

Youth Participation Working Group

Date: 26 February 2026 | **Time:** 11:00 – 12:00 CET | **Location:** online

Participants

Ana Budimir (SIC HR), Andrea Cox (SIC SK), Aurelie Van der Leene (SIC BE), Barbara D'Ippolito (SIC IT), Bénédicte Chevalier (SIC BE), Borjana Dine (SIC AL), Giuliano De Luca (SIC IT), Ieva Megne (SIC LV), Ilda Sukurica (SIC LU), Iris Strasser (SIC AT), Kristin Kjønneøy Slettvåg (SIC NO), Lea Vaupotič (SIC SL), Liudas Mikalkevičius (SIC LT), Liv Agdalen (SIC SE), Marieva Karkanaki (SIC GR), Natalia Wójcicka (SIC PL), Pilar Escudero Galindo (SIC ES), Proletina Ilcheva (SIC BG), Signe Sandfeld Hansen (SIC DK), Tom Pinfield (SIC UK), Tracy Hogan (SIC IE), Viviana Stanila (SIC RO), Carolina Fruscione (EUN), Chiara Antonelli (EUN), Irene Di Giorgio (EUN).

Recording of the meeting can be found [here](#)

Objective

The objective of the meeting was to share different youth panel models from across the network and identify and discuss common challenges and solutions.

Minutes – background information

The creation and development of youth panels vary across SICs. This session addressed the topic in a focused and structured manner, inviting reflection on effective youth panel models, identifying challenges and exchanging good practices.

Youth Coordinators were invited to join breakout rooms for a discussion around six specific questions:

- 1) How did you set up the youth panel in your country?
- 2) What is the selection/recruitment process that you follow? How do you ensure diversity and inclusion within your youth panel?

- 3) How often does your youth panel meet and where?
- 4) How do you communicate with members of your youth panel?
- 5) Can you share 1-2 activities or initiatives you organised where youth participation worked particularly well?
- 6) What are the main challenges you have encountered as a youth coordinator?

Youth Panel Setup

Models vary significantly across the network. Some SICs build panels through open calls and broad outreach. For example, SIC SK established its panel launching a public call via social media, website and direct outreach. The panel started with four members and has grown to 14, with a renewal planned. SIC ES operates a two-level structure: a large online community, approx. 400 young people, and a smaller active core group, approx. 12.

Other SICs rely strongly on partnerships. For example, SIC PL recruits mainly through partner schools, where teachers select students for one year of participation. SIC SE reaches out to large youth organisations, each nominating one candidate. SIC IE recruits twice yearly, in September and the summertime, through self-nomination, teacher recommendations and its peer-to-peer programme. SIC NO maintains a continuous panel in Oslo, recruiting twice a year through multiple channels, including a Facebook group of an external youth organisation.

Some panels are embedded in specific programmes. For example, SIC HR formed its panel within its Safer Internet Centre project, involving psychology and social work student volunteers and children from a half day treatment programme, including vulnerable youth. SIC BG recruited participants following a radio programme on online safety. SIC LU created a smaller, more active committee alongside its youth panel to allow faster engagement. SIC UK evolved from project-based youth boards to a dedicated board, ages 13–17, covering all areas of work.

Recruitment & Diversity

Recruitment processes include open calls, school-based nominations and formal application procedures. Most SICs reported using forms disseminated in schools, sometimes asking young people to write responses in their own words.

SIC IE selects 10–20 participants per round based on motivation. SIC NO uses application forms and informal interviews, involving guardians for younger members and ensuring additional support for disadvantaged youth. SIC SE receives around 12 nominations annually via youth organisations.

SIC IT recruits during the Giffoni Film Festival, a renowned film festival specifically focused on children and young people, ensuring that the group reflects gender balance, regional representation, ages 14–18, and inclusion of young people with migrant backgrounds.

Challenges around diversity were widely shared. Several SICs noted gender imbalance (often more girls than boys). SIC UK and SIC PL highlighted difficulties in ensuring representativeness, as application processes often attract highly motivated or high-achieving youth. Financial and logistical constraints also influence recruitment models, particularly when working with multiple schools.

Meeting Frequency & Format

Meeting frequency varies. For example, SIC ES holds two online sessions per month and two in-person weekends per year, with additional public events. SIC IE meets four times per year in person, plus online sessions. SIC SE holds 4–5 meetings annually, mainly online, with occasional in-person meetings in Stockholm and smaller working groups for specific projects. SIC NO meets on Saturdays at a Red Cross youth club in Oslo.

SIC PL meets at least twice per year in person (including a two-day meeting), with additional online sessions depending on needs. SIC SK meets 2–3 times annually in person, often alongside larger events, with most collaboration taking place online due to geographical spread. SIC BG meets 1–2 times per month on-site, with additional online meetings. SIC LU meets monthly in a hybrid format.

Across SICs, there was agreement that regular, often monthly, contact helps maintain engagement, with at least one or two in-person meetings per year where possible.

Communication Methods

Most SICs use instant messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Viber. For example, SIC ES uses Telegram, also via educators, while SIC AT reported that youth suggested creating a WhatsApp community. SIC DK is developing an app to support communication and community building. SIC UK relies primarily on email and sometimes Google Classroom for safeguarding reasons. SIC IT uses online forms for scheduling. SIC SK combines WhatsApp, email, a dedicated website and Google Drive to ensure accessibility and documentation.

Youth Participation Activities & Best Practices

Numerous successful initiatives were shared:

- SIC LT organised a competition for SID 2026, with the winning youth group attending SIF 2026 in Brussels.
- SIC IT and SIC AT involved young people as moderators at conferences.
- SIC DK engaged youth in a video workshop explaining the DSA.
- SIC NO youth test helpline procedures through simulated calls and develop volunteer resources.
- SIC IE works on topics chosen by participants and tests external resources.
- SIC ES ran the “Observatory of Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment”, where youth analysed platforms and presented findings to Meta and Google representatives.
- SIC LV conducts peer-to-peer workshops in schools for grades 1–7.
- SIC RO organised an outdoor creative workshop on oversharing (“If it doesn’t belong in the frame, don’t share”).
- SIC PL held a two day residential workshop using LARP to address disinformation.

- SIC HR organised a week-long gaming camp with workshops and peer-led sessions.
- SIC BE highlighted the value of creative icebreakers to strengthen group cohesion.
- SIC SK and SIC PL emphasised youth participation in conferences and preparation for major national and European events.

Challenges Identified

Common challenges across breakout rooms included:

- Maintaining steady motivation and engagement.
- Engaging vulnerable or introverted young people.
- Ensuring balanced gender representation.
- Ensuring representativeness of participants.
- Structuring effective feedback processes and showing young people concrete outcomes.
- Ensuring youth input meaningfully influences organisational work and policy discussions.
- Financial and logistical constraints, particularly for residential or co-production activities.
- Providing real opportunities for youth to engage in policy debates (e.g. around phone or social media bans).

Additional Information

The next YPWG will take place on Thursday, 26 March 2026 at 11.00 CET and will focus on peer – to – peer engagement.

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