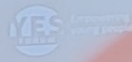




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Youth Empowerment for a Stronger Europe (YES)

Local Activity: Roundtable

Panel discussion in
Esslingen (DE), 3. Juni 2026

Overview

On 3 June 2026, the YES Forum organised the panel discussion "**Looking for a Flatshare, Future Uncertain – Housing Situation of Young People in and around Stuttgart**" as part of the Roundtable Campaign Implementations for the YES Project. The event took place at KOMMA Esslingen, an open youth and cultural centre which serves as an important meeting space for young people in the region, regularly hosting concerts, workshops, educational activities, and public debates.

The invited panellists were:

- **Pedro Treuer (Volt), Tübingen**
- **Claudia Schober (FDP), Stuttgart**
- **Clara Schweizer (Alliance 90/The Greens), Nürtingen**



All relevant Politicians working in and around Stuttgart. More about them in the following.

The event opened with a short presentation of the YES Project by **Sophie Brandes** (YES Forum). She introduced the project's objectives, highlighting its focus on youth participation, European exchange, and empowering young people to actively engage in political and societal issues. The introduction also explained how the panel discussion contributed to the project's goal of creating spaces for dialogue between young people and political stakeholders.

The discussion was moderated by the project's Young Advocates, **Cassandra Helmlí** (YES Forum Working Student) and guest moderator **Rodrigo Tito Sandi** (Student). Both played a key role in the organisational and content-related preparation of the event and facilitated the discussion, ensuring that the **perspectives of young people**—particularly students and young adults entering higher education or vocational training—were **represented throughout the conversation**.

The discussion focused on the current housing challenges faced by young people, especially those preparing to start or already enrolled in vocational training or university. Key topics included **rising rental prices, the shortage of affordable housing, and the difficulties of finding suitable shared accommodation or other**

housing options. The panellists also discussed potential solutions and explored the roles of policymakers, local authorities, civil society, and young people in addressing these challenges.

Key Messages

At the beginning, the speakers Claudia Schober (FDP, member of the FDP district board Stuttgart), Pedro Treuer (Volt, state election candidate Tübingen), and Clara Schweizer (Alliance 90/The Greens, municipal councillor Nürtingen and district councillor in the district of Esslingen) were introduced. In addition, current data on the housing situation in Baden-Württemberg was presented: according to the **2025 housing market** report of the City of Stuttgart, approximately **5,400 households** were searching for housing at the end of 2024. At the same time, rising rents and increasing living costs place a significant burden on young people and students in particular. **Stuttgart is experiencing a clear structural housing shortage, resulting in high competition on the housing market.**

During the discussion, differing causes and perspectives became evident. Claudia Schober emphasized the **gap between existing housing structures and actual demand**, highlighting the need for faster and expanded housing construction as well as a reduction of bureaucratic barriers. Pedro Treuer focused more on **conversion and a differentiated understanding of housing forms**, particularly in the student housing context, and cautioned against one-size-fits-all solutions. Clara Schweizer emphasized the **structural dimension of the housing issue**, pointed to rising overall living costs, and placed social justice at the center of the debate.

Key proposed solutions included **expanding housing supply** through both new construction and conversion, promoting student housing, and **developing more socially oriented housing concepts** such as intergenerational living. Reform of BAföG (financial governmental student support for disadvantaged students – depending on financial wealth of parents) and stronger support for young people were also repeatedly mentioned. At the same time, significant differences emerged regarding political instruments: while some participants advocated for **greater market orientation and reduced regulation**, others **emphasized the necessity of rent controls, protections against misuse of housing, and targeted state interventions.**

Regarding the role of municipalities, it became clear that while they are important spaces for dialogue and implementation of concrete projects, many structural issues must be addressed at the state and federal levels. Particularly controversial were discussions on handling vacant properties and the extent to which regulatory versus market-based approaches are appropriate. The concept of **"temporary housing"** and responses to urban density pressures were also assessed differently. In this context, both cultural factors (e.g., notions of community, neighborhood structures, and preferences for urban versus rural living) and political factors (e.g., legal frameworks, urban and housing policy strategies, state intervention in housing markets, subsidy programs, rent regulation, and political priorities at municipal, state, and federal levels) were addressed.

The second part of the discussion focused on future-oriented questions. Topics included the **expansion of public transport to relieve urban congestion, energy-efficient and sustainable construction, and the compatibility of climate protection goals with housing shortages.** Concerns were raised that young people may increasingly leave high-cost regions such as Stuttgart. While some participants emphasized economic

stability and diverse regional development, others stressed the need for targeted funding programs and more flexible housing models.

Input from the audience particularly highlighted **demands for independent (parental-income-free) BAföG**, the expansion and improved financing of student housing, and stronger **support for student services** organizations. Simplification of building standards and greater political attention to the perspectives of young people were also emphasized.

In conclusion, it became clear that housing remains a complex and highly relevant political issue that must be addressed on **multiple levels**. While there was consensus on the need for more housing, different approaches to implementation were evident. Final statements emphasized that housing is a policy-shapeable field and that continuous political dialogue is necessary to develop sustainable and equitable solutions.

Follow Up Steps

The outcomes of the panel discussion will be collected and integrated into further internal discussions as well as the ongoing substantive work of the YES Forum. They will serve as an important basis for exchange on current housing policy challenges and perspectives for young people at the local, national, and European levels.

In addition, all results will be incorporated into the **YES Forum Policy Event 2026** in Brussels in November, where they will be further processed and brought into a European policy context.

