

Participation of minority youth in public life

We as Youth of European Nationalities, umbrella organisation of 37 national ethnic autochthonous minorities in Europe have observed increasing obstacles to social inclusion, particularly for minorities, marginalised and vulnerable groups in Europe. This is largely due to increasing polarisation and fear of the 'other', lack of representation and participation in society, especially in the political, institutional and legal structures.

The lack of transparency and unapproachable decision-making processes are described by youth as problematic. Thus, there has been an increasing lack of trust in politicians, creating a gap and disconnection between youth and decision-makers. Ineffective communication methods by stakeholders are creating a lack of awareness of the meaning and benefits of active citizenship.

Discrimination of minority languages in public, especially in the everyday-life of youngsters, creates obstacles for young people to actively participate in public life, especially in a surrounding of majority population.

We have realized that a lack of awareness and understanding of diverse groups in society is partly caused by youth distanced from society, uninformed young people, education systems that are not meeting the needs of the youth and irresponsible media. Those issues are greatly influencing the participation of minority youth in public life.

Therefore YEN:

- **Calls** for an accurate, equitable and increased representation of all social groups in the media, political system and official institutions.
- **Asks** for the promotion of diversity and equity through increasing awareness, encouraging collaboration, sharing best practices and concrete actions on the rights of youth.
- **Highlights** the need to support minorities, vulnerable and marginalized groups, to reduce obstacles, increase access and prioritization of their needs to facilitate inclusion in society. The adaptation of current social structures and legal frameworks, as well as implementing representative policies are recommended.
- **Appeals** for more transparency in decision making processes using user friendly tools, such as online platforms and public dialogue with adequate language
- **Highlights** the importance of active citizenship and participation, especially volunteering, within society through formal and non-formal education and within official institutions and the media.
- **Urges** for official recognition and adequate representation of minority languages and history within society, particularly in all levels of the education system, the public sphere, in state institutions and the media, with the provision of platforms to promote and preserve minority languages and culture.
- **Appeals** for the involvement of all stakeholders in the promotion of responsible media and social media usage, through formal and non-formal education.