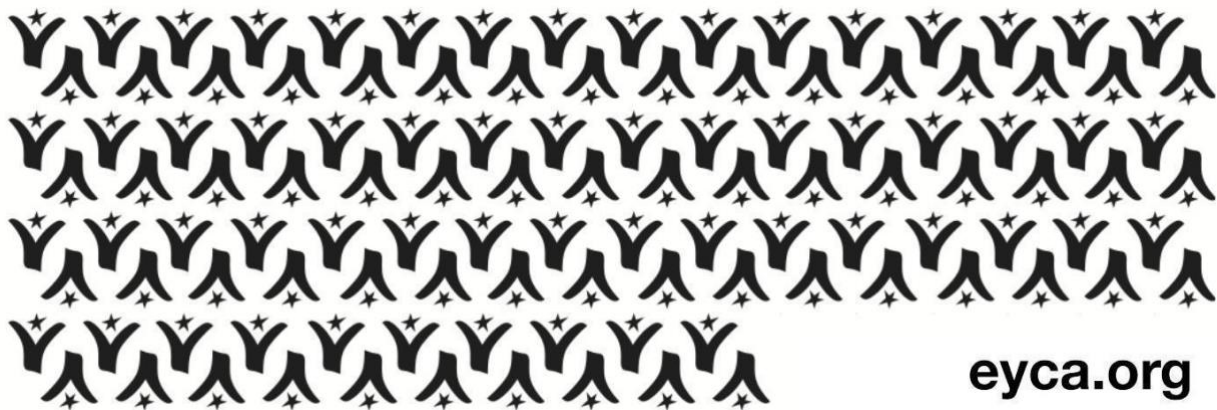


Report on
Partial Agreement Seminar:

*Youth ecosystems essentials: the role of European Youth
Card in advancing ecosystems for youth empowerment*

*30-31 May 2024
Podgorica, Montenegro
Hotel Voco*

Seminar of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the **Youth Card**
and the **European Youth Card Association (EYCA)**



DAY 1 | Thursday 30th May | Hotel Voco

09.15 - 10.00

Welcome speeches

- Jugoslav Radović - Vice President of European Youth Card Association and Executive Director of NGO Center for Youth education
- Dominique Waag - Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro
- Konstanze Schönfeld - Member of the Advisory Council on youth of the Council of Europe
- Manel Sanchez - Director of European Youth Card Association
- Dragoslav Šćekić - Vice President of Government of Montenegro for Demography and Youth and Minister of Sports and Youth

Manel Sanchez, the Director of the European Youth Card Association, welcomed the participants of the seminar and expressed his excitement about the many discussions and conclusions the participants of the seminar will have about finding ways to contribute to the lives of young people.

Jugoslav Radović, Vice President of the European Youth Card Association and Executive Director of the NGO Center for Youth Education expressed his gratitude for the platform, emphasising the importance of understanding youth ecosystem policies and thanking the Ministry of Youth for their support.

Dominique Waag, Head of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, highlighted the fruitful cooperation with Montenegro in creating spaces and policies for youth through partnerships with the government, NGOs, local self-government, and youth organisations. She emphasised the importance of empowering youth to voice their concerns to policymakers and become active members of society, noting that such events are crucial for discussing challenges and possibilities. She also mentioned the OSCE support to EYCA and encouraged participants to lead by example.

Konstanze Schönfeld, a member of the Advisory Council of Europe, discussed the co-management system of the Council of Europe. She explained her work in advising on youth priorities and mainstreaming youth topics across all COE activities. She emphasised the recognition and mainstreaming of youth work and invited participants to familiarise themselves with the Council's activities and join if they are passionate about youth work and human rights.

Manel Sanchez, Director of the European Youth Card Association, presented EYCA's work and expressed gratitude for meetings with the minister. He thanked the participants for their commitment to impacting the lives of young people within the Council of Europe. Sanchez highlighted the importance of EYCA, not only for the benefits it provides but also for its role in supporting governments to develop youth policies related to entrepreneurship, access to rights, mental health, and other topics of importance for youth. He underscored the impact of EYCA in fostering active citizenship and European values among young people, expressing his hope that the seminar would mark the beginning of new initiatives for youth in Europe.

Dragoslav Šćekić, Vice President of the Government of Montenegro for Demography and Youth and Minister of Sports and Youth, expressed his honour in hosting such an important event. He highlighted that young people are the pillar of the future, emphasising their energy, creativity, and innovation as key to a prosperous society. Šćekić stated that continuous support for young people is essential and described the European Youth Card as a tool for empowerment, individual and professional development, and a symbol of togetherness and opportunity. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to the EYCA program and its impact on improving the lives of young people in Montenegro. Šćekić emphasised the importance of national and EU-level synergy in creating an environment where young people can thrive. He thanked Sanchez for a good discussion on the possibility of opening an EYCA office in Montenegro. He also shared the planned initiative to nominate Podgorica as the European Youth Capital and expressed a desire for EYCA and all stakeholders to be involved in this endeavour.

10.00 - 10.30	<p>Aim and objectives of this seminar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mapping the audience ● Expectations
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During Session 2, we mapped the participants' expectations and explored the aims and objectives of the seminar **through roundtable discussions**. The young participants shared their hopes for the seminar, emphasising their desire to exchange new perspectives, learn effective ways to contribute at the local level, and gain a deeper understanding of the European Youth Card (EYCA). They expressed enthusiasm for drawing inspiration from the Montenegrin EYCA model, connecting with peers, and exploring innovative ideas on youth policy. The session underscored their commitment to contributing through their own experiences, initiatives, and practices from their home countries, with many looking forward to supporting Montenegro's bid to become the European Youth Capital.



Mentimeter question: EYCA to me means?

The most common answers from the participants:

- opportunities,
- discounts,
- collaboration,
- synergy

Other answers:

- benefits for young people
- common values
- community
- connection
- cultural participation
- cultural saving
- development
- education mobility
- helping the youth
- interculturalism
- international mobility
- international mobility
- mobility
- partnerships
- personal development
- youth empowerment
- youth service

Join at menti.com | use code 1927 1111

Mentimeter

EYCA to me means?

28 responses



10.30 - 11.00	Coffee break
11.00 - 11.30	<p>Setting the stage</p> <p>Manel Sanchez, Director of the European Youth Card Association and Natalja Turenne, Administrator of the Youth Policy Division in the Youth Department of</p>

	<p>the Council of Europe - Brief presentation of European Youth Card scheme and Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility</p> <p>Andrei Popescu - Keynote speaker on aligning objectives and stakeholders to build youth ecosystems</p>
<p>Manel Sanchez, Director of the European Youth Card Association, introduced the idea, goals, and mission of the EYCA through a brief presentation of the European Youth Card scheme. He explained its dual aspects: providing discounts and, more importantly, helping young people in creating youth policies. Emphasizing mobility as a crucial element, Sanchez highlighted how the card supports mental health, employability, entrepreneurship, etc. He also introduced the EYCA Youth Panel, noting that the voices of young cardholders are integral to the decision-making process. Additionally, he discussed the panel’s Rural Youth Project, which aligns with the Council of Europe’s policy priorities. Sanchez underscored the importance of connecting with European institutions and detailed how EYCA collaborates with these bodies to implement various projects and initiatives.</p> <p>Natalja Turenne, Administrator of the Youth Policy Division in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, spoke about the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the youth card. She introduced the Council of Europe’s work through its three pillars—democracy, human rights, and the rule of law—and of the youth sector, which comprised both governmental and non-governmental committees working both separately and together, explaining that the role of the non-governmental committee - the Advisory Council on Youth - went well beyond an advisory function but comprised also decision-making on an equal footing with the governmental European Steering Committee on Youth. Natalja Turenne highlighted the motivation of founding member States behind the creation of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card in 1991, after the fall of the Berlin Wall: to foster youth mobility and youth dialogue and particularly to facilitate meetings between young people from the East and the West. She described the organisation of various trainings, seminars, and study visits, and mentioned the Council’s cooperation with stakeholders, including public authorities, national youth card holders, and local self-governments. She elaborated on the key components of the Youth sector within the Council of Europe, which include steering committees with co-management, training and educational activities, two European Youth Centres, the European Youth Foundation, and a partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth.</p> <p>Furthermore, Natalja Turenne explained the governance of the Partial Agreement, and mentioned the Board of Coordination, which included representatives from member States and the European Youth Card Association. She reminded the participants of the benefits of the Partial Agreement membership, such as increased opportunities for networking, policy development, and capacity-building. She also outlined the annual work program, which features seminars, workshops, and study visits focusing on inclusive youth mobility, active youth participation, employability, intercultural dialogue, and other key issues. Through these efforts, the Council of Europe aimed to develop the European Youth Card Scheme and enhance youth policies to serve young people across Europe better.</p>	

Andrei Popescu, the keynote speaker, discussed the importance of aligning objectives and stakeholders to build effective youth ecosystems. He explained that these ecosystems can be established at local, national, or regional levels, emphasising the crucial components needed for their success. At the core of an effective youth ecosystem are young people themselves, who must be linked to various sectors such as culture, civics, sports, education, employment, and social services. Popescu highlighted the European Youth Village initiative in Romania, which aims to engage young people in activities that support European values. He argued that youth ecosystems can become a reality everywhere if this system with its essential components is implemented. Popescu emphasised the importance of having a vision to engage young people as active citizens, placing them at the centre and providing them with quality services. He addressed the unique needs of the young people of today, noting that they differ from previous generations. Therefore, youth participation is crucial to keep young people happy during their transition from childhood to adulthood. He concluded by suggesting that this framework serves as a map to guide stakeholders in building youth ecosystems, adaptable to specific needs and contexts.

His detailed presentation is available on this [LINK](#).

11.30 - 13.00	<p>Good practices from EYCA members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Scot - Scotland - United Kingdom • Center for Youth Education - Montenegro <p>Questions and Answers session</p>
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Success Stories from Young Scot and Center for Youth Education

Emma Inglis, a program officer at **Young Scot**, shared insights on how two different approaches in Europe can be successful in engaging young people. She emphasized the effectiveness of their digital communications team and the importance of their monthly newsletter in keeping young people informed about their activities. Inglis explained the functionalities of the Young Scot card, which serves as a pivotal tool in their outreach efforts. Available to young people aged 11-26, the card offers numerous benefits, including free proof of age, free bus travel for under-22s, transport concessions, school lunch card functionality, in-store discounts, and access to e-voting and participatory budgeting. Over 800,000 young people in Scotland hold a Young Scot NEC, and more than 100 million free bus journeys have been made since the introduction of free bus travel for under-22s, significantly enhancing their independence and mobility.

Young Scot representative further highlighted their Membership program, which encourages active citizenship by rewarding young people for participating in positive activities. This program includes earning points for activities like volunteering and community events, which can be exchanged for rewards. She also mentioned that Young Scot facilitates participatory budgeting, allowing young people to influence local budget decisions. Additionally, she shared testimonials from young people about the positive impact of these programs on their lives. Inglis concluded by discussing successful projects like the Free Bikes Programme Panel, where young people co-designed recommendations for a bike access program that was later implemented by Cycling Scotland.

The Center for Youth Education in Montenegro highlighted the success of their EYCA Educo Camp, which enhances youth mobility within Montenegro and the surrounding region through panel sessions, group work, and discussions. They also focus on educational activities such as

financial literacy, exemplified by initiatives like the "Friendly Card." The Center aims to celebrate and target specific groups of young people through various partnerships, such as those with CK and Mensa. EYCA ambassadors play a crucial role in advocating for youth employment, mobility, access to information, digitalization, and the local development of the EYCA program. The digitalization of the card has made it more sustainable and increased digital literacy among young people and stakeholders. Notably, the digital transition resulted in a 60% increase in EYCA cardholders through the new EYCA app. The impact and results of the EYCA program in Montenegro were shared, demonstrating its integration into a broader ecosystem. Participants inquired about the benefits for EYCA ambassadors, who gain personal satisfaction, fun, and opportunities for study visits both within and outside Montenegro. The program has grown organically by addressing the needs of young people, supported by strong partnerships and human capital.

Montenegro's success is attributed to its ambition and persistence, particularly from NGOs that aimed to connect young people to Europe through the card. Despite political changes and challenges, Montenegro leveraged the experiences of other countries and youth card systems to build a robust youth ecosystem. The country's openness to Europe has been a key factor in its achievements.

13.00 - 14.30

Lunch

14.30 - 16.00

Empowering Youth Ecosystems and maximising EYCA potential: European, Regional, and Local perspectives

- Natalja Turenne - Administrator of Youth Policy Division in Youth Department of Council of Europe
- Nataša Beširević - Director of Europe House in Montenegro
- Jelena Miljanić - Joint Programme Coordinator, UNDP Montenegro
- Edin Koljenović - Head of Local Branch Office of Regional Youth Cooperation Office
- Katarina Vukadinović - Coordinator of Youth Club Budva

How can we make the best out of EYC infrastructure?

Natalja Turenne - Administrator of the Youth Policy Division in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

Natalja Turenne emphasised the Council of Europe's significant outreach to young people who took part in the various activities organised by, with and for young people, including in the Council of Europe youth centres and the quality label centres in other countries. She highlighted the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders, including ministries, youth NGOs, EYCA organisations, and researchers. The Partial Agreement served as a platform for bringing together decision-makers and young people to discuss mobility issues and find joint solutions. Natalja Turenne pointed out that in Europe beyond the Schengen zone, mobility was often linked to broader issues such as visa and passport regulations, making it a critical concern. She stressed the need to leverage strengths and provide young people with

diverse opportunities, including travel—both physical and mental—to help them find their place in society.

Nataša Beširević - Director of Europe House in Montenegro

Nataša Beširević discussed the importance of partnerships with educational institutions to showcase various opportunities available to young people. Europe House focuses on developing mentorship programs to connect young people with positive role models. Their team, with half of its members under 25, brings enthusiasm and innovative methods, particularly in online and social media engagement. Beširević highlighted the promotion of youth-led initiatives and how EYCA is a valuable partner in these efforts. Europe House also equips young people with the skills and expertise to promote their activities and run effective campaigns, emphasizing the necessity of constant dialogue with youth.

Jelena Miljanić - Joint Programme Coordinator, UNDP Montenegro

Jelena Miljanić spoke about leveraging programs to support the democratic development of countries through intercultural exchanges, which contribute to social cohesion. While employment and entrepreneurship are standard activities, she urged a deeper exploration of unlocking young people's potential through real-life interactions and human development. Miljanić stressed the importance of fostering empathy, solidarity, and active citizenship, emphasizing that leadership should embody these values rather than traditional notions of authority. She advocated for strong partnerships based on respect, focusing on both problems and solutions and supporting authentic youth contributions.

Edin Koljenović - Head of Local Branch Office of Regional Youth Cooperation Office

Edin Koljenović explained the unique structure and programs that RYCO is implementing on both regional and local levels. He mentioned that RYCO has gathered more than 30 000 young people through its programs. Its methodological approach allows for meaningful youth involvement and participation and significant efforts have been invested in capacity building training for both youth and those working with youth.

The goal of these things is to achieve quality youth engagement and quality youth work throughout the region. He also emphasised that RYCOs work in the Governing Board is based on the co-management principle.

Also, 30 percent of the overall number of supported young people belongs to the marginalised and vulnerable communities.

He highlighted the importance of joining efforts and collaboration with EYCA in order to spread the values and reach set goals in the upcoming period.

Katarina Vukadinović - Coordinator of Youth Club Budva

At the beginning, Katarina Vukadinović stated that she has been following the development and growth of the EYCA card since the time it was called EURO26. As a student, she had the opportunity to use the card and noted that what she lacked then was additional information about the possibilities the card offered. She recalled going to the office where she received the card and was given only a few sparse details about the discounts available. In her role today as someone who issues the card to young people, she emphasized the importance of personal contact. Besides the young people who regularly come to the Youth Club, who are generally highly motivated, the EYCA card has attracted many more youths who are otherwise not reached by their programs (such as young people from minority groups, NEET youth, etc.). Vukadinović

highlighted that the act of issuing the EYCA card is a moment used to discuss the interests of the youth and to present the programs offered by both EYCA and the Youth Club Budva. This approach allows young people to "dive" deeper into the world of opportunities for youth and thus become more active members of society. She also noted that the EYCA card is often used as a reward (after certain workshops, quizzes, along with the Luča diploma, etc.).

*Constanza emphasized the importance of inclusion and participation for young people's rights, particularly for minorities and those from rural areas. She expressed a desire for the COE Advisory Board to learn more about these issues and share their findings, highlighting the board's commitment to being partners in communication and advocacy.

*Hailey spoke about the abundant opportunities available to explore the world, travel, and experience different countries and cultures. She noted that young people today have a unique privilege to take advantage of these opportunities more than ever before.

16.00 - 16.30	Coffee break
17.30 - 19.00	Guided tour of the Podgorica Municipality
19.30 - 22.00	Dinner in the city in a traditional restaurant <i>(only for the international guests of the PA Seminar)</i> Welcoming speech by representative of Tourist organisation of Podgorica

DAY 2 | Friday 31th May | Hotel Voco

09.30 - 10.00	Welcome back and recap of the previous day
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Recap of the previous day. After a fun energizer, all the participants had the opportunity to do a recap of Day 1 in a circle discussion, by sharing amongst each other what they found the most interesting and engaging during the activities of the previous day.

10.00 - 11.00	<p>Empowering Youth and Stakeholders Collaboration: navigating challenges and opportunities in Montenegro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr Ljudmila Mila Popović - General director of Directorate for Interculturalism in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights ● Vanja Drljević - Director of National Erasmus+ office in Montenegro ● Ivana Bošković - Adolescent Development Officer in UNICEF Montenegro ● Irena Marunović - Youth focal point in the OSCE Mission to Montenegro ● Elvira Hadžibegović - Researcher and expert in youth policies
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Ljudmila Mila Popović, the General Director of the Directorate for Interculturalism in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, stated that a youth-focused approach is crucial when dealing with topics of interest for the youth. In order to do so, she stated, it is important to ask the youth, "What do you need me to do to help *you* succeed? I'm here for *you*, not to ask you to *do something*. I'm here to *listen*." In her work, instead of starting with strategies, she began with the youth movement, which was led by young people, as for her, it was and is important to gather youth and talk to them. She noticed that young people are eager to share their thoughts and ideas. This realization led her to understand the need to harness this energy. According to her, youth

need to be put at the forefront, but they aren't as structurally connected as other systems, as there is currently no organized way to support the youth movement. However, she observed that young people are craving connections and want to sustain these relationships.

Vanja Drljević, the Director of the National Erasmus+ Office in Montenegro, highlighted the Erasmus+ office's growing reputation in Montenegro and Europe, particularly through its well-known mobility programs for university students. She reminded the participants that Erasmus+ has become a globally recognized brand, and that the youth sector has just recently been added to their portfolio, with the aim of addressing youth issues that span across multiple sectors, and ministries. As one of the largest issues in Montenegro's youth movements within the CSO sector, Drljević acknowledged the challenges in mapping youth organizations in Montenegro. To deal with this and similar issues in the youth area, they have regularly invited EYCA to their panel discussions, and other activities, in order to get a deeper insight into the world of youth (work), and get to know the youth, and their hopes and challenges, and to cherish the connections and learning opportunities. She emphasized that *people* are at the heart of their efforts. Understanding the *youth as individuals* involved and their challenges is essential for effectively responding and taking action.

Ivana Bošković, the Adolescent Development Officer at UNICEF Montenegro is proud of having adolescents at the core of UNICEF's activities and initiatives, within their mission of ensuring every child and young person equal access to their rights – which requires addressing systemic challenges. She emphasized their strong partnerships with institutions and highlighted these institutions' need to reflect the *actual* needs of young people. Furthermore, she mentioned the fact that UNICEF works with teachers on digital literacy and collaborates with various partners to support youth development. She discussed one of UNICEF's currently implemented EU-funded projects, which focuses on education reform, engaging young people, and cooperating with various NGOs focused on youth education. This project represents an example of a youth-centered approach, by directly talking to, and including young people and listening to their needs. Furthermore, Bošković discussed the plans to build the capacity of youth organizations and strengthen trust in institutions. She identified mental health, peer violence, anxiety about climate change, and economic dependence as major issues for youth, but also recognized progress in empowering young people and strengthening partnerships with e.g. EYCA and private companies.

Irena Marunović, the Youth focal point in the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, highlighted the OSCE Mission to Montenegro's long-standing commitment to youth, rooted in the organization's founding documents. She reminded the participants of the Organization's dedication to ensuring equal participation of young people in all their activities and within the mission's overall framework. As the youth focal point, she discussed the importance of her role in connecting young people with decision-makers. She noted that youth issues are integrated into democratisation programs, with a focus on aligning youth priorities. Furthermore, she stated that the OSCE Mission actively cooperates with ministries and various local and regional NGOs, supporting them in implementing activities aimed at the effective execution of youth policies – at both national and local levels. Marunović concluded by stressing the crucial importance of collaborative efforts in fostering *meaningful* youth participation and successfully implementing youth-oriented initiatives.

Elvira Hadžibegović, a researcher and expert in youth policies, said she is proud of being a youth worker in Montenegro – particularly since there are very few of them in the field, and no

formal education in youth work can be obtained in the country. Despite change happening at a slow pace, she believes that significant progress is achievable. Hadžibegović highlighted her work in countering violent extremism and her role in cooperating with the government, contributing to the development of strategies and action plans. She also mentioned her continuous support of the Youth club in Budva (whose representative took part in the panel during Day 1), and encouraged openness and perseverance as crucial traits youth workers must possess. She admitted to still struggling and learning, but finds fulfillment in making an impact through various trainings, raising awareness, and implementing youth initiatives. She emphasized that collaboration and meaningful partnerships are crucial for success, and compared *building a network* to the act of *maintaining a bank account*, where relationships need time and attention – much like friendships. Therefore, shared values, and ways, methods, and approaches in working with youth are essential. She stressed the need for a holistic, multisectoral approach in all strategies, stating that success is only possible through mutual support and cooperation.

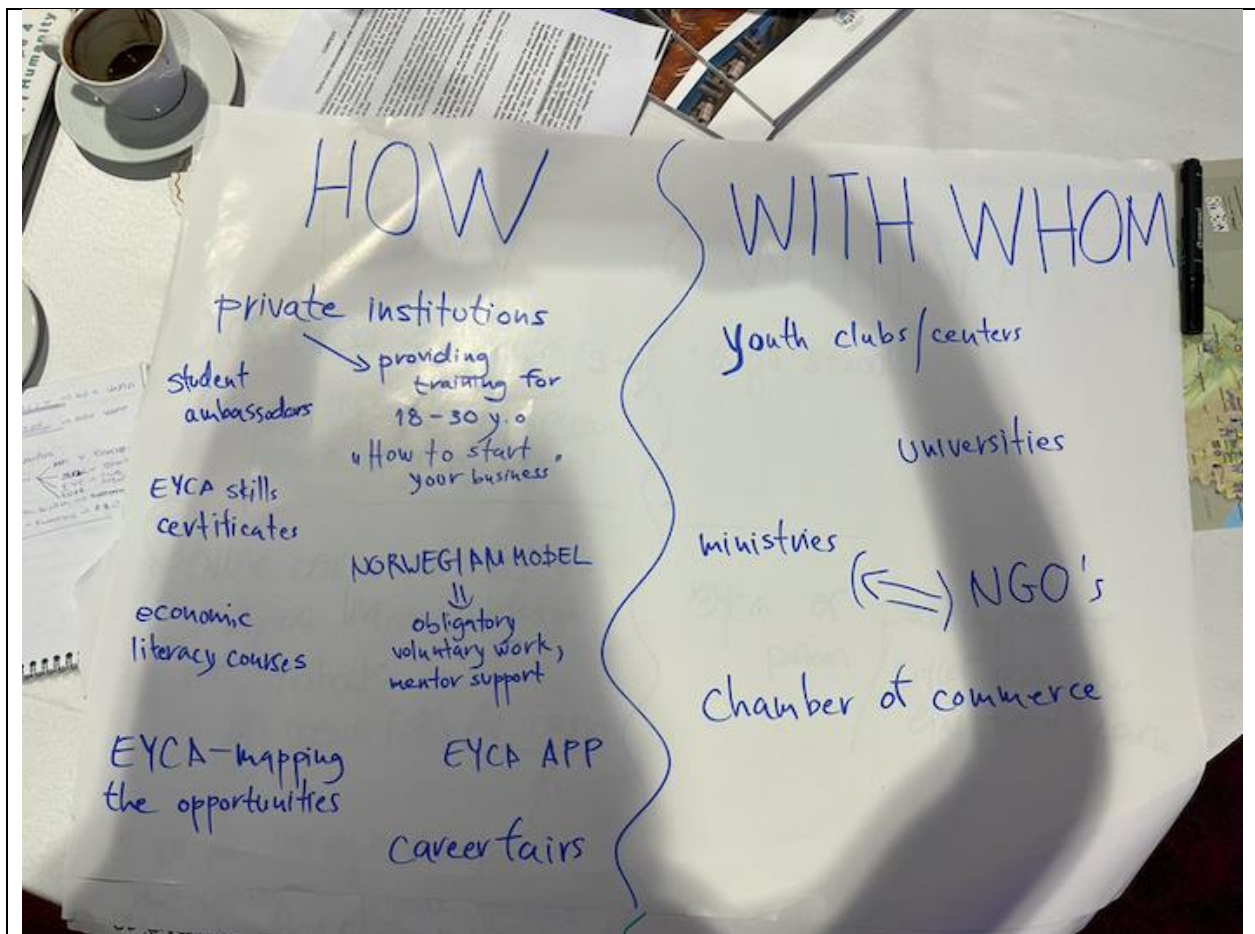
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 - 13.00	<p>Untapping the potential of EYC in connecting stakeholders and building youth infrastructure.</p> <p>Working groups on different topics related to youth ecosystems.</p>

In the World cafe session the participants were divided into three groups, where they discussed three topics and provided their inputs; the participants brainstormed ideas, and shared relevant experiences from their home countries.

In the **Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Group**, it was discussed *how the EYC* can support youth employment initiatives and foster entrepreneurship among young individuals, as well as the **what stakeholders** are to be invited to join these efforts.

How: Private institutions – providing training for 18 – 30-year-olds on "How to start your business"; student ambassadors; Norwegian model – obligatory voluntary support, mentor support; economic literacy courses; EYCA skills certificates; EYCA App – mapping the youth opportunities; Career fairs

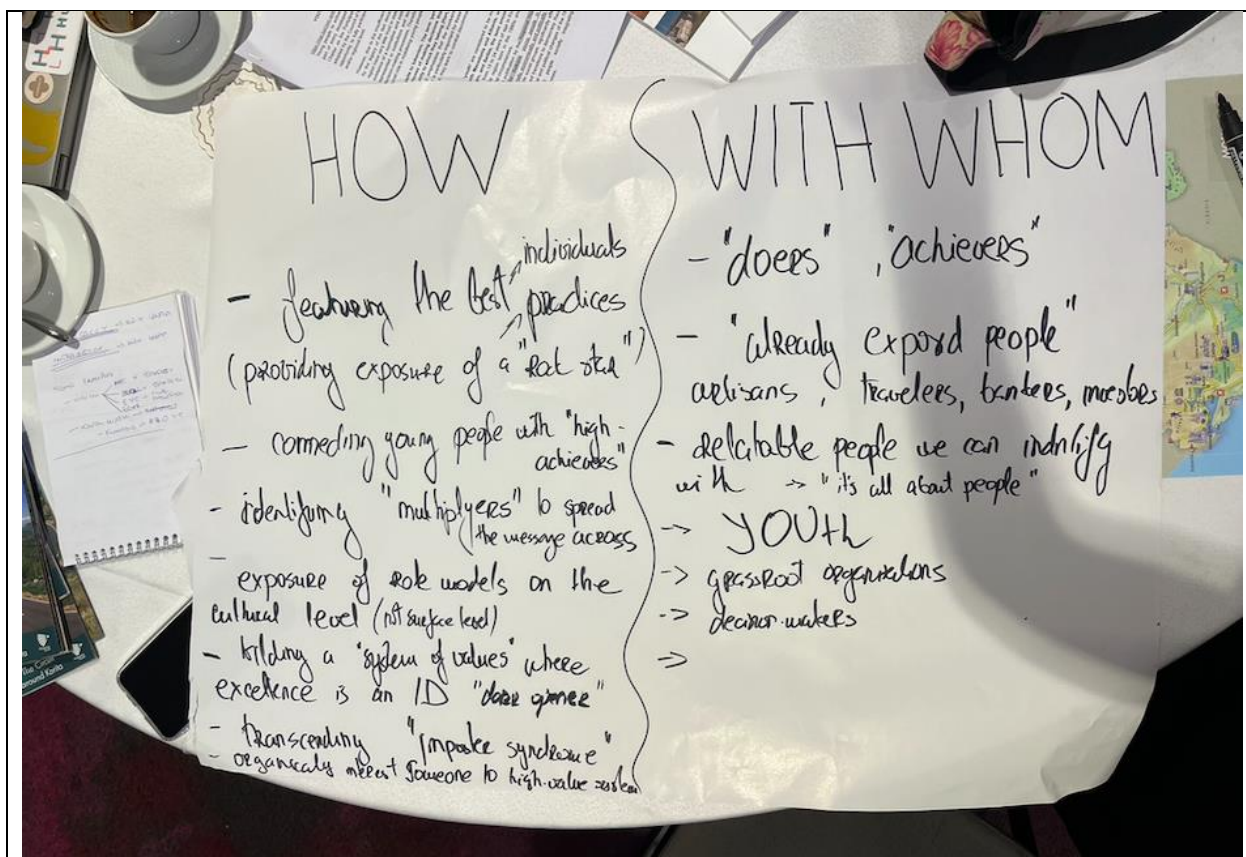
With whom: youth clubs, centres; universities; local NGOs, NGOs advocate with relevant ministries; Chamber of Commerce



In the **Youth Civic Engagement and Participation Group**, the strategies to encourage youth involvement in civic activities and decision-making processes was discussed. Furthermore, how the EYC can facilitate access to civic education and leadership development programs for young people was explored.

How: Featuring the best individuals (providing exposure of a "rock star" – practices); young people with "high-achievers"; identifying multipliers to spread the message across; exposure of role models on the cultural level (not surface level); building a "system of values", where excellence is a ID door-opener; transcending "imposter syndrome"; organically interest someone to the high-value system

With whom: "doers", "achievers"; "already exposed people", artisans, travelers, bankers; relatable people we can identify with – it's all about people; YOUTH; grassroot organizations; and decision-makers.



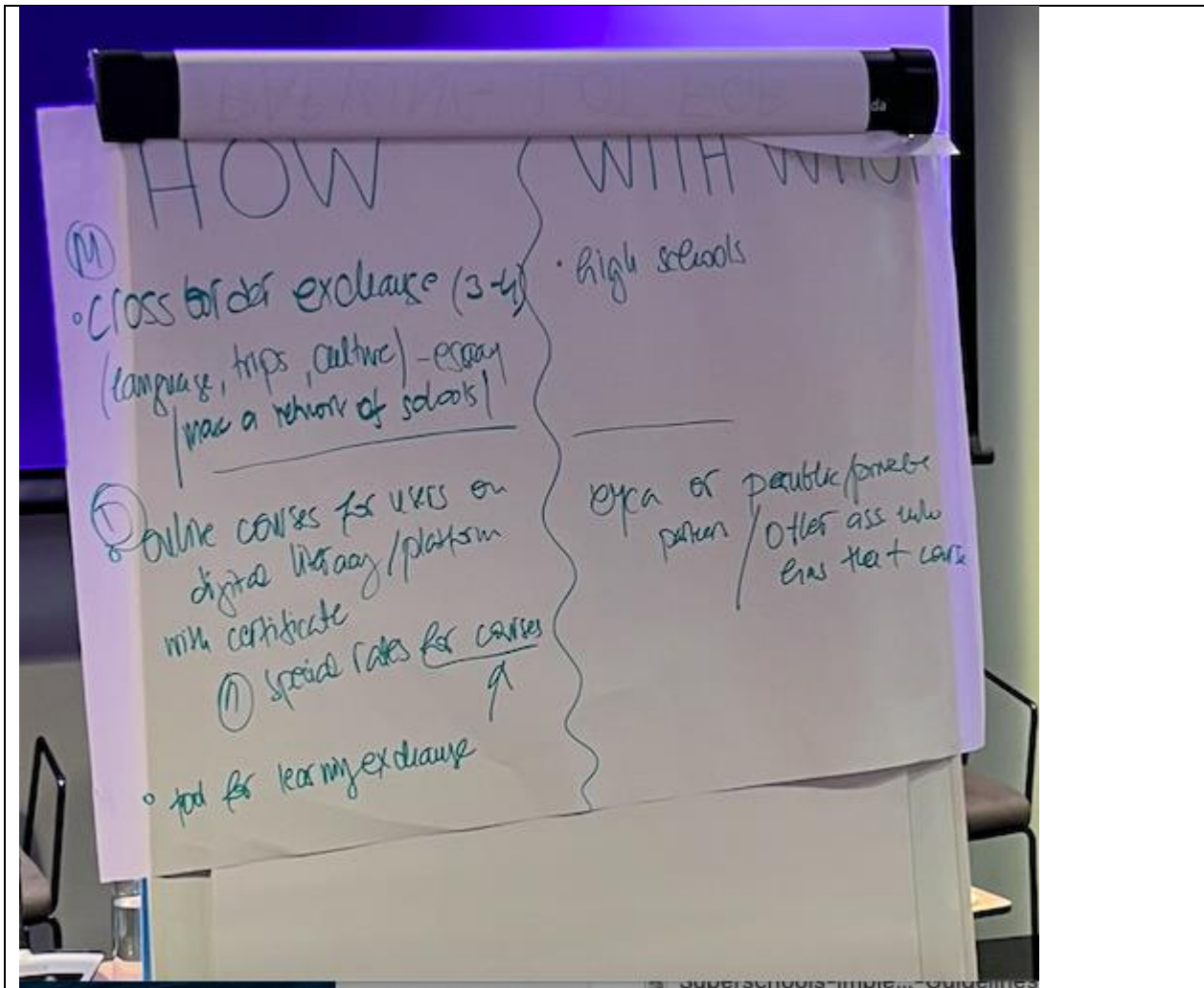
In the **Youth Cultural Exchange and Digital Literacy Group**, it was examined how the EYC can foster cultural exchange and celebrate diversity among young people across Europe. Additionally, the participants discussed the initiatives to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among EYC cardholders.

How: (M) cross-border exchange (3-4), language, trips, culture – essay (make a network of schools)

(D) online courses for users on digital literacy/platform with certificate; (n) special rates for courses – tool for learning exchange

With whom: high schools;

EYCA or public/private partners / other ass who has that course



13.00 - 13.30	Closing of event
13.30 - 14.30	Lunch break and departures