

PRESS RELEASE

YouthPowerEU launches a youth-led campaign to lower the European Parliament candidacy age from 25 to 18

The new Erasmus+ project will empower young people in Italy and Greece to influence political decision-making and advocate for more inclusive democratic representation

Brussels, Rome and Athens, 7 September 2026 – YouthPowerEU, a new youth-led European project funded by the Erasmus+ programme, has officially launched with the objective of **strengthening young people's participation in democratic life and advocating for a reduction of the minimum age required to stand as a candidate in European Parliament elections from 25 to 18 in Italy and Greece**. YouthPowerEU is implemented under the Erasmus+ KA154-YOU – Youth Participation Activities action. The 14-month project will run from 1 June 2026 to 31 July 2027.

Although young people are directly affected by decisions taken at national and European levels, **they remain significantly underrepresented in political institutions**. YouthPowerEU seeks to address this **democratic gap by giving young people the knowledge, skills, platforms and direct access to decision-makers needed to influence public policy**.

At the centre of the project will be a group of **YouthPowerEU Ambassadors aged between 18 and 24, selected from Italy and Greece**. They will participate in a structured programme combining non-formal education, political and legal literacy, advocacy training, strategic communications, digital campaigning and direct dialogue with policymakers. **At least 40% of the young people involved will be participants with fewer opportunities**, ensuring that the campaign reflects the experiences of young people who are often excluded from traditional political participation.

"Democracy cannot be truly representative when young people are invited to vote but face additional barriers when they want to stand for election themselves. YouthPowerEU is about moving from consultation to meaningful political participation, giving young people the tools to shape laws, public narratives and institutional decisions," the YouthPowerEU spokesperson Isabella De Gregorio (President of Eduxo.eu, the NGO that initially founded the campaign in 2024).

The project aims to **involve at least 9 Members of the European Parliament and at least 20 national policymakers**, while reaching an estimated audience of **1 million people through media, digital communications and awareness-raising activities**.

The partnership combines expertise in youth participation, European citizenship, non-formal education, political advocacy, media and inclusive democratic engagement. By the end of the project, YouthPowerEU intends not only to **advance the debate on candidacy-age reform, but also to establish a sustainable network of young ambassadors capable of continuing to advocate for more accessible, inclusive and representative political institutions across Europe**.

Media contact:

Ms Isabella Sofia De Gregorio (President of Eduxo.eu - European Network for Democracy and Equality ASBL)

+39 329 485 9967 | +32 470831781 | info@youthpowereu.eu | www.youthpowereu.eu

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