

Advocacy campaign

“Better living in Europe”

We're not waiting for the future.
Young people are shaping Europe right now.

2026



Funded by
the European Union

About the Pact4EU project

Objectives

- Expanding young people's knowledge and understanding of how European institutions work, as well as youth policies and participatory processes;
- Strengthening youth participation;
- Expanding the capacity and reach of organizations



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Introduction

The “Better Living in Europe” is a youth-led advocacy campaign developed within the framework of the Pact4EU project, involving young people from Belgium, Hungary, and Slovenia, with the support of partner organizations. The project and the campaign aim to help young people to better understand the European Union, connect their local realities with EU-level policies, and actively participate in shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and democratic Europe.

This toolkit has been designed as a practical and easily accessible resource for young people, youth workers, and organizations. It provides essential knowledge, tools, and methods to achieve the following goals:

- Understanding youth-related issues connected to the EU
- Strengthening advocacy and civic participation
- Initiating local initiatives linked to European challenges and scaling them to the international level



Young people across Europe face common challenges

01 Limited access to
affordable housing

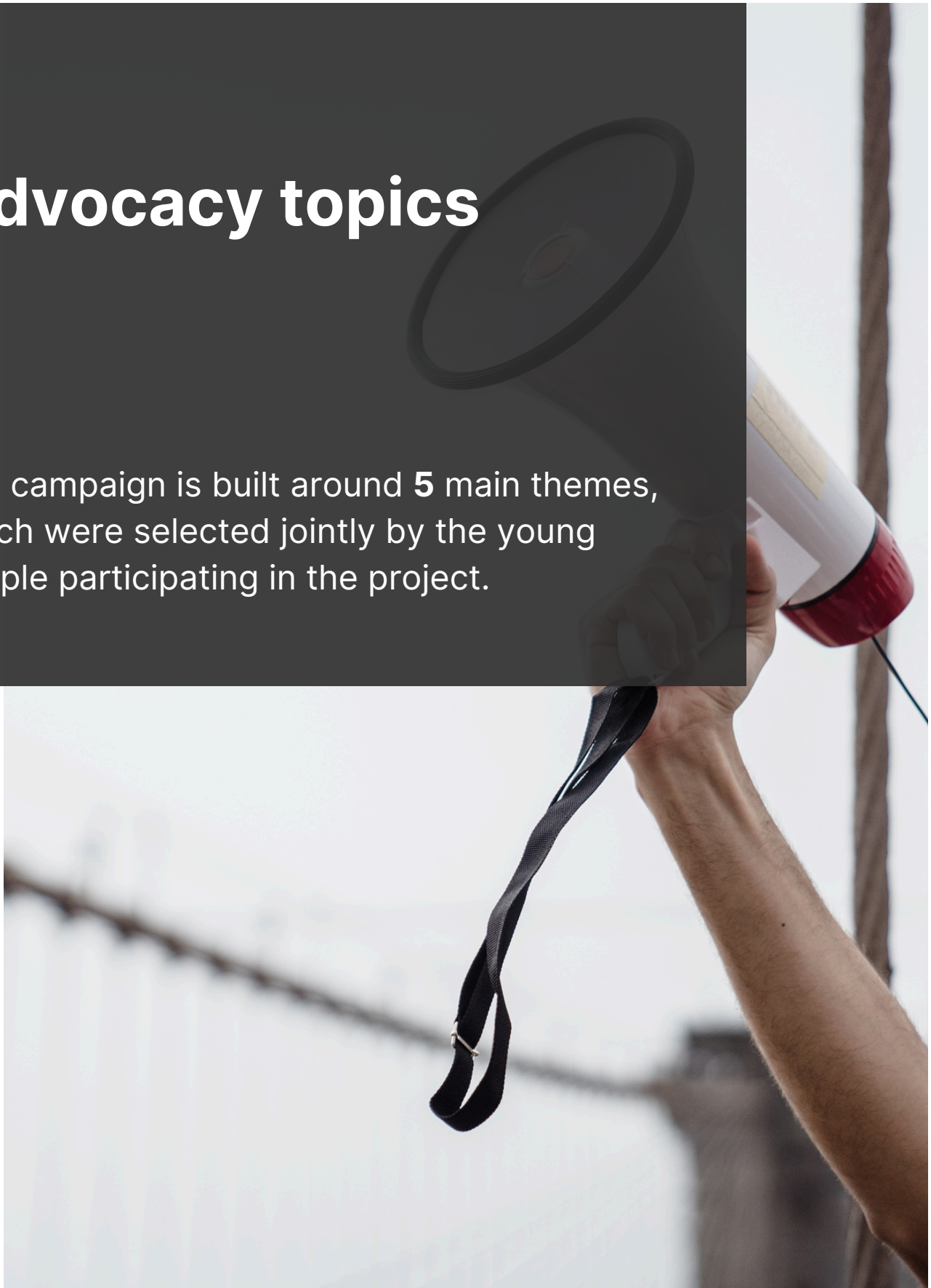
03 Climate injustice and
social inequalities

02 Lack of meaningful
participation in
decision-making

04 Underrepresentation of
young people's voices
in policy-making

Advocacy topics

The campaign is built around **5** main themes, which were selected jointly by the young people participating in the project.



Housing as a fundamental right

“No youth should face homelessness in Europe.”

Housing is essential for dignity, stability, and participation. Many young people face precarity, high rents, or exclusion.

The EU should recognize housing as a fundamental right and support inclusive housing models.

EU policies should support



Affordable housing

Affordable housing is a fundamental condition for young people to start an independent life. It significantly influences their employment opportunities and future plans. Stable housing reduces financial stress and improves mental well-being. It also contributes to equal opportunities and community participation.



Cooperative and community-led housing

Cooperative and community-led housing offers a more affordable alternative for young people compared to market prices. It provides greater security, as the focus is not on profit maximization but on the needs of residents. It strengthens community ties and cooperation among residents. In addition, it gives young people the opportunity to actively participate in decisions affecting their housing.



Temporary use of vacant buildings

The temporary use of vacant buildings can provide affordable housing or community spaces for young people. It allows unused properties to create value while reducing housing shortages. It also creates space for creative, cultural, or community initiatives that strengthen local communities.

Shared Governance and Youth Participation

“Nothing about us without us.”

Youth are often excluded from decision-making processes.
Participation is often symbolic rather than impactful.

Young people must be involved in policy-making; they should not merely be treated as beneficiaries.

What could be the solution?



Co-decision mechanisms

Co-decision with young people ensures that EU policies are not only about them, but are created together with them. This leads to higher-quality decisions, as young people bring in direct experiences and new perspectives. It also strengthens democratic legitimacy and increases young people's trust in and participation in the EU.



Youth inclusion in EU-funded projects

Involving young people in EU-funded projects makes programs more relevant and effective, as their lived experiences help shape the planning process. They contribute new ideas and innovative solutions that enhance the quality and impact of projects.



Participatory governance models

Participatory governance models are valuable in the EU because they involve citizens in decision-making, ensuring that policies better reflect real societal needs. They increase transparency and democratic legitimacy, which strengthens trust in EU institutions. In addition, they foster innovative solutions and social cohesion by incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into the process.

Urban ecology and just transition

“Climate justice is housing justice.”

Environmental challenges are deeply linked to social inequalities.
Sustainable transitions must be inclusive.

EU climate policies must integrate social justice and local realities.

Key ideas



Circular economy (reuse, repair, share)

The circular economy reduces the use of raw materials and the generation of waste, making the economy more sustainable. It contributes to the fight against climate change by lowering emissions and reducing the waste of resources. In addition, it creates new jobs and opportunities for innovation in areas such as repair, recycling, and sharing.



Community-led ecological initiatives

Community-led ecological initiatives are important in the EU because they help address environmental problems at the local level while strengthening community participation and responsibility.



Fair access to sustainable living conditions

Fair access to sustainable living conditions ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to live in a healthy and safe environment. It reduces social inequalities by making quality housing, energy, and basic services accessible not only to the more affluent, but to all citizens.

Youth advocacy and visibility

“We are not the future, we are the present.”

Youth voices are often invisible or ignored.

Participation must be continuous, not occasional.

Create permanent spaces and mechanisms for youth expression and influence.

What could be the solution?



Long-term youth spaces

Long-term spaces dedicated to young people enable them to continuously participate in EU decision-making, for example in connection with the work of the European Parliament and the European Commission. These spaces develop democratic skills and ensure that the voices of young people from diverse backgrounds are represented, for instance through the EU Youth Dialogue.



Platforms for expression

Platforms for expressing opinions give young people the opportunity to directly share their views with EU decision-makers, for example through European Commission consultations. These platforms help ensure that decisions better reflect societal needs, especially the perspectives of the younger generation. It is particularly important to make these forums and participation opportunities known to as many young people as possible.



Recognition of youth expertise

Recognizing young people's expertise within the EU can be achieved by actively involving them in decision-making, for example through consultations and expert groups. Programs such as Erasmus+ also play an important role, as they develop and formally recognize young people's skills and experiences. The validation of non-formal learning and volunteering (for example through certificates) helps make young people's knowledge and competencies more visible.

Local Action, European Connection

“From our streets to Europe.”

Local initiatives are powerful but often disconnected from EU frameworks.

Access to EU funding is complex.

The EU should support and scale local innovations led by communities.

Suggestions



Simplified access to EU programs

Simplified access to EU programmes would allow more young people to participate in Erasmus+ initiatives. This reduces administrative barriers, making these programmes more accessible to disadvantaged groups as well. Faster and more transparent application processes increase participation rates. In the long term, this strengthens equal opportunities and the effectiveness of EU initiatives.



Recognition of grassroots initiatives

Recognition of local initiatives within the EU is also important. The European Commission supports and promotes these through dedicated programmes and funding opportunities. Sharing and disseminating good practices at the EU level—through networks and collaborations—helps scale successful approaches. Creating awards and recognition schemes can further encourage communities to actively engage in local development.



Stronger links between local and EU levels

Stronger connections between the local and EU levels can be built through regular dialogue and consultations, for example between the European Commission and local communities. Intermediary bodies, such as the Committee of the Regions, play a key role in representing local interests at the EU level. Digital platforms and networks also facilitate information exchange and cooperation across different levels.



Understanding the EU

Understanding the EU helps citizens to consciously participate in decision-making, for example in European Parliament elections. If people understand how the EU works, they can more easily recognize how decisions affect their everyday lives.

This increases democratic participation and trust in institutions, such as the work of the European Commission. In the long term, it contributes to the development of a more active and informed society.



Key Institutions

- **European Commission** → Proposes laws, manages programs
- **European Parliament** → Represents citizens, votes laws
- **Council of the EU** → Represents member states



The role of young people

- Erasmus+ programs
- Youth participation initiatives
- Public consultations
- Local EU-funded projects

Practical tools



PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- What influences my daily life?
- What isn't working well or needs improvement in my environment?
- What skills do I have to handle the challenge ahead of me?

FORMULATING THE MESSAGE

Problem → Aspiration → Claim

Example:

Problem: Housing is unaffordable
Aspiration: Everyone deserves a safe home
Claim: The EU should support cooperative housing

SELECTING THE FORMAT

- Social media posts
- Visual campaigns (posters, graphics)
- Audio or video testimonials
- Short articles
- Public debates or workshops
- Local, self-organized conference / debate

LOCAL-LEVEL ACTION

- Organize a workshop
- Start a discussion group
- Collaborate with local organizations
- Create visual elements (artwork, signs, events)

The Pact4EU project

The participants are not just listeners, but co-authors and partners



Participatory workshops



- Group discussions on a chosen topic
- Creative activities (drawing, fieldwork, storytelling – finding common ground)
- Collaborative problem-solving

Interactive tools



- Role-playing games (e.g., housing or gentrification games, themed board games with a specific focus)
- Comparing local practices with international examples (local issues → EU policies)
- Collaborative creation

Tips for impact



Communication and methods

- Community building is a key component of effective local activities.
- It is a good idea to organize fieldwork with the group based on the chosen topic.
- Seek cooperation with local organizations.
- Use of social media

Suggested hashtags - #BetterLiving, #YouthVoicesEU, #NothingAboutUs, #HomesNotEmpty
#YouthForCommons

Real-life experience

Start with real-life stories and experiences. Identify shared experiences and develop a common position.

Local stories

Connect local stories to broader frameworks and relevant EU strategies.
Do some research on local issues.

Debate club

Start a debate club where you can discuss chosen topics using arguments and facts.



Get involved!

Your voice matters. Your action counts.

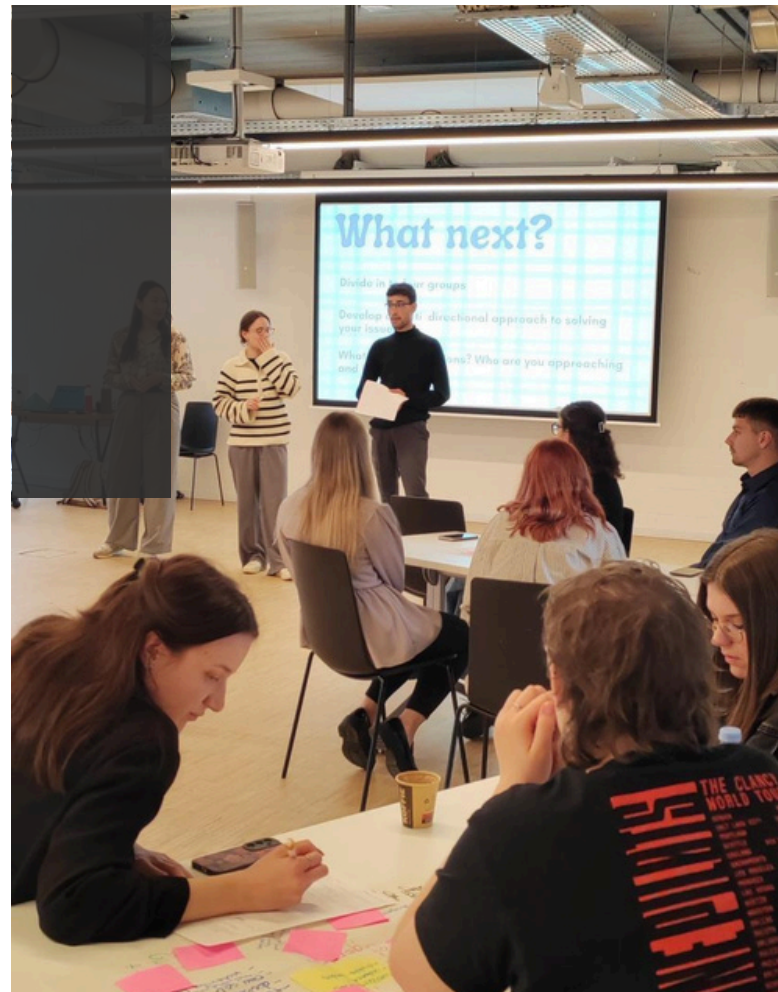
Europe is not only institutions — it is also what happens in your neighborhood.

Young people are already shaping Europe through:

- Community action
- Solidarity
- Creativity
- Advocacy

Join local initiatives or start your own.

Take part in EU youth programs.





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Watch the videos about the project!

How the EU law made?

[Video link](#)

Sustainable cities and public transport

[Video link](#)

Let there be a future locally

[Video link](#)

Europe isn't just a project. It's a place.

[Video link](#)

Fun facts about Europe

[Video link](#)

Summary video

[Video link](#)



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