

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE CALL FOR IDEAS ON THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH

The call for ideas on the European Year of Youth was **launched on 22 October** in English and on the 27 in every other EU language in the platform of EU survey. The launch was announced on the [European Youth Portal](#) and a social media ad campaign followed on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Overall, the campaign generated more than 4.8 million impressions and 27 000 unique clicks. The news was also shared with various stakeholders, including Back to School coordinators and the European Youth Forum.

The call was **closed on 21 November** at midnight and received overall **4 686 replies**. The majority of the respondents were between **18 and 24 years-old** (55.5%) with the age groups 14-17 and 25-30 following. 81.1% of them were living in cities or towns and 16.3% from villages and rural areas. We have received responses **from all Member States and beyond**, with Greece¹, Italy, and Spain being the top three participants. 60.4% of the respondents identified as female, 35.8% as male, and 3.8% as other or preferred not to answer the question.

All charts on the demography of respondents can be found in Annex I.

Profile of the most typical responders

- Nationality: Greek
- Age: 18-24
- Residence: City/town
- Gender: Female
- Education: Secondary high school diploma
- Participation in a European youth initiative/programme: No

Key findings

- Respondents would like to see **festivals, workshops, debates, and training sessions** to be organised as activities.
 - The many young respondents also emphasised **travel** opportunities, educational and thematic **excursions** and **exchanges**, including school exchanges - with schools in other EU countries – or in host families belonging to different communities to learn about their ways of life.
 - Young people showed interest in **volunteering** activities, more Erasmus+ scholarships for **rural areas, sport** events, free certified video courses and **exhibitions** involving young people.

¹ There was not a geographical balance between the responders, as the survey was accessible to everyone. (37, 11% of the responders were from Greece).

- **58.8% of respondents** would like to **actively contribute** to the European Year of Youth.
- To the question ‘Who would you like to **interact with** during the European Year of Youth?’, 3 438 votes arrived to ‘**Young people from other European countries**’, 1 613 to ‘Member of the European Parliament’, and 1 308 to ‘Representative from a Youth Organisation’. (Respondents were able to submit votes for multiple options.)
- As for the **themes** of the Year, most respondents selected ‘**Education and training**’ (63.6%), ‘**Climate change/environment**’ (59.8%), ‘**Health/mental health**’ (56.1%), ‘**Inclusive societies, including gender, anti-discrimination**’ (48, 12%). (Respondents were able to submit votes for multiple options.)
 - When asked about other themes the EYY should focus on, the respondents provided a vast majority of topics, such as the effect of the pandemic on young people, financial literacy, art & music, empowering the rural communities and strengthening digital skills.
- When asked where the Year of Youth activities should take place, we have received 3 121 votes for ‘**all over Europe**’, 1 548 for ‘all over the world’, and 1 477 for ‘all over my country’.
- The majority of the respondents would prefer the **activities** to take place both in **face-to-face and online** formats (56,19%).
- **62.9% does not know or not sure how to make their voice heard or express their opinion.** Respondents’ **preferred way of making their voice heard** is: ‘**debates and interactive dialogues** (public events, town halls, citizens’ dialogues, consultations etc.)’ (61%), ‘communicating on the topic on social media’ (52.9%), and ‘voting in elections’ (47.5%). (Respondents were able to submit votes for multiple options.)
 - Some young respondents expressed that as they are under the age of 18, they do not have enough options to express themselves politically as they cannot vote. The ideas of “acting by example” and discussing with their own networks were also reoccurring as preferences.

All charts on the content related responses can be found in Annex II.

What does the European Year of Youth mean to young people?

Most of the respondents replied that it means more **opportunities** for youth, a chance for young people to take part in the **decision-making process** and to make their **voice heard** at European level. Most of them are expecting interactions with other Europeans through cross-border activities, trainings, exchange of experiences and culture and Pan-European festivals or big events.

A part of the respondents also stressed the **need for recovery programmes** after the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their daily lives. European Year of Youth is also a chance “*to put aside our differences and to build a shared Europe that goes beyond our national identities*” as highlighted by one respondent. In addition, a few respondents seem to see the European Year of Youth as a good occasion to bridge the gap between the generations.

Even through there were not many negative statements, some respondents expressed their **disappointment** for the EU and are distrustful that this new initiative could bring even a small change. Moreover, a number of responders are hoping for long-term effects, far beyond 2022, in order to bring a substantial change.

Furthermore, a vast majority of the respondents stressed the fact that this initiative shows that the European Union is thinking about the future by bringing the **young people in the spotlight** for one year, as a celebration of youth and a forward thinking.

“I think it is a great opportunity to strengthen young people’s voice in society and listen to them. Therefore, I think it is essential that there is real outcome of this event e.g. a document collecting all ideas/propositions from young people and that will be presented to EU decision makers.”

“It means inclusion. It means listening to the ideas of the youth - the new generations - and implement them in everyday life. Use them in real life, not only listen to them. Integrate LGBTQ youth in all countries and bring their discrimination to an end. Enough is enough!”

“The European Year of Youth means a new hope to me. A new hope so that we can all come closer. A new hope, so that our visions and ambitions come true in order to obtain the future that belongs to us and that we are struggling to fight for a better and more secure tomorrow. ”

“In principle, I think that's important and welcome. With such a short lead time, I'm afraid, it won't turn out to be anything more than a show of politicians and officials with lots of beautiful window speeches.”

How would they like to contribute to the European Year of Youth?

The 58.8% of respondents that expressed the desire to actively participate (see fig. 9) were asked to specify the manner in which they were willing to contribute to the European Year of Youth.

A vast majority of the participants manifested their eagerness to contribute by **participating in/attending** the future activities, mainly to **share their opinions, ideas, culture and experience** with peers and decision makers, as well as to meet new people. The themes of interest mentioned in their written contributions are mostly in line with the results of the question regarding the themes of the year (see fig. 10).

Moreover, a large part is willing to go a step further by **organising the activities** themselves or help in their organisation. Those respondents are eager to put their skills into use for the organisation of workshops, debates, trainings, various events online and offline at their local or national level, sometimes even at European level. Some are ready to travel in order to do so, and some others prefer to engage with organisations that they trust will have an impact.

Specific ideas mentioned:

- Debates, discussions, conferences around themes of interest, with peers and decision makers (at local, regional, national and European levels);
- Spaces for youth to share their ideas, opinions, hopes, culture, proposals (e.g. a webpage; meetups; forums; etc.);
- Workshops and trainings on themes of interest (e.g. to better understand how the EU works; new skills; to increase youth’s civic involvement; to learn how to speak in public; work related; etc.);
- The possibility to be involved in the organisation of the activities;
- Entertainment (games; quizzes; concerts; etc.).

“Be an active participant and help to organize the events in my country. In order to feel the most European spirit I think the EU should let the young European citizens to do and organize activities too in the name of EYY. Also promoting interactions.”

“I want to be part of events all around Europe, I want to participate into conferences, debate with other young Europeans. Maybe I’ll be able to organise some events in my city and across Europe so everyone can be part of this European year of Youth.”

“It would be nice to have a webpage where young people can write articles, blogs, or advice, and to share thoughts for other young people to see and engage with.”

As for respondents with more experience, most expressed the desire to share their expertise, as well as provide a motivational support, to increase youth’s active participation and inclusion into policymaking and into society.

Finally, quite a few of this survey’s partakers are disposed to contribute by **spreading the word** (through various media, their private circle) or via journalistic activities (articles, documentaries, etc.). One can also highlight a general **enthusiasm** to participate, even without specific ideas as how to do so, which points to high expectations regarding the number of future activities and their accessibility.

Other ideas proposed by respondents

A central theme of the participants’ additional ideas was the need to **meet people and engage with other youth**. The youth want to discuss about issues affecting them, not only with policymakers, but also with each other. The participants want to get to know each other and other European youth’s lives – where they live, what they eat, what their culture is like. **Inclusion** in general is mentioned, as is the **disadvantaged and rural youth** and giving them opportunities to also participate in the Year. Ideas implying **intergenerational collaboration** highlighted the importance of having the older generations also included in the year, so that they can understand the youth better. Furthermore, education was a popular theme among the ideas, for example in the context of giving disadvantaged and rural youth better opportunities to participate in education programmes, platforms and language trainings. In addition, an *“Exhibition about other countries’ educational system”* was a specific idea in regards to education.

Many participants highlighted the **need for communication**. Not only between people themselves, but especially in the context of EU and the youth. According to some responses, the EU does not promote nor provide enough information of its traineeships, programmes and other job opportunities. This has resulted in a lack of information and participation of the youth. In addition, the EYY itself needs more marketing/promoting, as some participants disclosed that more visibility for the Year is needed, and not only through social media. Podcasts relating to the Year or the youth in EU were suggested multiple times and could help bridge the information gap. Another interesting – and a recurrent – suggestion was the development of a **“mobile app** to get informed about youth topics in Europe”. This would act as an easy way for the youth to get directly in touch with the institutions. Even if social media was not regarded as sufficient marketing tool, many participants highlighted **digital tools** as the best and most present-day way to engage with the youth.

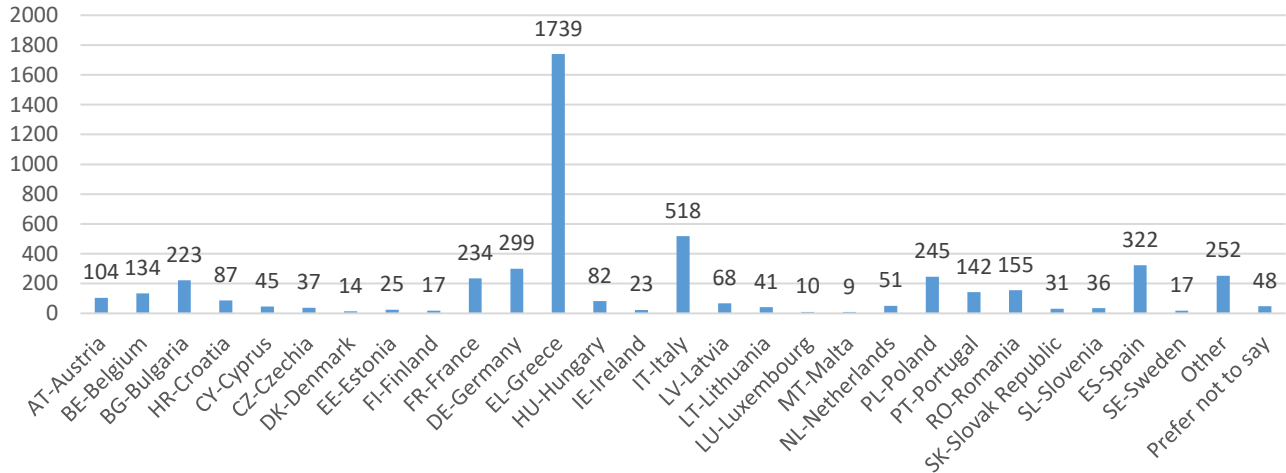
One important matter pointed out by many of the participants is their fear of the Year being just talk and not concrete actions. This **distrust** is also displayed in some of the replies that indicate apprehension on the timeline of the Year – the sudden announcement and following quick organisation raised doubts of the Year’s actual

impact. The importance of being heard and listened and to being able to impact policymaking were recurring topics. **Job shadowing and mentoring** were also suggested by many participants. Another suggestion to bridge the gap between politicians and youth was to include scientists in the discussion, who might be more trusted by youth than politicians. Young local politicians also seem to be more approachable and trustworthy to the participants of the survey.

Finally, other interesting ideas and topics were also raised, such as **sustainability/climate, gender issues, employment and mobility**. Some more specific ideas were for example organising a “Food Festival” with traditional foods from different countries, organising a “country market” to discover different countries on their stands, and to commemorate the Suicide Prevention Week and the World Mental Health Day. In one idea, it was suggested that the Year’s start should include a webinar that presents all the events that will be happening around Europe and the Year itself.

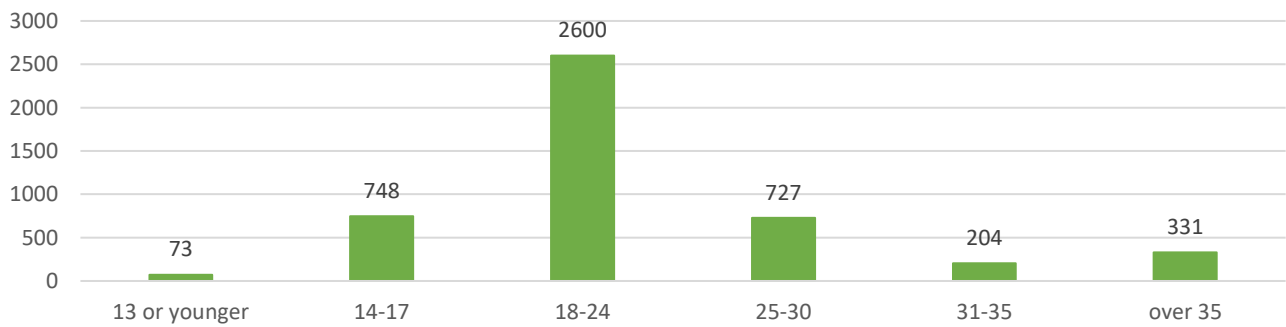
Annex I Demography

Figure 1. What's your nationality?



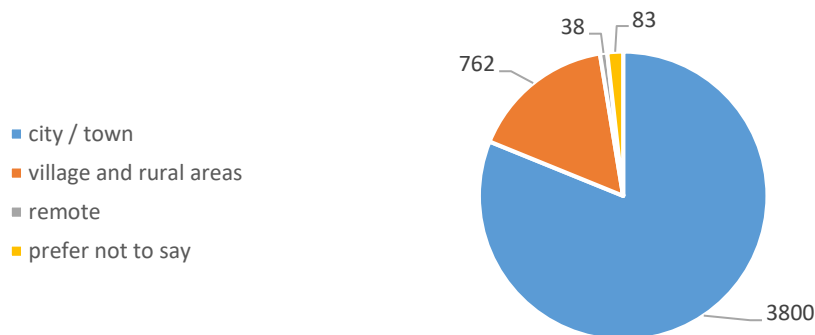
This was a multiple-choice mandatory question.

Figure 2. How old are you?



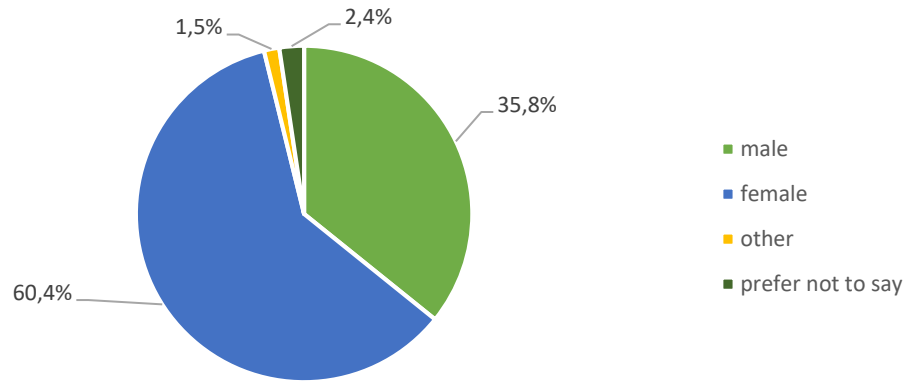
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 3. Do you live in...



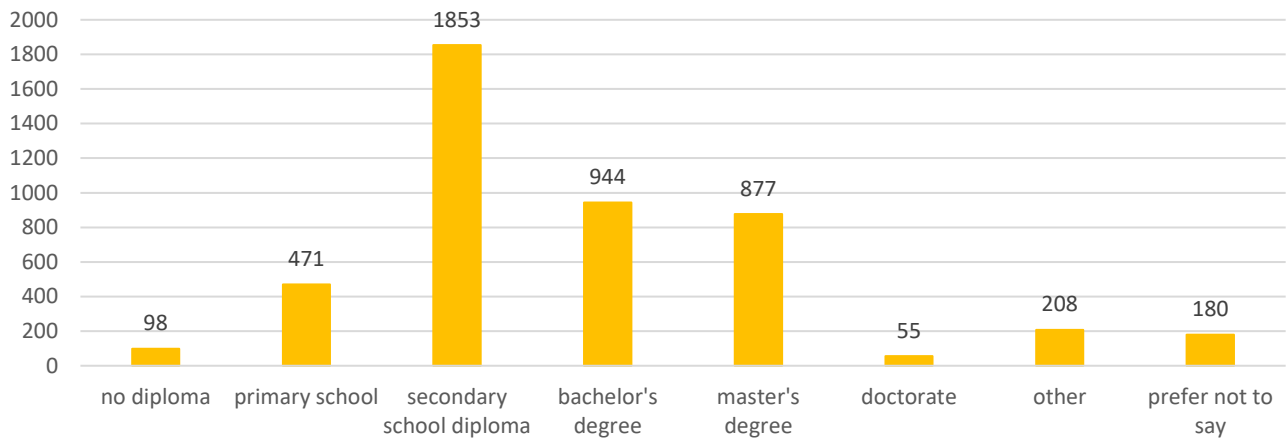
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 4. Do you indentify as...



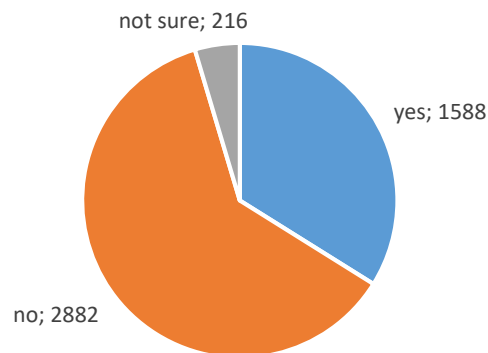
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 5. Please state your highest qualification earned so far



This was a single-choice mandatory question.

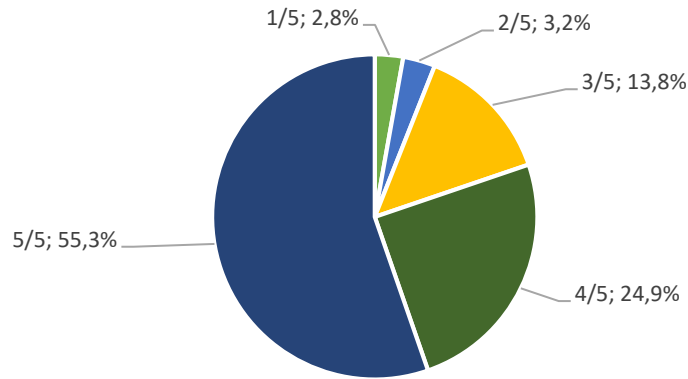
Figure 6. Have you already participated in a European youth initiative/programme?



This was a single-choice mandatory question.

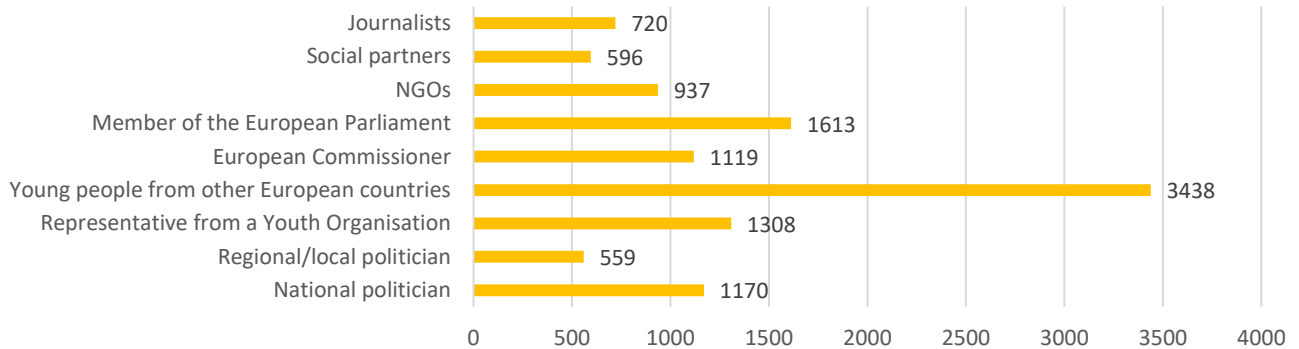
Annex II Content

Figure 7. How do you feel about the proposal of the European Year of Youth?



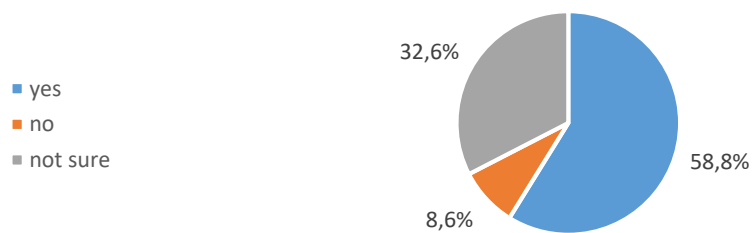
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 8. Who would you like to interact with during the European Year of Youth?



This was a multiple-choice (between 1 and 3 choices) optional question.

Figure 9. Would you like to actively contribute to the European Year of Youth?



This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 10. What themes do you think the European Year of Youth should focus on?

This was a multiple-choice (between 1 and 5 choices) mandatory question.

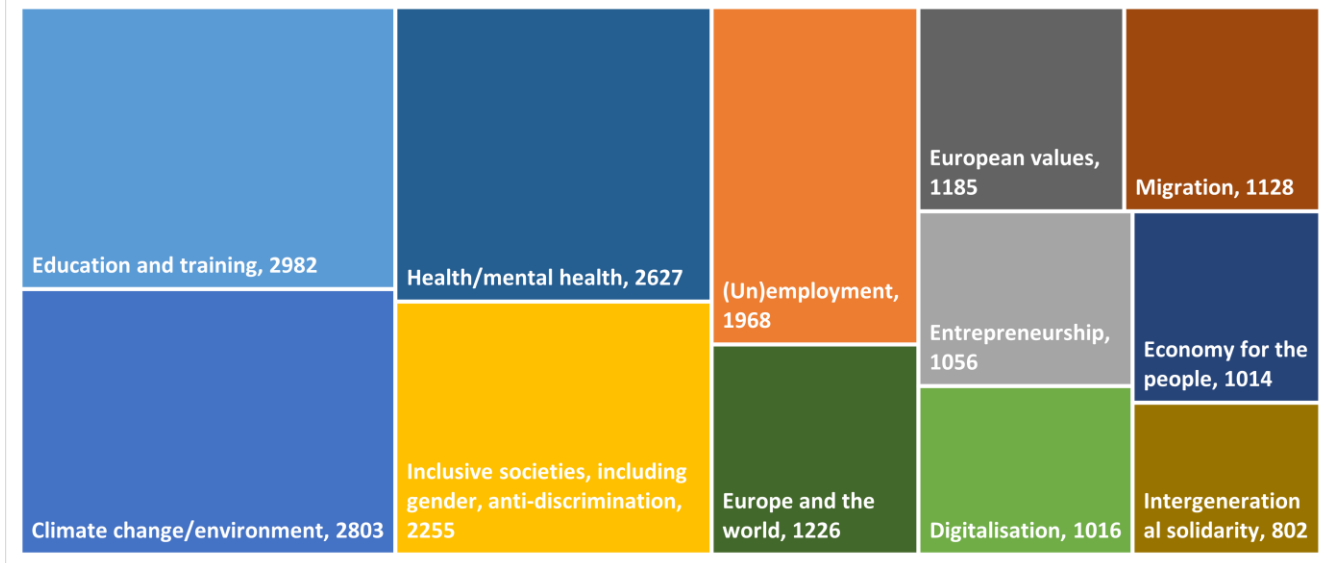
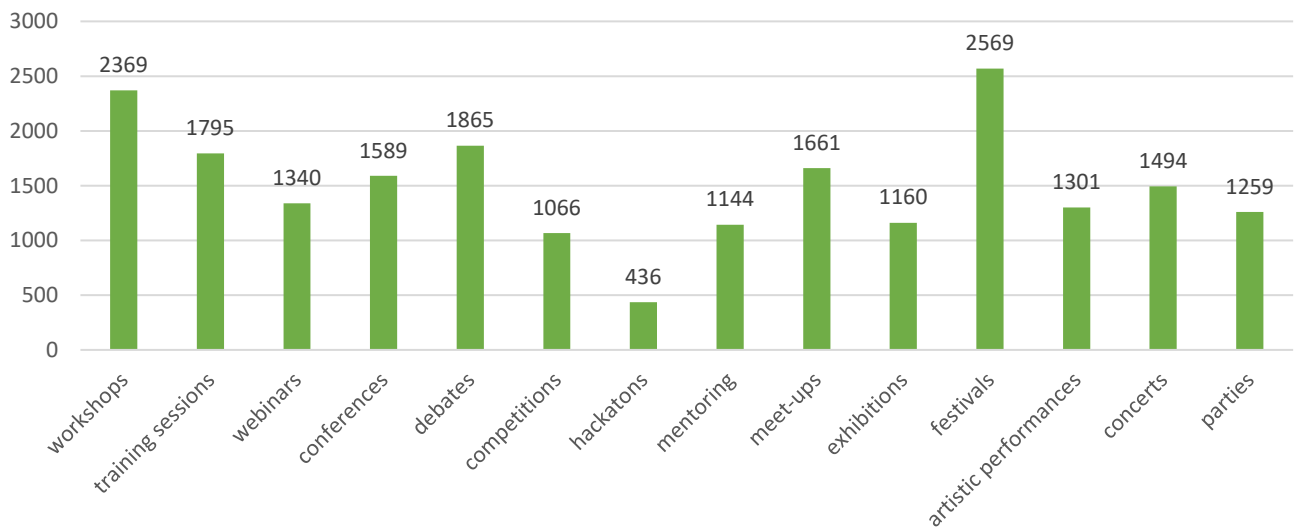


Figure 11. What kind of activities do you think should absolutely be part of your European Year of Youth?



This was a multiple-choice (between 1 and 5 choices) mandatory question.

Figure 12. Where should these activities take place?

This was a multiple-choice (between 1 and 3 choices) optional question.

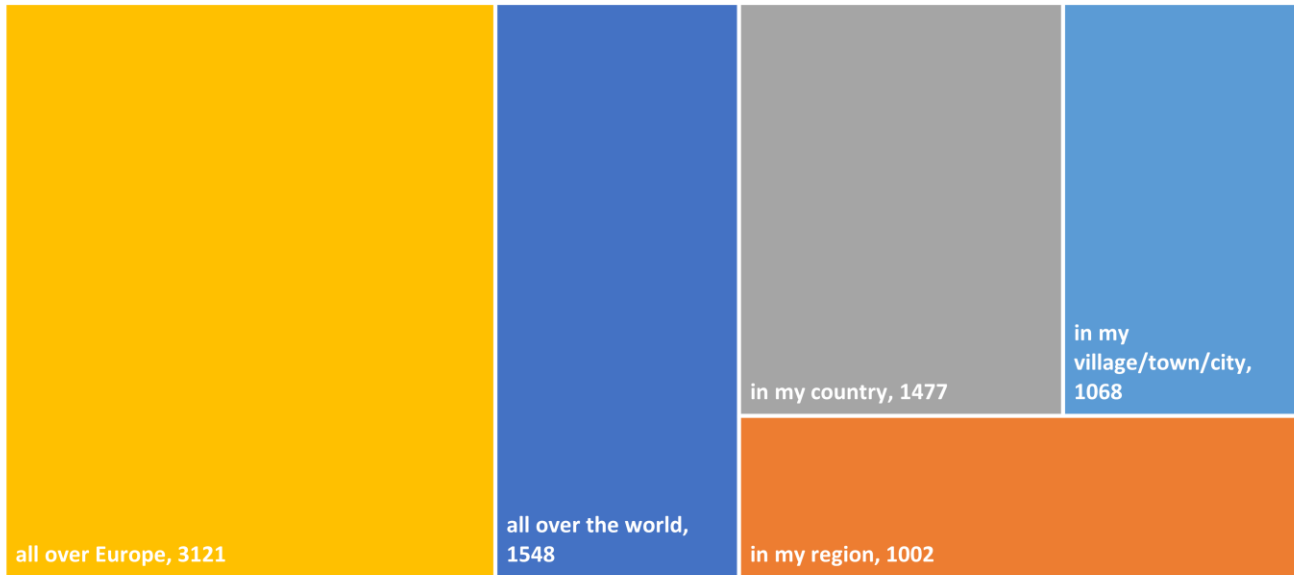
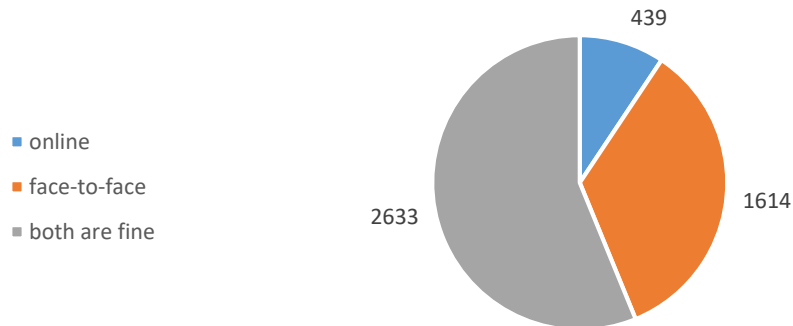
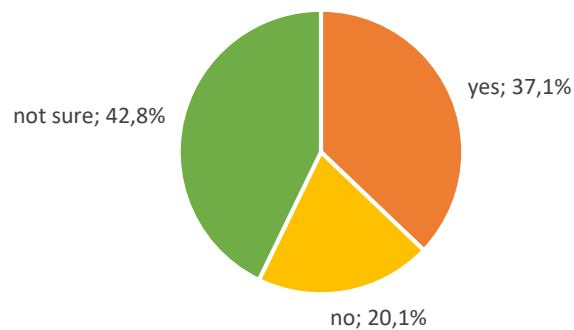


Figure 13. Which activity format would you prefer?



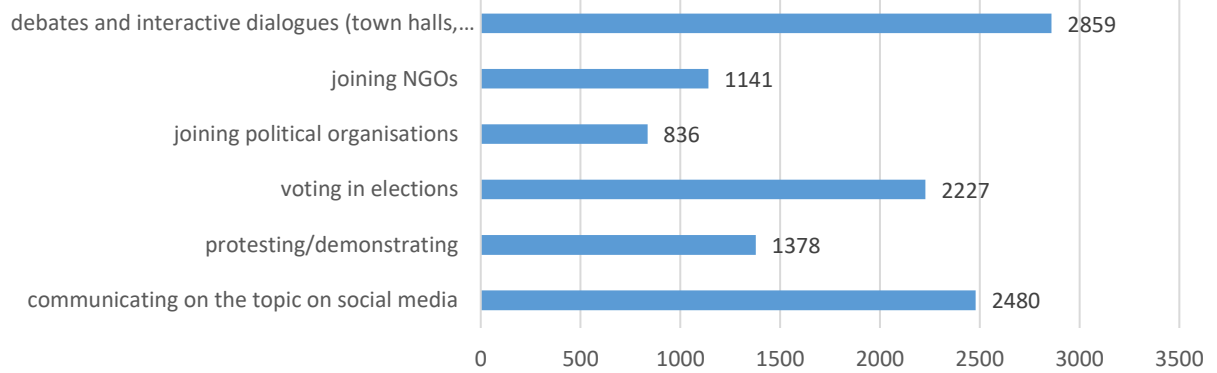
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 14. If you want to make your voice heard/to express your opinion, do you know how to do so?



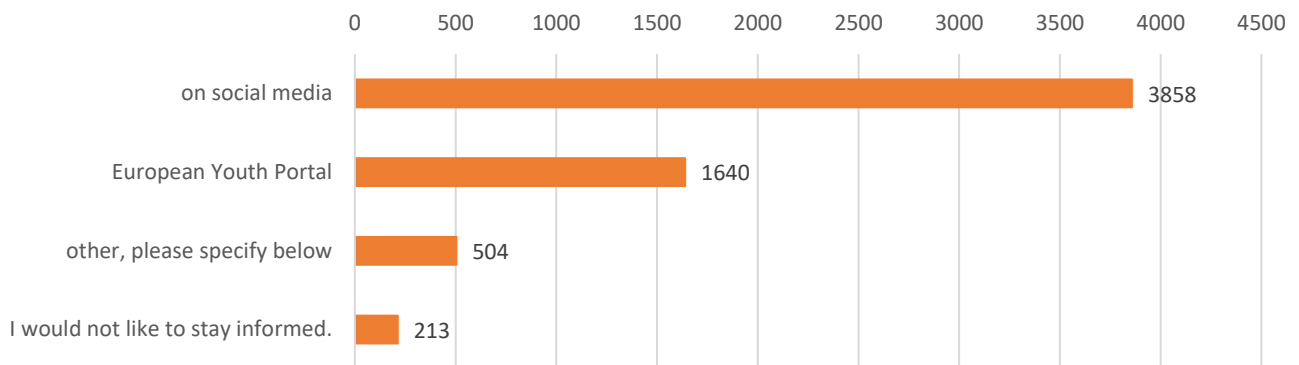
This was a single-choice mandatory question.

Figure 15. What is/would be your preferred way of making your voice heard?



This was a multiple-choice (between 1 and 3 choices) mandatory question.

Figure 16. How would you like to stay informed on developments of the European Year of Youth?



This was a multiple-choice mandatory question.