6.2 Policy Area: Digital Transformation and Critical Digital Competences

## Recommendation 4: Develop Advanced Critical Digital Skills

### Rationale

Young people are active users of digital tools but highlighted the need for deeper understanding of digital systems, including information flows, algorithmic influence, and ethical implications. Current approaches often focus on basic digital literacy, leaving gaps in critical engagement.

### Proposed Actions

- Integrate critical digital literacy into education at all levels.
- Develop programmes focused on media literacy, data awareness, and algorithmic understanding.
- Promote interdisciplinary approaches combining technology, ethics, and social sciences.
- Support youth-led initiatives exploring digital topics.

### Key Stakeholders

- Ministries of Education
- Educational institutions
- Youth organisations
- Digital and media organisations

### Expected Impact

- Increased ability to critically evaluate digital content and systems.
- Reduced vulnerability to misinformation and manipulation.
- More informed and responsible digital participation.

# Recommendation 5: Ensure Human-Centred Digital Transformation

## Rationale

Participants emphasised that digital transformation should not be driven solely by efficiency and innovation, but must consider social, ethical, and well-being implications. Concerns about overdependence, inequality, and reduced human interaction highlight the need for balanced approaches.

## Proposed Actions

- Incorporate ethical and social considerations into digital policy development.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusiveness in digital public services.
- Promote balanced use of digital tools in education and daily life.
- Support research and monitoring of digitalisation's impact on well-being.

## Key Stakeholders

- Governments and policymakers
- Public institutions
- Technology developers
- Research organisations

## Expected Impact

- More inclusive and equitable digital systems.
- Reduced negative impacts of digitalisation on well-being.
- Increased trust in digital transformation processes.

# 6.3 Policy Area: Youth Participation and Co-Creation

## Recommendation 6: Establish Structured Mechanisms for Youth Co-Creation

### Rationale

Young people consistently expressed the need for participation that goes beyond consultation. Existing mechanisms often lack continuity and influence, limiting their effectiveness.

### Proposed Actions

- Create permanent youth advisory structures at local and national levels.
- Integrate youth representatives into policymaking processes.
- Develop co-creation frameworks for policy design and implementation.
- Ensure feedback loops demonstrating how youth input is used.

### Key Stakeholders

- Governments and public institutions
- Local authorities
- Youth organisations
- Policy development bodies

### Expected Impact

- Increased influence of young people on policy outcomes.
- Stronger alignment between policies and youth needs.
- Establishing structured dialogue between youth and decision-makers.
- Improved trust in institutions.

# Recommendation 7: Expand Accessible Participation Opportunities

## **Rationale**

Barriers to participation remain, particularly for young people with fewer opportunities. Participation must be inclusive, accessible, and adapted to different needs and contexts.

## **Proposed Actions**

- Develop outreach strategies targeting underrepresented groups.
- Combine online and offline participation formats.
- Provide support (financial, logistical, informational) for participation.
- Create safe and inclusive environments for engagement.

## **Key Stakeholders**

- Local and national authorities
- Youth organisations
- Community organisations
- Social services

## **Expected Impact**

- Broader and more diverse participation.
- Reduced inequalities in access to decision-making.
- Strengthened social inclusion.

# 6.4 Policy Area: Well-being, Social Inclusion, and Community Support

## Recommendation 8: Strengthen Community-Based Youth Support Structures

### Rationale

Young people across contexts highlighted the importance of supportive environments where they can meet, collaborate, and build relationships. Community-based structures such as youth centres, local initiatives, and non-formal spaces play an important role in reducing isolation and strengthening belonging, yet their availability and sustainability are uneven.

### Proposed Actions

- Invest in accessible youth spaces at local level, including youth centres and community hubs.
- Support regular programmes that encourage peer interaction, collaboration, and informal learning.
- Strengthen cooperation between municipalities, schools, and youth organisations in providing youth services.
- Ensure long-term operational support for existing community-based youth structures.

### Key Stakeholders

- Local authorities and municipalities
- Youth organisations and youth centres
- Educational institutions
- Community organisations

### Expected Impact

- Stronger sense of belonging among young people.
- Increased social connection and community participation.
- More resilient local youth ecosystems.
- Reduced experiences of isolation.

# Recommendation 9: Integrate Well-being into Youth, Education, and Community Policies

## Rationale

Well-being was consistently linked to educational pressure, digital overuse, social disconnection, and lack of supportive environments. Participants did not frame well-being as a separate issue, but as something influenced by multiple systems. This requires integrated responses rather than isolated interventions.

## Proposed Actions

- Include well-being objectives within youth, education, and local development strategies.
- Integrate mental well-being themes into youth programmes and educational settings.
- Promote preventive approaches focused on connection, resilience, and healthy routines.
- Develop referral pathways between schools, youth services, and relevant support providers.

## Key Stakeholders

- Ministries responsible for youth, education, health, and social affairs
- Schools and universities
- Youth organisations
- Local authorities

## Expected Impact

- Stronger preventative support for young people.
- Improved coordination between relevant systems.
- Greater awareness of well-being as a policy issue.
- Healthier and more supportive learning and community environments.

# Recommendation 10: Ensure Inclusion of Young People with Fewer Opportunities

## **Rationale**

Participation, learning, and support opportunities are not equally accessible to all young people. Structural, economic, geographic, and social barriers can limit access to programmes and decision-making processes. Inclusive policy design is therefore essential across all youth-related interventions.

## **Proposed Actions**

- Apply inclusion measures in all youth programmes and participation mechanisms.
- Remove financial and logistical barriers to participation.
- Use outreach approaches tailored to underrepresented groups.
- Monitor participation diversity and adjust programmes accordingly.

## **Key Stakeholders**

- Public authorities
- Youth organisations
- Social services
- Educational institutions

## **Expected Impact**

- More equitable access to opportunities.
- Greater diversity in youth participation.
- Reduced exclusion from learning and civic processes.
- Stronger social cohesion.

# 6.5 Policy Area: Youth-Led Innovation, Sustainability, and Initiative Support

## Recommendation 11: Create Enabling Systems for Youth-Led Projects

### Rationale

Young people across countries demonstrated willingness to develop ideas and contribute solutions to local and societal challenges. However, turning ideas into action often depends on access to funding, mentoring, and practical support. Without enabling systems, motivation may not translate into implementation.

### Proposed Actions

- Establish small grant schemes for youth-led initiatives.
- Provide mentoring and coaching support for project development.
- Simplify administrative procedures for youth applicants.
- Create visible pathways from local pilot ideas to larger support programmes.

### Key Stakeholders

- National and local authorities
- Funding agencies
- Youth organisations
- Community foundations and civil society actors/organisations, NGOs.

### Expected Impact

- Increased number of youth-led initiatives.
- Stronger practical engagement of young people.
- Development of local solutions to community challenges.
- Greater confidence and leadership among participants.

# Recommendation 12: Strengthen Youth Engagement in Sustainability Transitions

## Rationale

Environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability were recurring themes across national reports. Young people expressed interest in contributing to sustainable lifestyles, local environmental initiatives, and responsible resource management. Their engagement should be recognised as a strategic asset.

## Proposed Actions

- Integrate sustainability topics into youth programmes and education initiatives.
- Support youth-led environmental and circular economy projects.
- Encourage cooperation between municipalities, schools, and youth organisations on local sustainability actions.
- Create opportunities for youth contribution to climate and sustainability planning processes.

## Key Stakeholders

- Ministries responsible for the environment, education, and youth
- Municipalities
- Schools and universities
- Youth and environmental organisations

## Expected Impact

- Increased youth participation in sustainability action.
- Stronger environmental awareness and practical skills.
- Greater local ownership of green transitions.
- Better alignment between youth policy and climate objectives.

# Recommendation 13: Support Innovation Through Cross-Sector Collaboration

## Rationale

Innovation ecosystems are stronger when young people can connect with institutions, educators, businesses, and civil society actors. Participants identified collaboration and access to networks as important conditions for developing ideas and responding to future challenges.

## Proposed Actions

- Create local innovation labs and collaborative spaces involving youth.
- Encourage partnerships between schools, youth organisations, municipalities, and private sector actors.
- Support challenge-based programmes focused on real societal issues.
- Facilitate networking opportunities for young innovators and community actors.

## Key Stakeholders

- Local authorities
- Educational institutions
- Youth organisations
- Private sector and innovation hubs

## Expected Impact

- Stronger innovation culture among young people.
- Better transfer of ideas into practice.
- Increased collaboration across sectors.
- More responsive local problem-solving ecosystems.

# 6.6 Policy Area: Structural Conditions Shaping Youth Futures

## Recommendation 14: Address Housing as a Youth Policy Priority

### Rationale

In several contexts, especially Slovakia, housing was directly linked to independence, family planning, long-term stability, and the decision to remain in the country. Housing conditions therefore influence multiple life outcomes and should be treated as a core youth policy issue rather than a separate sectoral topic.

### Proposed Actions

- Integrate youth needs into housing strategies and urban planning.
- Expand affordable rental options for young people and young families.
- Support local housing solutions based on community needs.
- Improve policy coordination between housing, youth, and demographic strategies.

### Key Stakeholders

- Housing ministries and authorities
- Municipalities
- Urban planning bodies
- Social policy institutions

### Expected Impact

- Greater housing stability for young people.
- Improved conditions for independent living.
- Stronger alignment between housing policy and youth retention goals.
- Better long-term life planning opportunities.

# Recommendation 15: Develop Long-Term Responses to Demographic Change

## Rationale

Participants identified ageing populations, migration trends, and declining youth populations as issues requiring strategic responses. These trends affect labour markets, social systems, territorial development, and intergenerational balance.

## Proposed Actions

- Develop cross-sector demographic strategies linked to youth, housing, employment, and family policy.
- Include young people in discussions on demographic futures.
- Strengthen regional opportunities to reduce territorial imbalance.
- Use evidence-based planning for long-term demographic resilience.

## Key Stakeholders

- National governments
- Research and statistical institutions
- Regional authorities
- Ministries responsible for labour, family, and development

## Expected Impact

- More coherent long-term demographic planning.
- Stronger connection between youth policy and population strategy.
- Improved regional resilience.
- Greater legitimacy of long-term reforms.

# Recommendation 16: Integrate Resource Resilience into Future Planning

## Rationale

Some national contexts highlighted the strategic importance of natural resources, particularly in relation to climate pressures and future stability. Resource resilience should be integrated into long-term planning, not treated only as an environmental issue.

## Proposed Actions

- Include resource security in national resilience and sustainability strategies.
- Strengthen sustainable management of key natural resources.
- Connect environmental planning with youth engagement and education.
- Improve public communication on the long-term value of resource protection.

## Key Stakeholders

- Ministries responsible for the environment and development
- Local and regional authorities
- Research institutions
- Educational and youth organisations

## Expected Impact

- Stronger long-term resilience planning.
- Better preparedness for environmental pressures.
- Increased public understanding of strategic resources.
- Stronger connection between sustainability and future policy design.

# 6.7 Cross-Cutting Implementation Principles

## Recommendation 17: Use Cross-Sector Governance for Youth Policy

### Rationale

The issues identified by young people cut across education, housing, digitalisation, health, participation, and environment. Isolated interventions are unlikely to address interconnected realities.

### Proposed Actions

- Establish inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms for youth-related policy areas.
- Enhance collaboration with local youth parliaments and councils.
- Use shared targets across sectors where policy areas overlap.
- Involve local authorities and youth stakeholders in coordination structures.
- Regularly review policy coherence and implementation gaps.

### Key Stakeholders

- National governments and relevant ministries
- Local and regional authorities
- Youth organisations and youth councils
- Educational institutions
- Public agencies responsible for health, housing, digitalisation, employment, and environment

### Expected Impact

- More coherent youth policy systems.
- Reduced duplication and fragmentation.
- Better use of public resources.
- Stronger outcomes across multiple policy areas.

# Recommendation 18: Institutionalise Youth-Informed Foresight

## Rationale

The FYI project demonstrated that participatory foresight generates valuable insights for policy development. This capacity should be embedded into regular governance processes rather than limited to project-based activities.

## Proposed Actions

- Integrate youth foresight exercises into policy consultations and strategic planning cycles.
- Train public institutions and youth organisations in participatory foresight methods.
- Use foresight outputs to inform long-term strategies and reforms.
- Support periodic cross-country youth foresight initiatives.

## Key Stakeholders

- Ministries responsible for youth, education, innovation, and strategic development
- Local and regional authorities
- Youth organisations and youth centres
- Educational institutions and universities
- Research institutions, think tanks, and policy development bodies

## Expected Impact

- More anticipatory policymaking.
- Stronger inclusion of youth perspectives in long-term planning.
- Better preparedness for emerging challenges.
- Sustainable legacy of the FYI project.

# 7

## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



# 7.1 Governance and Coordination Capacity

Implementation of the policy recommendations depends on effective coordination across multiple institutions and governance levels. The issues identified through the FYI process span education, youth participation, digitalisation, housing, well-being, sustainability, and long-term planning. As these areas are often managed by separate institutions, implementation requires mechanisms that enable coordination rather than isolated action.

At national level, ministries and public bodies responsible for youth-related fields need structured channels for joint planning, information exchange, and alignment of objectives. Where responsibilities are distributed across sectors, clear mandates and coordination procedures are essential to avoid fragmentation or duplication.

At regional and local levels, municipalities and community institutions play a critical role in implementation, particularly in areas such as youth participation, community support, local innovation, and access to services. Their proximity to young people allows for more responsive and context-sensitive approaches, but local capacity and resources may vary significantly.

The role of intermediary actors is also important. Youth organisations, youth centres, educational institutions, and civil society organisations often act as connectors between public institutions and young people. Their involvement can strengthen implementation quality, outreach, and trust.

Implementation is therefore not solely a matter of policy design, but of governance capacity: the ability of institutions to cooperate, adapt, and engage relevant actors over time.

# 7.2 Resource Requirements

Successful implementation requires adequate and sustained resources. The recommendations developed through this document vary in scale and complexity, but all depend on some combination of financial investment, human capacity, infrastructure, and institutional commitment.

## Financial Resources

Some actions require direct funding, such as:

- support for youth-led projects and grant schemes,
- operation of youth spaces and community programmes,
- development of training programmes and learning materials,
- digital tools and participation platforms,
- research, monitoring, and evaluation activities.

In other cases, implementation may rely more on reallocation of existing budgets or better coordination of current programmes rather than entirely new funding streams.

## Human Resources

Many recommendations depend on the availability of trained professionals, including:

- teachers and educators,
- youth workers, facilitators and trainers,
- municipal staff,
- policy designers and programme managers.

Without sufficient staffing and expertise, even well-designed policies may not achieve intended outcomes.

## Infrastructure

Implementation also depends on both physical and digital infrastructure. This includes:

- accessible youth spaces,
- schools and community venues,
- digital participation tools,
- communication platforms,
- transport access for participation in programmes.

The quality and availability of infrastructure will shape how inclusive and scalable interventions can be.

## 7.3 Capacity Building Needs

All these new approaches, particularly foresight, co-creation, and integrated policy design, require specific competences that may not yet be widespread across institutions.

### **For Educators and Youth Workers**

Professionals working directly with young people may require support in participatory facilitation, foresight methodologies, critical digital literacy education, inclusion approaches and well-being sensitive programme design.

### **For Public Institutions**

Administrative and policy actors may require capacity building in youth participation design, cross-sector collaboration, long-term strategic planning, evidence-informed policymaking and adaptive governance methods.

### **For Young People**

Young people themselves may benefit from continued opportunities to strengthen civic participation skills, project development competences, leadership and teamwork, future literacy, and digital critical thinking. Capacity building should therefore be understood as a systemic multi-level requirement rather than a single training activity.

## 7.4 Enabling Conditions for Effective Implementation

Beyond resources, implementation depends on broader enabling conditions that support long-term success.

- **Political Commitment**

Many recommendations require sustained commitment beyond short project cycles or electoral timelines. Without political ownership, reforms may remain pilot initiatives without structural impact.

- **Recognition of Youth as Stakeholders**

Implementation is strengthened when institutions recognise young people as legitimate contributors to policy development, not only target groups of programmes.

- **Institutional Flexibility**

Several recommendations require experimentation, adaptation, and iterative learning. Rigid procedures may limit the ability of institutions to respond effectively to emerging needs or feedback.

- **Cross-Sector Trust**

Where multiple actors are involved, implementation depends on trust, shared understanding, and willingness to collaborate across institutional boundaries.

- **Continuity**

Short-term or one-off interventions are less likely to generate lasting change. Continuity in funding, staffing, and institutional attention is important for building sustainable outcomes.

## 7.5 Risks, Barriers and Conditions for Long-Term Success

Implementation of the recommendations outlined in this document will depend on political will, available resources, and the ability of institutions to anticipate and respond to barriers that commonly undermine policy delivery. The cross-country findings suggest that many of the challenges young people identified are already well known within public systems. The difficulty often lies less in recognising the problem and more in sustaining coordinated, credible, and inclusive responses over time.

One of the most significant risks is the **fragmentation of responsibility between institutions**. Youth-related issues frequently cut across several policy domains, including education, employment, housing, health, digitalisation, and community development. Where responsibilities are dispersed, it becomes easier for important actions to fall between administrative boundaries or to be addressed only partially. Without clear ownership structures and effective coordination, even strong policy intentions may lead to limited practical change.

A second barrier concerns the **short-term nature of many interventions**. Young people's priorities, such as trust in institutions, meaningful participation, well-being, or access to stable life opportunities, cannot be addressed through isolated initiatives or temporary projects alone. Yet in practice, many innovative responses rely on short funding cycles, pilot schemes, or time-limited external support. While pilot approaches can be valuable, they become problematic when successful models are not integrated into regular systems after initial testing.

The issue of **territorial inequality** also requires attention. The capacity to implement youth-oriented policies often differs significantly between urban centres and smaller municipalities, or between regions with strong institutional ecosystems and those with fewer resources. Where local youth infrastructure is weak, opportunities for participation, support, and innovation may remain unevenly distributed. This risks reproducing disparities between young people depending on where they live, rather than ensuring equal access to opportunities.

Another challenge is the potential for **participation fatigue and declining trust**. Our findings clearly show that young people are willing and able to engage with complex societal issues when given meaningful opportunities. However, repeated consultation processes that do not produce visible outcomes can weaken motivation and reinforce perceptions that participation is symbolic rather than influential. Trust is built not only through invitation to participate, but through evidence that participation matters.

**Institutional culture** may also present obstacles. Approaches such as co-creation, participatory foresight, or cross-sector collaboration often require organisations to move beyond traditional hierarchies and established routines. This can create resistance where systems are structured around narrowly defined mandates, risk aversion, or highly formalised decision-making processes. In such contexts, innovation may be welcomed rhetorically but constrained in practice.

**Digitalisation** introduces both opportunities and new forms of exclusion. While digital tools can broaden access to services and participation, unequal access to devices, connectivity, digital skills, or confidence can create additional barriers. A digital-first approach that does not consider these differences may unintentionally exclude some young people, particularly those already facing disadvantage.

Responding to these risks requires a deliberate shift from project logic to **systemic implementation logic**. Clear governance arrangements, realistic timelines, and continuity of support are essential. Institutions need mechanisms for shared accountability, not only parallel responsibilities. Where multiple actors are involved, coordination should be embedded into delivery structures rather than dependent on informal relationships alone.

Equally important is the creation of **visible feedback and learning processes**. Young people and stakeholders need to see how input has shaped decisions, what has been implemented, and what has been adjusted when challenges emerge. Transparent communication can strengthen trust, maintain engagement, and improve legitimacy.

Long-term success will also depend on the willingness to treat implementation as an **adaptive process**. Complex social issues rarely respond to linear solutions. Programmes may need to be tested, refined, and scaled gradually. Monitoring systems should therefore be used as tools for continuous improvement.

Ultimately, the conditions for successful implementation are closely aligned with the values expressed throughout the FYI project: **credibility, inclusion, responsiveness, and long-term thinking**. Where institutions are able to embody these principles in practice, the recommendations have significantly greater potential to generate lasting impact.

## 7.6 Risk Mitigation Approaches

Risks identified in implementation can be reduced through clear and practical governance choices.

A first priority is **clear ownership and accountability**. When several institutions are involved, responsibilities should be clearly defined, and one body should coordinate delivery. This helps prevent overlap, delays, and policy gaps.

A second priority is **continuity beyond pilot projects**. Temporary initiatives can test new ideas, but successful models should be integrated into regular budgets, strategies, or permanent structures to ensure lasting impact.

To reduce territorial inequalities, national policies should allow for **local flexibility and targeted support**. Smaller municipalities or weaker local systems may need additional resources, partnerships, or technical assistance.

Maintaining youth engagement requires **visible and regular feedback**. Young people should be informed how their input was used, what actions followed, and why certain proposals were or were not adopted. This strengthens trust and prevents participation fatigue.

Where institutions are resistant to change, **phased implementation** can be effective. Testing approaches gradually, building staff capacity, and scaling successful models often works better than immediate large-scale reform.

Digital exclusion should be addressed through **blended participation models** that combine online tools with offline opportunities and accessible communication.

Finally, implementation should remain **adaptive and learning-oriented**. Regular review and adjustment processes help institutions respond to challenges and improve results over time.

## 7.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

Monitoring and evaluation should support both accountability and improvement. It is not enough to measure how many activities were delivered; implementation should also assess whether young people experience better opportunities, stronger support, and more meaningful participation.

Basic indicators can track progress, such as the number of participants involved, professionals trained, youth-led initiatives supported, or institutions applying new approaches. These measures help show reach and delivery.

However, qualitative outcomes are equally important. Feedback, interviews, case studies, and reflection sessions can reveal whether participation is perceived as meaningful, whether trust has improved, or whether young people feel better prepared for future challenges.

Evaluation should not happen only at the end of a process. Regular review points allow institutions and stakeholders to identify barriers early, adjust activities, and improve implementation while it is still ongoing.

A strong monitoring system therefore, combines data, reflection, and continuous learning. Its purpose is not only to report results, but to strengthen future policy and practice.

## 7.8 Localisation and Adaptation

The cross-country findings show that shared priorities do not always require identical responses. While common themes emerged across all partner countries, the way these issues are experienced depends on local social, economic, and institutional realities.

For this reason, implementation should combine common strategic goals with flexibility in delivery. National frameworks can set direction, while regional and local actors adapt measures to their own contexts and needs.

In some areas, housing or demographic change may require a stronger policy focus. In others, well-being, community support, trust in institutions, or digital competences may be more urgent. Effective implementation depends on recognising these differences rather than applying uniform solutions everywhere. Localisation is also important within countries. Municipalities and communities often differ in capacity, resources, and existing youth infrastructure. Allowing room for local adaptation increases relevance, ownership, and practical impact.

Adaptation should therefore be seen as a strength of implementation, not a deviation from strategy. Policies are most effective when they remain coherent in purpose but flexible in practice.

# 7.9 Sustainability of Implementation

Long-term impact depends on whether successful approaches become embedded in systems rather than remaining temporary initiatives. Sustainability can be strengthened through:

- integration into existing strategies and institutions,
- long-term budget planning,
- permanent participation mechanisms,
- continued professional development,
- institutional memory and documentation,
- partnerships that continue beyond project funding.

The FYI project itself demonstrates that project-based innovation can generate valuable models. The next step is ensuring those models become part of regular practice.

# 7.10 Strategic Implementation Perspective

The recommendations in this document should not be viewed as separate actions to be implemented one by one in isolation. Their greatest value emerges when treated as parts of a broader transition toward more future-oriented, participatory, and youth-responsive governance. This requires connecting short-term actions with long-term goals, combining policy reform with practical experimentation, and linking national frameworks with local delivery. It is also important to treat implementation as an ongoing process of learning and adaptation, while involving young people throughout the whole implementation cycles.



# CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT



# 8.1 From Project Results to Policy Value

These recommendations go beyond the immediate outcomes of FYI workshops and consultations. Their strategic value lies in translating youth perspectives into policy-relevant insights that can inform long-term planning, institutional reform, and more responsive governance.

Rather than treating young people only as beneficiaries of programmes, we positioned them as contributors to policy development. This shift is important because it improves the relevance of policies while strengthening democratic legitimacy. When young people are involved in identifying challenges and proposing solutions, policy frameworks are more closely connected to lived realities. So, while the recommendations were developed by the FYI project consortium, they were formed based on real-life perspectives and challenges, faced by youth. This clearly demonstrates that foresight methodologies can strengthen policy design by introducing longer-term thinking into discussions that are often dominated by short-term pressures.

## 8.2 Contribution at Organisational Level

For youth organisations, schools, youth centres, and other implementing bodies, the recommendations provide a practical framework for innovation and quality improvement.

Key contributions include:

- stronger use of participatory methods in programme design,
- integration of future-oriented learning approaches,
- greater recognition of youth voice in organisational planning,
- improved cooperation between formal and non-formal education actors,
- more structured approaches to inclusion and well-being.

At organisational level, the recommendations can support institutions in becoming more adaptive, youth-responsive, and capable of addressing emerging challenges.

## 8.3 Contribution at Local and Municipal Level

Local authorities play a central role in areas such as participation, community life, youth spaces, local innovation, and access to services. Many of the priorities identified by participants can be addressed most effectively at municipal level, where institutions are closest to young people's everyday experiences.

The recommendations can support municipalities in:

- developing stronger youth participation mechanisms,
- improving cooperation with youth organisations and schools,
- investing in inclusive community spaces,
- linking youth policy with housing, mobility, and local development planning,
- supporting youth-led local initiatives.

Local implementation is particularly important because visible change at community level can strengthen trust in public institutions and demonstrate the practical value of youth engagement.

## 8.4 Contribution at National Policy Level

At national level, the document contributes to broader policy agendas related to education, digital transformation, participation, inclusion, sustainability, and demographic resilience.

Its strategic relevance includes:

- supporting more integrated youth policy approaches,
- strengthening links between sectors that affect youth futures,
- providing evidence-informed input for reforms and strategies,
- encouraging long-term planning rather than reactive policymaking,
- promoting recognition of non-formal education and youth work.

The recommendations are not limited to one policy sector. Their value lies in showing how youth-related issues connect across multiple systems.

## 8.5 Contribution to European Policy Priorities

The international nature of the FYI project gives the recommendations relevance beyond national contexts. Shared findings across different countries suggest broader European trends and common challenges affecting young people.

The document contributes to European policy discussions by reinforcing priorities such as:

- youth participation and democratic engagement,
- inclusion and equal opportunities,
- digital readiness and critical competences,
- sustainability and future resilience,
- stronger youth ecosystems and cross-sector cooperation.

It also demonstrates the added value of transnational cooperation in identifying both shared priorities and context-specific needs.

## 8.6 Strategic Value of Youth-Informed Foresight

One of the strongest contributions of the FYI project is methodological, demonstrating how participatory foresight can be used for learning activities, as well as policy development.

Its strategic advantages include:

- bringing long-term perspectives into present policy debates,
- identifying emerging risks and opportunities early,
- supporting systems thinking across policy areas,
- creating meaningful participation formats for young people and
- improving the quality and legitimacy of policy design.

This suggests that foresight should not remain limited to project environments, but can (and should) become a useful governance tool in wider public policy contexts.

## 8.7 Long-Term Policy Significance

The long-term importance of these recommendations depends on whether they are used as a reference point for future decisions rather than treated as a one-time project output. Their greatest value lies in supporting gradual structural change across institutions, policies, and governance cultures.

If applied consistently, the recommendations can help shift youth policy from short-term responses toward more strategic and preventive approaches. This includes stronger anticipation of future challenges, earlier involvement of young people in decision-making, and better coordination between sectors that shape youth life opportunities.

Over time, this could contribute to education systems that respond more effectively to changing realities, participation mechanisms that are trusted and meaningful, and local communities that provide stronger support for well-being, innovation, and inclusion.

The recommendations may also strengthen institutional learning. By embedding practices such as co-creation, cross-sector collaboration, and foresight-based planning, public systems can become more adaptive and better prepared for social, technological, and demographic change.

Potential long-term outcomes include:

- more resilient and future-ready youth systems,
- stronger trust between young people and institutions,
- better alignment between education and future needs,
- more inclusive participation structures,
- stronger local ecosystems for youth development and
- greater institutional capacity for anticipatory governance.

The long-term significance of this document therefore lies not only in its recommendations, but in the model of policymaking it represents: participatory, forward-looking, and grounded in youth perspectives – in other words, whether it helps create more responsive institutions and stronger conditions for young people to shape their own futures.



# CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



The FYI project demonstrates that young people are both willing and able to contribute meaningfully to discussions about long-term societal development when provided with appropriate methods, space, and institutional trust. Across all partner countries, participants engaged with complex issues such as education, digital transformation, participation, well-being, sustainability, housing, and governance, and translated these reflections into concrete policy priorities.



A key conclusion of the process is that many of the challenges identified by young people are interconnected. Education influences employability and adaptability. Digitalisation affects participation, information access, and social relationships. Housing and demographic trends shape long-term life planning. Well-being is linked to community support, inclusion, and opportunity structures. These connections underline the need for policy responses that move beyond isolated sectoral measures.

The project also confirms the value of participatory foresight as a policy tool. Foresight methods enabled participants to think beyond immediate concerns, explore alternative futures, and identify both risks and opportunities. This created a stronger basis for recommendations than a consultation focused only on present-day problems.

Another important conclusion is that youth participation is most effective when it is meaningful, continuous, and linked to visible outcomes. Young people do not seek symbolic involvement; they expect transparent processes, genuine influence, and institutions that respond to their contributions in a visible way.

Finally, the cross-country dimension of the project shows that while national contexts differ, many priorities are shared across Europe. This creates strong potential for mutual learning, coordinated responses, and continued cooperation in youth policy development.

## 9.1 Core Messages for Decision-Makers

The findings of this document point to several clear messages for policymakers and institutions:

Young people should be recognised as partners in policy development, not only target groups of programmes.

Long-term and anticipatory thinking should be integrated into youth-related policymaking.

Education systems need to better prepare young people for uncertainty, complexity, and rapid change.

Participation mechanisms must be credible, inclusive, and connected to real decisions.

Well-being, community support, and inclusion are essential foundations for youth development.

Structural issues such as housing, territorial inequality, and demographic change must be considered within youth policy frameworks.

## 9.2 Suggested Next Steps for Stakeholders

### At Organisational Level

Youth organisations, schools, and youth centres can build on the FYI results by integrating foresight methods, strengthening youth co-creation processes, and using the recommendations to improve programme planning.

### At Local Level

Municipalities can review local participation structures, strengthen cooperation with youth actors, and identify where community support, youth spaces, or youth-led initiatives require additional investment.

### At National Level

Relevant ministries and public bodies can use the recommendations as input for strategies, reforms, and cross-sector coordination in areas such as education, youth participation, digital policy, inclusion, and demographic planning.

### At European Level

The findings can contribute to wider exchange of practices, future transnational cooperation projects, and continued dialogue on shared youth priorities across member states.

## 9.3 Mapping to EU Youth Strategy Priorities

The recommendations developed through the FYI project are closely aligned with the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, particularly its focus on engagement, empowerment, and connection.

### Engage

Recommendations related to youth participation, co-creation, trust in institutions, and democratic involvement directly support stronger youth engagement in civic and political life.


### Empower

Recommendations on future-oriented education, digital competences, non-formal learning, well-being, and youth-led innovation contribute to empowering young people with skills, opportunities, and support systems.

### Connect

Recommendations focused on inclusion, community spaces, local ecosystems, cross-sector partnerships, and transnational learning reinforce the connection dimension of the strategy by strengthening relationships between young people, institutions, and communities.

The document also connects with several **European Youth Goals**, particularly those related to quality learning, inclusive societies, mental health and well-being, youth participation, sustainable Europe, and quality employment for all.

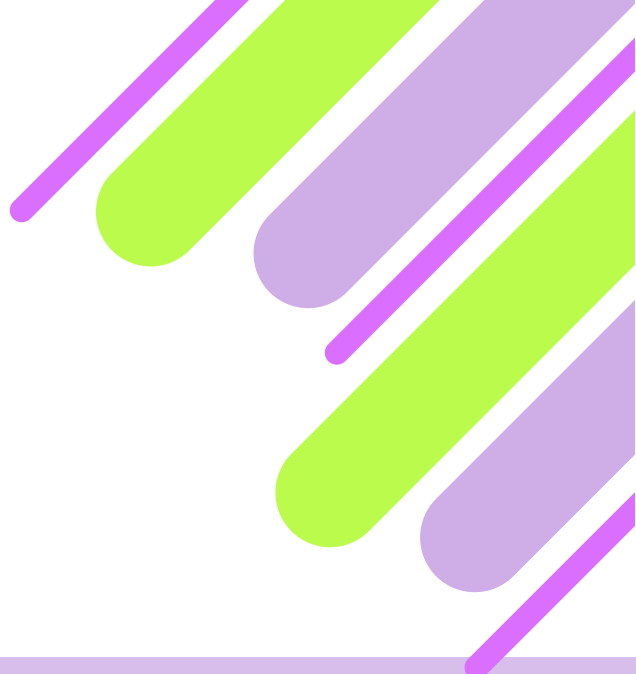


The value of this document will depend on how it is used after the project period. Possible follow-up uses include:

- reference material for future youth policy discussions,
- input for local and national strategies,
- training material for youth workers and educators,
- basis for new pilot initiatives or partnerships,
- framework for future youth foresight exercises,
- evidence base for advocacy and stakeholder dialogue.

The FYI project has created not only a set of recommendations, but a replicable model for involving young people in shaping future-oriented policy.

Young people across Europe are already thinking seriously about the future. The central question is whether institutions are prepared to listen, respond, and work with them in shaping it.



For detailed information on local contexts, see National reports for each partner country. National Policy Recommendation Reports for Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Estonia are all available on FYI project website [foresight4youth.eu](https://foresight4youth.eu), following [this link](#).



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