



Impact Report 2024



Welcome!

I am pleased to present the YES Forum 2024 Impact Report. Guided by our motto “Empowering Generations,” we focused on strengthening member engagement and capacity building. Our members contributed to publications on digital inclusion and a webinar on youth and democracy – fostering dialogue between young people, social workers, professionals, and policymakers.

Authenticity is at our core, and I am pleased all this report’s images capture our members’ hands-on efforts, illustrating the deep connection between grassroots engagement and meaningful impact. This groundwork underpins YES Forum’s unique advocacy, bridging regional expertise with EU decision-making to build a fairer, more social Europe. In 2024, we amplified youth and social work issues, advocating for systemic solutions for disadvantaged youth, co-organizing a policy event with the EESC and BAG EJSA, and contributing to the EU Youth Test.

We also ensured that regional realities remained central to European discussions. Our annual event in Piteå addressed Northern Sweden’s green transition, highlighting the need to include all regions in Europe’s sustainable future.

During increasing political polarisation following the 2024 European Parliament elections, we remain committed to fostering inclusive cooperation and ensuring that European policies reflect the voices of those we serve. Together with our members, partners, and stakeholders, we look forward to continuing our work to improve the lives of disadvantaged young people.

Annett Wiedermann

Director



As we look back on 2024, I feel immense pride in how much we have achieved together as a network. This year has truly demonstrated the value of collaboration and the strength that comes from the expertise and commitment of our members.

Our members have been at the heart of our success – co-organising events, leading workshops, facilitating sessions, and contributing to reports and policy papers that shape our work and amplify our impact. It is your dedication that makes YES Forum what it is today: a vibrant and influential network that successfully advocates for young people across Europe.

Two highlights of this year were the Annual Event in Piteå, which was organised in partnership with the OECD and the Municipality of Piteå, and the Policy Event in Brussels, which showcased the strong relationships we have built with European institutions and networks. Organised in partnership with our founder member, BAG EJSa, and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Policy Event focused on the vital role of young citizens in shaping a fair and inclusive digital future. By involving young people at every stage, we ensured their voices were central to these important discussions.

This year has proven, once again, that together we are stronger. As we move forward, I want to thank you for your unwavering support, your contributions, and your shared commitment to making a difference. Let us also take some time and give a warm welcome to our networks' new full member NOSTOS (EL), as well as our new associate members: Mobile Schools (BE), Pistes Solidaires (FR), Finglas Youth Resource Centre (IE), Stichting SCN (NL), and Calasanz (ES).

Let us build on the successes of 2024 and continue working toward a brighter future for all young people.

Kind regards,

Hannah Degerman

Chair of the YES Forum Board

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National challenges in the labour market 2024

Shortage of skills and labour.

Migration and establishment patterns.

Sparsely populated rural areas and big cities.

Part-time employment.

Dependency burden/dependency ratio.

Have a higher level of sick leave.

Struggle to enter the labour market.

Less in vocational secondary school training.

Employment and labour shortage.

Education, accommodation and labour

**Navigating challenges, embracing opportunities:
a year of progress**

2024 was a year of meaningful progress, reinforcing our commitment to social inclusion, youth empowerment, and cross-sector cooperation.

We focused on [the Green Transition and its impact on young people and social work](#). During our Annual Event in Piteå, Sweden, we addressed the challenges and opportunities it brings, exploring its effects on employment, social integration, and education. We highlighted initiatives that equip young people with skills and resilience for a greener economy.

Digitalisation was another key theme. At our Policy Event in Brussels, we examined its impact on social cohesion, facilitating discussions among social and youth work professionals, disadvantaged young people, and European stakeholders on the [challenges and opportunities of a digital world](#). These conversations underscored the importance of digital literacy and inclusion in an increasingly digital world.

Our [engagement with EU institutions and networks](#) grew significantly. We contributed to key discussions on social policies, digital transformation, and civic engagement, ensuring the perspectives of social and youth workers and young people were heard. Collaborations with European partners enabled us to bring grassroots insights into policymaking and drive meaningful change. Moreover, we strengthen our engagement in [the European Semester](#) process.

With our members at the heart of our work, we continued to [build a collaborative and inclusive community](#). We strengthened connections through on-site meetings, online gatherings, and dedicated platforms for knowledge-sharing. This ongoing dialogue helped us understand members' needs, identify strengths across our network, and develop initiatives with local, national, and European impact.



2024's highlights



2024 started with our member [Internationaler Bund's 75th anniversary](#) celebration, which we contributed to by joining a panel discussion on international youth and social work.



The YES Forum was present at two key European events:

- The [Civil Society Week](#) organised by the EESC.
- The [Leadership Academy](#) organised by the European Parliament's project together.eu.



Between 6 - 9 May, European citizens elected the new European Parliament. The YES Forum encouraged young people to vote with the "[I Vote for EU](#)" and the [CitiGenZ project's](#) campaigns.

January

March

May

February

April

June

- The [Back on Track project](#) officially started with an insightful Opening Conference in Vienna.
- The YES Forum Board and [Secretariat team](#) met in Berlin to plan the year's activities together.



The YES Forum brought grassroots level expertise to high level European settings, including:

- The [European Social Work Conference](#) organised by the Belgian presidency of the Council of Europe.
- [Strategic Dialogue meetings](#) with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.



- In the [Annual Event held in Piteå](#), YES Forum members delved into the impact of the Green Transition on youth and social work
- The YES Forum and its member [Internationaler Bond](#) organised a [webinar to exchange intergenerational perspectives on youth and democracy](#).





The YES Forum got to know EJSA Regensburg's work with young people as part of BAG EJSA's anniversary events which aimed to connect young people from Bavaria with German policymakers.



- The YES Forum fostered collaborations among social and youth work organisations in the annual online project planning meeting.
- The YES Forum hosted an international group of social and youth workers and explored empowering initiatives for people with disabilities in Stuttgart.



- The YES Forum joined its founder member BAG EJSA's 75th anniversary celebrations in Berlin and reflected on their longstanding impact on national and European social policies.
- The YES Forum, BAG EJSA and the EESC organised the "Social Cohesion in the Digital Transition" Policy Event in Brussels, focused on how youth and social workers can contribute to ensuring social cohesion in the digital age, and the risks and opportunities posed by digitalisation in relation to disadvantaged young people.

July

September

November

August

October

December

The YES Forum was selected to contribute to the [EU Youth Test](#) at the EESC, a pioneering initiative at the EU level that ensures disadvantaged young people's voices are structurally included in policymaking through impact assessments and consultations.

The YES Forum joined the [Zug um Zug](#) journey by hosting an international meeting in Stuttgart. The project aims to empower young people and youth work professionals by fostering mobility as a tool for personal growth, as well as contributing to skills development, and cross-border networking.

The YES Forum became an official member of the [EESC Liaison Group](#), strengthening its role in connecting the social and youth work field with EU institutions and influencing policies that affect disadvantaged young people.





Shaping EU policies with ground-level perspectives

We are not a typical European network. We are driven by our members, and they are always at the heart of our actions. What sets our advocacy work apart is our commitment to going beyond representation. We **actively connect our member organisations with policymakers**, acting as a bridge to the EU sphere. Not being based in Brussels does not prevent us from bringing valuable, ground-level insights into the European conversation, and from ensuring that real-life perspectives from across our network inform policy discussions.

This unique approach has allowed us to strengthen our ties with European stakeholders over the past year. By inviting EU institutional representatives and networks to speak at events like our Policy Event *Social Cohesion in the Digital Transition*, **we have fostered meaningful dialogue and collaboration**. These exchanges have opened doors for us to contribute to EU-level initiatives, including a partnership event with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), an invite to join the EU Youth Test's pioneering initiative within the EESC, and the opportunity to conduct a workshop at the Leadership Academy organised by the European Parliament's together.eu project. These experiences, always shared with one or more member organisations, demonstrates our ability to create impactful synergies that amplify the voices of our members and drive forward inclusive European cooperation.

We are actively working to strengthen our engagement in the **European Semester** process by contributing recommendations, participating in consultations, and building internal capacity. The European Semester is the EU's annual cycle of economic, fiscal, and social policy coordination that helps monitor member states' progress toward common EU priorities, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights.



European social cohesion in the digital era

Between 19-20 November 2024, the *Social Cohesion in the Digital Transition event*, co-organised with the EESC and BAG EJSa in Brussels, brought together representatives from 14 European youth and social work organisations, along with young people they support.

The event explored [how youth and social workers can foster social cohesion in the digital age](#), addressing the risks and opportunities of digitalisation for disadvantaged youth. A key aim was empowering young participants to engage in civil dialogue at the EU level, building their confidence and skills.

A critical approach to digitalisation

At the EESC, [Neža Repanšek](#) (EESC), [Guillaume Hemmert](#) (European Commission), and [Cornelia Kramtsall](#) (ipcenter) discussed the impact of digitalisation on social cohesion and what EU initiatives exist to address it, whilst also stressing the need to engage critically with the issue and its interplay with young people's lives.

[Mirco Trielli](#) (Zefiro, Italy) and [Felix Neumann](#) (Diakonie Offenburg, Germany) presented innovative examples of digital tools' application in youth and social work, offered practical tips for engaging with AI and highlighted future opportunities for skills development.

During an interactive dinner, participants created origami envelopes containing messages from the YES Forum addressed to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), paving the way for future engagement in 2025.

Digital skills include digital literacy

Participants also visited the European Parliament and met [Johann Vohn](#) and [Hannah Gohlke](#), representatives of Vice-President [Katarina Barley](#). Discussions focused on AI, digitalisation, digital literacy, and youth involvement in policymaking, echoing sentiments from YES Forum's policy paper on digital transition.

Participants then divided into three groups to visit civil society organisations in Brussels and discuss topics such as advocacy work at the EU level, and integrating youth participation within organisations. The groups met with [Robert Ranson](#) and [Katja Reuter](#) from Social Platform; [Sofie Amalie Stage](#) from the Young European Socialists; and [Agnieszka Zarzyńska](#) from Caritas Europa.



[Read more](#)

Inclusive and real youth participation

Meaningful youth participation goes beyond presence—it requires preparation and support. For our Brussels event, we put an extra effort on preparing young people and providing them tools to participate in the dialogue.

Their thoughts and reflections, together with those of the professionals that participated in the event are compiled in the *European Social Cohesion in the Digital Era - Social and Youth Work Perspectives*

” Listen to the opinion of young people, not just the opinion that you put in their mouths or that you want to hear, because it is also the young people’s future.

-Young Participant, Policy Event 2024



[Read more](#)



Members experience

” For BAG EJSA, the active participation of young people and the exchange with them are becoming increasingly important. Co-organising the Policy Event in Brussels made a fruitful contribution to this.



[Read more](#)

Hans Steimle, BAG EJSA



[Read more](#)



Policy paper on navigating digitalisation within youth and social work

The *Policy Paper – Navigating the digital transition: New Technologies in Youth and Social Work* discusses the opportunities and risks of new technologies in youth and social work, with insights from the YES Forum and its members.

Deepening our engagement in European policymaking

In a significant step towards its mission of amplifying the voices of disadvantaged young people across Europe, YES Forum has deepened its collaboration with European institutions such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) or the European Parliament, while establishing strategic links with key policymakers.

European Semester: strengthening our engagement

The YES Forum actively contributed to the European Semester process through targeted actions and by strengthening the Secretariat team's capacities. We took part in discussions at DG EMPL meetings, the Social Platform's thematic working group, and the EESC's consultation. At our Policy Event, we informed member organisations about engagement opportunities.

EESC Liaison Group: at the heart of EU civil society

In December, YES Forum became an official member of the EESC Liaison Group. This move places us at the heart of a unique platform designed to bridge the gap between civil society organisations and EU institutions, and enhances our role in shaping policies that directly impact the lives of young people.



EESC Youth Test: a milestone for young voices in EU policies

The YES Forum was selected to participate in the EESC Youth Test. The EU Youth Test [a pioneering mechanism to involve young people in the EU's policy-making processes](#) being implemented for the first time by a European institution. By joining this initiative, YES Forum elevates disadvantaged young people's voices, ensuring they are considered in decisions that shape their futures.



Partnership event with the EESC: empowering youth in the digital age

We organised, in partnership with the [European Economic and Social Committee](#) (EESC), a dynamic two-day event focused on social cohesion in the digital age. Through this collaboration, we reaffirmed our commitment to empowering young people and fostering inclusive decision-making at the European level.

Civil dialogue: amplifying vulnerable voices at the European Commission

In 2024, we had the privilege of meeting with several representatives from the European Commission's [Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#) (DG EMPL). Our engagement goes beyond attending events to which we are invited. We take a proactive approach by reaching out and inviting representatives to join our own events as speakers:

- We met [Mr Mario Nava](#), the new [Director of the](#) DG EMPL, providing an opportunity to introduce the YES Forum's work and our unique approach to social and youth work.
- We actively participated in several [Strategic Dialogue meetings](#) organised by the Directorate-General for Employment engaging in discussions on key topics such as ensuring [a fair green transition, social and essential services and digital inclusion](#).
- On the Social Cohesion in the Digital Transition event, [Guillaume Hemmert](#), Policy Officer at Fair Green and Digital Transitions Research Unit, engaged with participants in discussions about how digitalisation affects social employment, and the various initiatives carried out by an EU institution.

These encounters are invaluable for fostering mutual understanding and ensuring that the voices of those we represent are heard at the heart of European policymaking.





Building meaningful connections with key members of the European Parliament

We have established [strong links with prominent Members of the European Parliament](#), such as its Vice-president, [Katarina Barley](#) and her Policy Advisor, [Hannah Gohlke](#), and Spokesperson, [Johann Vohn](#), and fostered ongoing dialogue on [ensuring an inclusive digital transition](#).

At the [Civic Pulse](#) event, organised by Social Platform and Civil Society Europe with European Parliament Vice-President Katarina Barley, we engaged with MEPs [Nicu Ștefănuță](#) and [Sergey Lagodinsky](#). Discussions focused on enhancing collaboration between civil society and the European Parliament to strengthen democracy and promote social rights.

During the [Leadership Academy](#) event, we shared our expertise on accessible communication with the EU and exchanged impressions with [Philipp Schulmeister](#), Director for Campaigns, along with [Stephen Clark](#), Director for Liaison Offices, and [Jaume Duch](#), former spokesperson for the European Parliament.

Joining forces with other European networks

We have established valuable connections with key European stakeholders, which are [crucial to our work in advancing social and youth policy](#). We engaged in small groups with Robert Ranson and Katja Reuter ([Social Platform](#)); Sofie Amalie Stage ([Young European Socialists](#)), and Agnieszka Zarzyńska ([Caritas Europa](#)). These smaller group discussions provided a platform for sharing experiences on youth engagement, social cohesion, and the impact of the recent European elections.



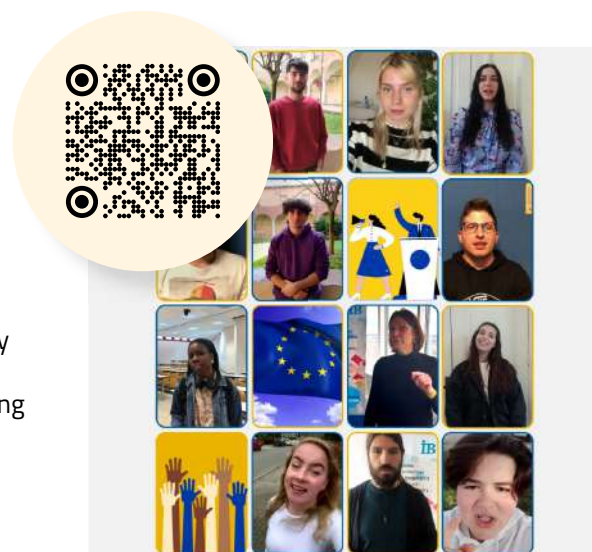
Mobilising young voters on the European elections

Ahead of the European Parliament elections in June 2024, we launched a range of initiatives aimed at raising political awareness among young people and deepening their understanding of the European Union and its functions. We believe it is crucial to encourage youth participation in the elections, [as the voices of young people play an essential role in shaping the future of Europe](#). These initiatives were designed to empower young people to engage with the political process and take an active role in European policymaking, and to make use of their rights as European citizens.

Encouraging an informed youth vote

With several of our members, we launched the [#IVoteForEU](#) campaign to encourage young people to engage in the upcoming elections. The initiative shared [personal stories and perspectives from young people](#) across Europe and emphasised the importance of voting.

In addition, the [CitiGenZ project's campaign](#) complemented our own by sharing relevant [information on the EU and its functioning](#) with GenZ voters. In collaboration with the project partners, we produced engaging social media content to help young voters understand how the EU works.



Key messages for change: why young voters matter

To help young people recognise the significance of their vote, the YES Forum created an [informative poster](#) titled [Why to Vote in the European Elections](#) with essential information to guide young people in participating in the elections. Additionally, to address barriers to civic and political engagement for vulnerable youth, the YES Forum advocated for the adoption of six key messages aimed at policymakers, designed to promote greater participation and inclusion of vulnerable young people.

Sharing our expertise on accessible communication

In cooperation with our member IEKEP, we conducted a workshop at the [Leadership Academy](#) in Brussels, a training and networking event organised by [together.eu](#), a project of the [European Parliament](#). The workshop offered [good practices based on the YES Forum's long experience](#) in explaining the European Union and the European Parliament ahead of the 2024 European elections.



Advancing social rights: key initiatives for change

Call for open dialogue with civil society

January 2024



Together with the European Economic and Social Committee's Civil Society Organisations' Group, Civil Society Europe (CSE), and more than 150 endorsers, we signed an open letter addressed to European institutions calling for the [implementation of concrete measures for establishing an open, transparent, and regular dialogue with civil society.](#)

Civil Society Week 2024

March 2024



YES Forum took part in [Civil Society Week](#), organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. Our involvement ensured that the voices and experiences of vulnerable young people and the professionals who work with them were represented in the discussions. YES Forum highlighted the [unique challenges disadvantaged youth face in achieving social cohesion](#) while emphasising the importance of their inclusion in shaping a more social Europe.



European Social Work Conference

April 2024

The Board member [Andreas Koth](#) participated in the [European Social Work Conference](#) in Bruges, organised by the Belgian presidency of the Council of Europe. The event provided valuable insights into the [emerging trends and challenges in social work across Europe](#), and the profound social impact of climate change, digitalisation, and migration.



Advocating for NEETs in the Danube region

June 2024



YES Forum advocated for young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) by publishing an article in the DREIZEHN magazine, published by our member BAG EJSA. The article explored [the barriers NEETs face, particularly in the Danube region, and highlights what European Union's initiatives exist to address them](#), while showcasing the [Back on Track](#) project's impact on fostering digital inclusion and the integration of NEETs in rural areas.

Ensure a vibrant civic space in the EU: letter to EU leaders

September 2024

We joined over 400 civil society organisations in the [open letter *Ensuring a vibrant civic space in the European Union*](#), urging the incoming Polish, Danish, and Cypriot Presidencies of the Council of the European Union, along with the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Parliament, to take decisive [actions to strengthen civic space, uphold democracy, and protect fundamental rights](#).



Democracy in action: visit to the European Parliament

November 2024

YES Forum members and young people visited the European Parliament and gained valuable insights into the workings of the European Union while exploring its iconic premises. This experience provided participants with a deeper understanding of EU institutions and their decision-making processes and equipped them with the [knowledge to better navigate and engage with European policies](#).

Sharing best practices on embracing diversity

November 2024



The report [Embracing Diversity in the Youth Sector for a Fruitful Social Dialogue](#) provides recommendations on how to enhance dialogue and inclusivity in diverse groups. [The report highlights recommendations and best practices that our network has encountered during work in international settings.](#)

Social rights in focus: the role of social and youth workers

December 2024

At Social Platform's Social Rights are Human Rights event, focused on strengthening ties between the European Social Charter and the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), the YES Forum emphasised [the critical role of preventative youth and social work in ensuring access to equal opportunities and active employment support for disadvantaged young people](#).





Key messages for enhancing active citizenship among vulnerable youth

The YES Forum is a network of organisations from 19 different European countries working with and for young people from vulnerable backgrounds. Regarding our work, YES Forum promotes the following key messages:

1. Investing in Support Systems for Youth:

Investment in youth services is crucial for providing stability, guidance, and opportunities, helping at-risk youth avoid negative outcomes.

2. Role of Youth Work Professionals:

Youth work professionals are vital for promoting and fostering active citizenship. Investing in their skills enhances the quality of support and equips youth to participate in society.

3. Youth as Equal Stakeholders:

Ensuring young people are equal stakeholders in policy discussions empowers them through representation to shape the future and feel represented.

4. Promotion of EU Political Education:

EU political education should focus on inclusive participation, peer learning, and experiential learning to diversify skills and encourage lifelong learning.

5. Accessibility of EU Language:

Making EU language accessible helps young people engage in civic life and contribute to an inclusive Europe.

6. Implementation of the Youth Test:

The Youth Test raises awareness of young people's needs, enhances their participation, and mainstreams their concerns in EU policymaking, promoting inclusivity and societal well-being.



Read the whole publication



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**Collaborating for impact:
supporting our members and young people**

Our members are the driving force behind everything we do, and this belief is at the heart of how we work. To support and enhance their expertise, we organise tailored trainings and activities, fostering knowledge exchange and capacity building. Additionally, we [offer young people learning opportunities](#) by involving them in our projects or through internships, enabling them to gain professional experience in international environments while contributing to meaningful initiatives.

Over the past year, we have strengthened our collaboration with our members, [ensuring their voices are central to our activities](#). We now meet on-site at least twice a year and organise regular online gatherings to discuss pressing issues and exchange expertise. Members are not just participants in our work—they are active contributors, taking on roles as co-organisers, session leaders, and collaborators in implementing activities. We also draw on their expertise to shape our publications, ensuring their knowledge reaches a wider audience.

This closer communication has helped us to better understand their needs, identify their strengths, and [work together on international responses to social challenges](#). A key milestone has been the completion of our Members Space, a dedicated platform to enhance collaboration, which we are excited to implement next year.



Exploring the social challenges of the green transition



The YES Forum 2024 Annual Event & General Assembly took place in Piteå, Sweden, between 11 and 13 June. Organised in collaboration with the Municipality of Piteå, [the event 'Nordic Insights on Sustainable Futures: Inclusion & Innovation in the Green Transition'](#) focused on the social challenges driven by the green transition and the impact it is having in Northern Sweden.

50 participants from 23 organisations across 11 countries had the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of the Green Deal and observe its implementation first-hand in northern Sweden, a leading example in the green transition both in Europe and worldwide.

Empowering youth for a greener tomorrow

In addition to public initiatives, three Nordic organisations, including two YES Forum members, shared details about their work with young people, offering insights into youth social work and community-building approaches. Workshops were led by [Lotta Karlsson-Andersson and Åsa Engström](#) ([Activa](#); Sweden), [Mecki Andersson and Ia Wingren](#) ([Musikcafé After Eight](#); Finland), [Leif Pääjärvi and Mattias Söder](#) ([Utbildning Nord](#); Sweden, Finland and Norway).



Nordic initiatives for a fair transition

Nicklas Winblad von Walther (Piteå Kommun), Göran Sjöberg (European Minds), and Iris Ryu (OECD), shared valuable insights into northern Sweden's green transition. Key takeaways included the need for a diverse workforce to support the transition, and strategies to help newcomers adapt to the region's unique climate and social realities. The speakers' first-hand experiences provided a valuable perspective on the social dimensions of the Green Deal.

Another session showcased northern Sweden's proactive green transition initiatives, highlighting innovative approaches to sustainable development and social challenges. Kirsi Paloniemi-Lundqvist (EURES adviser, Swedish Public Employment Office) presented employment public initiatives and Region Norrbotten's strategies, Sten Andersson (Piteå Kommun) discussed a summer job fair for young people, and Sean Black (Swedish ESF Council) shared insights on the Council's impactful work.



Members experience

Hannah Degermann
Municipality of Piteå

” Hosting the YES Forum Annual Event was a chance to put North Sweden on the map in international discussions and strengthen our ties with the European community.



[Read more](#)

Fostering opportunities for NEETs in the Danube region

The [Back on Track](#) project, part of the Interreg Danube Region programme, made great progress in supporting rural NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training). It created a transnational stakeholder network, conducted research on NEETs' needs, and held meetings to foster collaboration and gather feedback. The project also hosted an opening conference and several partner meetings, leading to the development of strategies to improve employment, social inclusion, and digital access for NEETs in the region.

Complementing these efforts, the Peer Review Group (PRG) meetings involving young NEETs in partners' countries provided [a collaborative platform](#) for discussing additional strategies to support NEETs. Participants addressed barriers to education and employment, shared best practices, and explored digital tools for support.



Cassandra Helml
intern at the YES Forum Secretariat



From my experience as a Peer Review Group instructor, addressing the NEET challenge requires both strategic initiatives like Back on Track and hands-on, empathetic engagement to drive real change.



[Read more](#)

Connecting Gen Z with the EU's values

The [CitiGenZ project](#) aims to foster a sense of belonging to the EU among young people (Generation Z). Together with our partners, we created [EU awareness-raising content](#), adapting it to their preferred learning style, and ["learning boxes" on 50 EU topics](#), which compiled a short and dynamic video with a one-page info sheet on each topic. In addition, we crafted [a handbook](#) featuring 11 EU awareness-raising activities dedicated to youth workers across Europe. The project activities were introduced at the University of Applied Science Esslingen, connecting with young students to raise awareness of political decision-making processes and inspire them to embrace the project's goals in their future career.



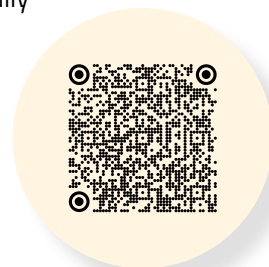
Cross-border learning and inclusive mobility

The Zug um Zug – Train to Europe project addresses the barriers many young people face in accessing mobility and cross-border learning opportunities. The project kicked off in October and since then, the YES Forum has contributed to local activities, including creative and interactive events conducted during train journeys. Zug um Zug aims to empower young people and youth work professionals by [fostering mobility as a tool for personal growth, skills development, and cross-border networking](#).



Celebrating SAAM project's success

After four years of dedicated work, the SAAM project successfully concluded its mission to [enhance vocational training mobility between Africa and Europe](#), alongside capacity-building initiatives. From February 13th to 15th, project partners gathered in Praia, Cabo Verde, for their final meeting. During the event, participants reviewed the project's outcomes, and reflected on its achievements. The meeting culminated in a public event on February 15th, where the project's impact was highlighted, and testimonies from mobility participants were shared.



Youth and democracy: intergenerational priorities and perspectives

In late June, the YES Forum and its member [Internationaler Bund](#) co-hosted a webinar on [Youth and Democracy in Europe](#), bringing together youth workers, professionals, and students from IB Carlo Schmid School. The session explored [key concerns of Generation Z](#), with environmental issues, social justice, and discrimination emerging as top priorities. The session also highlighted the influence of social media on young people's worldviews. Participants called for better education on digital literacy and clearer, youth-friendly political information. The event also fostered [meaningful intergenerational dialogue](#).



Inclusive peer learning approaches in political education

The LearningLAB project aimed to reinforce links between policy, research and practice for youth, by [exploring political simulation games](#) together with the Erasmus Student Network. A [peer-learning approach](#) was applied, bringing together young university students of ESN to work together with young vulnerable participants. The Learning LAB training brought together in Stuttgart young participants and professionals from across Europe to enhance their knowledge about Europe and share best practices on [innovative learning strategies](#).



Fostering inclusivity through digital tools

From the 23rd to the 27th of September, the YES Forum hosted a five-day training in Stuttgart as part of the A.M.O.R. project. This event provided an opportunity to [test and refine the materials developed in previous months](#), including the Digital Handbook and the Good Practice Catalogue. Educators, experts and young people from Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain participated in a dynamic programme featuring workshops, study visits, guided tours, and informal exchanges. exploring innovative ways to integrate inclusivity into both digital and physical learning environments. workers.

Cross-border collaboration: empowering ideas for European initiatives

In order to [foster collaboration and exchange](#) among European organisations working with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, we organised several project planning meetings during the year. In June, participants met in Sweden to engage in a World Café session to explore key topics, identify new working fields, and brainstorm future project ideas on the topic of the Green Transition. Building on this, we organised a second meeting in September, where 28 participants from 17 organisations across 10 countries came together to develop these and new ideas further.



Enhancing skills through international experiences

As part of our commitment to enhance social and youth workers abilities to navigate current challenges, during 2024 we organised several study visits for professionals. These initiatives gave them the opportunity to [discover projects and new approaches to social and youth work](#) in different European countries. In addition, we also organised learning mobilities for disadvantaged young people. We provided them with a safe, international experiences where they could interact with their peers, learn new perspectives and foster their skills.



Helping newcomers feel included in North Sweden

The Annual Event concluded with a study visit to [Piteå Learning Centre](#), where participants explored its facilities and learned about its efforts in migrant integration. The centre offers Swedish language courses, vocational training, and acts as a bridge to local employers. Staff showcased specialised areas like healthcare simulation rooms and explained how newcomers access training and connect with job opportunities.



Creating opportunities: inclusion in action in Stuttgart

In September, we welcomed an international group to Stuttgart to explore digital tools aimed at enhancing intercultural skills for people with disabilities. Together, we discovered the inspiring [ProjektWERK](#) initiative by [Stuttgarter Jugendhaus](#), enjoyed a historic city tour led by individuals with special needs through [Caritas 'Treffpunkt'](#), visited [Lebenshilfe Stuttgart](#) to learn about their work creating employment opportunities for people with impairments, and shared a meal at [Rudolf's Küche und Café](#), which supports individuals with mental health challenges.



From workshop to policy: amplifying youth aspirations in Bayern

The YES Forum joined its founding member BAG EJSA in celebrating its 75th Anniversary at a regional gathering in Regensburg, Germany. The event showcased [EJSA Regensburg's impactful work and connected Bavarian youth with policymakers from Berlin](#). Highlights included a visit to EJSA's carpentry workshop, where Bundestag members [Dr. Carolin Wagner \(SPD\)](#), [Peter Aumer \(CSU\)](#), and [Stefan Schmidt \(Die Grünen\)](#) met apprentices, heard their stories, and discussed their aspirations. This meaningful exchange highlighted the importance of youth voices in shaping policies that reflect their needs and ambitions.

Building confidence and knowledge: youth meet European stakeholders in Brussels

In November, the YES Forum brought [young people to Brussels to engage directly with European policymakers and stakeholders](#), fostering dialogue on youth, social work, and digitalisation. Over two days, participants explored how digitalisation impacts social cohesion, especially for disadvantaged youth, while gaining insights into EU actions in these fields.

Highlights included discussions at the [European Economic and Social Committee](#) with speakers like Neža Repanšek and Guillaume Hemmert, and a visit to the [European Parliament](#), where participants engaged with representatives from Vice-President Katarina Barley's office. Interactive sessions with organisations like Social Platform and Caritas Europa provided further opportunities for dialogue and learning. This initiative empowered young participants to share their perspectives, enhance their understanding of the EU, and build confidence in contributing to civil dialogue.



Young people's voices

The YES Forum welcomes young people passionate about building a more social and inclusive Europe. We offer internship opportunities at our Secretariat in Stuttgart or with our member organisations, providing valuable professional experience in international settings.



Jone Villarroel

” My internship at YES Forum has been an incredibly enriching and transformative experience. My time at YES Forum allowed me to deepen my knowledge, particularly in the practical application of European Law. I had the remarkable opportunity to represent YES Forum at international events and to witness the impact of our work first-hand through field visits and interactions with members of our network and partner organisations. Interacting with diverse groups of people from various cultural backgrounds enriched my perspective and taught me the value of social work and the effort behind it.



[Read more](#)

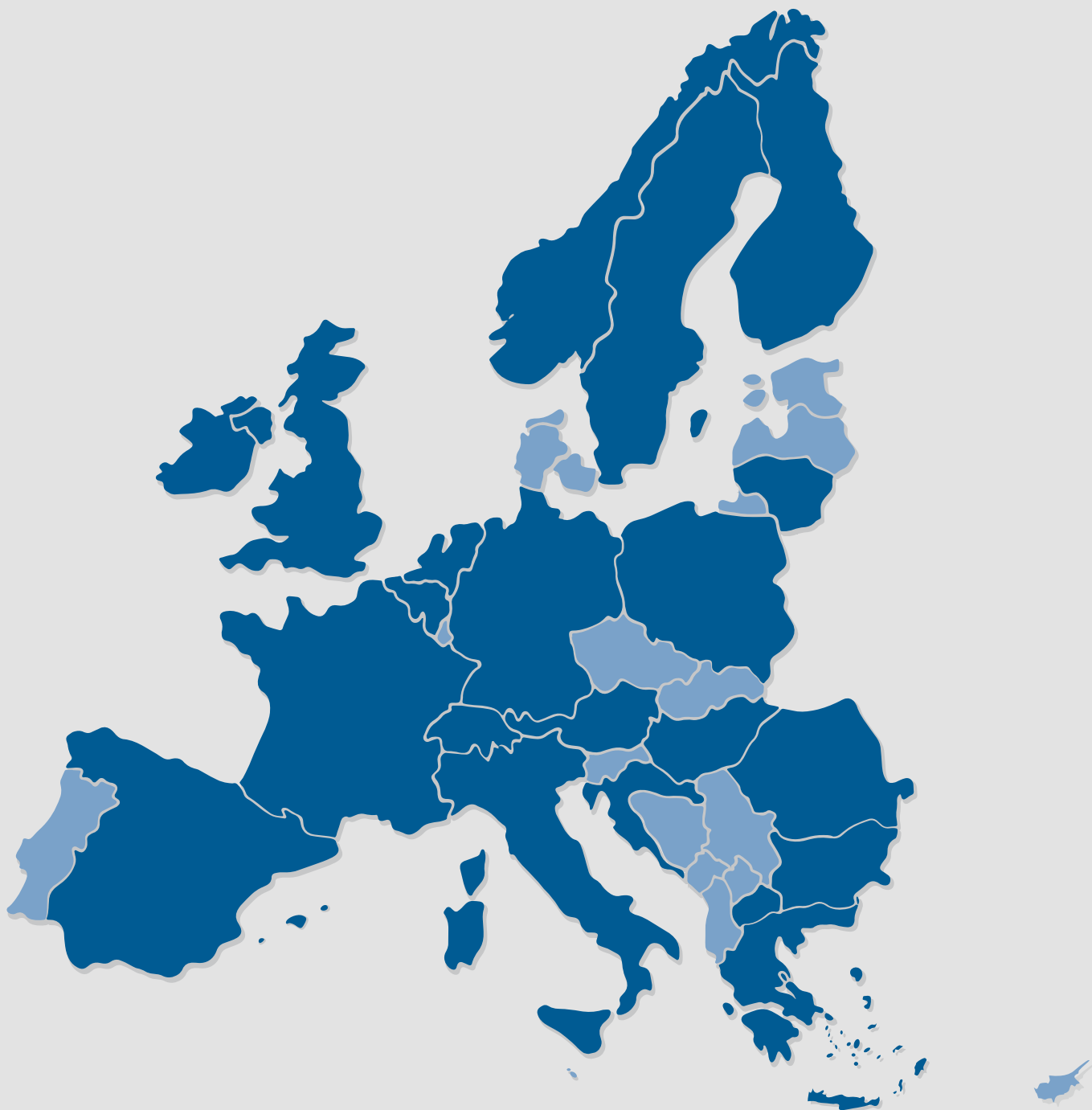
Robin Gaastra

” Before I came to where the YES Forum's Secretariat is located, I started a pre-internship at a member of the YES Forum in the Netherlands: Jongerenwerk Barkema & de Haan. I familiarised myself with the core task of the members of the YES Forum; to support young people in all sorts of ways. During my internship at the YES Forum, I could deepen my knowledge about how European institutions work and about the funding and workings of NGOs. These experiences have given me a lot. I met so many kind and interesting people from all backgrounds, ages, and nationalities, and learnt firsthand about the importance of inclusion, civic participation and youth and social work.



[Read more](#)





Our members

The impact of our commitment to the real and inclusive participation of professionals and young people is reflected in the fact that this year our network has grown again. In 2024, one of our Associate members has taken a step forward and became an EEIG member. Moreover, 5 new organisations have joined our youth empowerment journey. We look forward to the collaborations to come! Welcome to the YES Forum!



New EEIG member: Nostos

After several years as an associate member of the network, NOSTOS became a full member in June. Now, as part of the Members Assembly, they will actively contribute to our network's development and decision-making process. NOSTOS supports social and employment inclusion for those struggling to join their community and labour market.

Welcome on board!

New members:



Finglas YRC

Ireland



Mobile School

Belgium



Calasanz

Spain



Stichting SCN

The Netherlands

pistes s→olidaires

Pistes Solidaires

France

Celebrating our Members Anniversaries

During 2024, we had the pleasure of joining several anniversary celebrations of our members, celebrating their milestones and the impact of their work. [Accompanying them on these significant occasions is a meaningful moment for us](#), as it strengthens our bonds, acknowledges their invaluable contributions, and reaffirms our commitment to supporting their vital role in empowering young people and shaping inclusive communities.



Internationaler Bund: European by tradition - democracy by principle

In early January, we had the honour of joining our member IB in Berlin to celebrate their 75th anniversary. Beyond marking this incredible milestone together, we contributed to the celebrations by [sharing our expertise in international youth and social work during a dynamic panel discussion](#).

We showcased our participatory approach to EU and civic education, and emphasised how it promotes democracy and its values among young people. It was a privilege to highlight our shared commitment to empowering youth and fostering inclusion alongside IB.

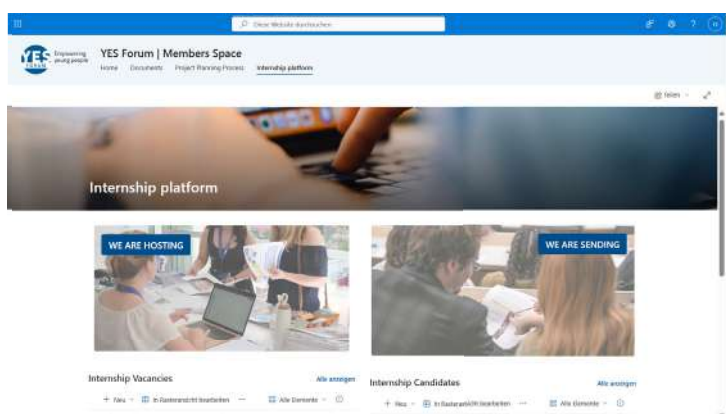
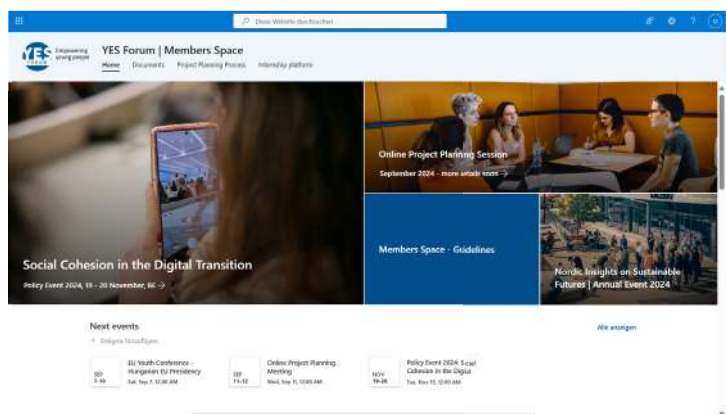


BAG EJSA: The future is always!

In November, we had the privilege of celebrating the 75th anniversary of our founding member, BAG EJSA, in Berlin.

The event was a remarkable tribute to 75 years of impact, featuring an inspiring exhibition that amplified the voices of young people across Germany. It also highlighted [BAG EJSA's critical contributions to both national and European policies](#), including their valuable input into our latest policy papers.

As Ulrike Bahr, Member of the German Parliament, aptly stated, *"The best economic investment a country can make is to invest in its youth."* We wholeheartedly agree—social policies that empower every young person, regardless of their background, must be a priority at all levels.



Members space

To enhance information sharing and strengthen engagement across our network, we have developed a tailored online platform to meet our members' specific needs. This dedicated [Members Space](#) is designed to [facilitate collaboration, foster a sense of community, and become an essential tool for staying connected and involved](#). It will provide spaces for sharing documents and resources, support project application development, and promote learning exchanges and mobilities for young people within the network. The platform's core features were collaboratively tested with the YES Forum Board members to ensure they address the needs of organisations and professionals. We will implement its use from January 2025.

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#EMPOWERINGYOUNGPEOPLE



VOICE

PhotoVoice -
Participation &
Empowerment in
Youth Work



Nordic Insights on Sustainable Futures:
Inclusion & Innovation in the Green Transition
YES Forum 2024 Annual Event & General Assembly
11 - 13 June 2024, Ploiești (RO)

The YES Forum 2024 Annual Event & General Assembly, organised in collaboration with its members, the Municipality of Ploiești, will serve as a space to foster exchanges on addressing the social challenges driven by the green transition, such as Sweden, while countries.

Through keynote speeches, aiming at increasing visibility, new trends in the field are shared. As usual, the event is an opportunity for Associated Members and Non-Member organisations to discover the YES Forum's activities.

- YES Forum Event (11-13 June 2024) at Ploiești
- YES Forum Annual Meeting (13 June 2024) at Ploiești
- Non-member organisations accommodation

ARE YOU REALLY
TALKING
TO US?
#EXPLAINED



Work Forum
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Empowering
young people

Who we are

Vision, mission and values

The YES Forum desires a society where every young person, regardless of their background, is able to realise their full potential and is given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to society.

Our member organisations are working with and for young individuals who are navigating many challenges in finding their path, and who require support in education, training, or in transition to adulthood. They support young people by offering customised support and programmes to smoothen their transition into adulthood, to find meaningful work, and to manage their own lives, so that they can contribute to their communities and society. *Our member organisations represent the rich expertise of professionals from the broad field of youth services*, from street work to second chance education, specialised vocational training, skills development agencies, to comprehensive youth care, including preventive youth work.

As a network, we believe that when we utilise our collective experience *together, we can make sure young people's voices are heard*.

The YES Forum promotes civic and political education across a more inclusive Europe. We are dedicated to increasing the opportunities and life chances of all young people by providing support for their genuine participation in society.

Youth participation is our central value. The guiding question of our work is not "What can we do for young people?". Instead, we ask *What can we do with them?*

Embedded in a culture of listening and the meaningful involvement of young people, we acknowledge the diverse possibilities that exist for young people to make valuable contributions to projects and activities, which is why we strongly promote the social engagement of young people within our network.



Learn more

Objectives and principles



How we work

In order to respond to the challenges and opportunities faced by young people, the YES Forum creates room for peer learning and the exchange of inspiring practices for social and youth work professionals on the one hand. Activities for young people on the other hand aim the sustainable development of labour market competences and transversal skills. Our activities are implemented in the fields of advocacy, capacity building and mobility opportunities, focusing on young people as well as on social and youth work professionals.

The YES Forum creates room for discussion and consultations. We strongly encourage the involvement of our members in transnational cooperation which engage both young people and practitioners.

Board

Gwen Birza, *Jongerenwerk Barkema de Haan (NL)*

Hannah Degerman, *Pitea Kommun (SE)*

Sebastian Frank, *ÖJAB (AT)*

Andreas Koth, *Internationaler Bund (DE)*

Lilika Trikalinou, *IEKEP (EL)*

Secretariat team

Annett Wiederman, *Director & Project Manager*

Diana Neugebauer, *Financial Administration*

Olatz Alonso Guevara, *Communications Officer*

Violeta Bakia, *Project and Advocacy Officer*

Lucy Pettinella, *Advocacy and Co-operation Officer from October 2024*

Cassandra Helmlí, *Intern*

Çağla Ezgi Yıldız, *EU Project Assistant until January 2024*

Jone Villarroel, *Intern from February to August 2024*

Robin Gaastra, *Intern from June to December 2024*

Our Members



Piteå Kommun



pistes solidaires





Empowering
young people

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January 2025

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