

ΕΓΓΡΑΦΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ

Τίτλος εγγράφου: Strengthening Youth Participation in Democratic Processes¹

Οργάνωση/σεις: YEU Cyprus

Ημερομηνία υποβολής:

Περίληψη – εισαγωγή: (120 – 150 λέξεις):

The main objective of this policy paper is to highlight the views of young people on how to improve good governance in the public sector. This policy paper aims to give young people a voice on active citizenship, which presupposes informing the public on various matters as is their rights and obligations of the individual as a citizen, the expression of his/her views, the demand for transparency and fairness, the active participation in social processes.

It is an imperative need that technology serves democracy and that is why there is an obvious need to speed up democracy with modern means and methods of government.²

The following recommendations of this policy paper were based on the three main reasons of low participation of Cypriot citizens from young people:

1. High abstinence rates from parliamentary elections and European elections,
2. Strong feeling that their vote has no impact on the outcome of the elections, a lack of confidence in the Governors and depreciation of the electoral process
3. Under-representation of young people in democratic institutions - generation gap of elected representatives and candidates and young people.

¹ The opinions presented in this paper reflect the findings of the conferences: “Act’s of Young People” which was held in April 2017 and "Stimulate Democracy: Transformation Governance Through Technology (STIDE)" which was held in September 2018 with the participation of 18- 30 years old youngsters. The conference took place under the Erasmus + program and is part of the Basic Action 3: Supporting Policy Reforms.

² *Accelerating Democracy: Transforming Governance Through Technology*, John O. McGinni

Θέσεις πολιτικής: (σε μορφή bullet-point)

The Ministry of Education and Culture:

- Should introduce the “goal system” in schools. The system will be consisted of teaching and learner goals set by the teachers and students at the beginning of each academic year, with the aim of empowering youth, enriching the students’ soft skills but also promoting youth participation. The two goals will be interrelated and interdependent. The success of the system will be measured by the performance of students in Non-Formal Education activities, such as debates, workshops and events. This system will improve the performances of teachers and students and will focus on developing competences, self-improvement and participation.
- Should enhance the education of primary and secondary school students on active citizenship matters. This will be achieved by conducting courses and seminars on citizenship issues for primary school students. For secondary school students, this will be achieved using the Vouliwatch Cyprus platform in the classroom, where students will follow the views of each MP or politician, with a parallel explanation of the political system and how it works by their teachers.

Governmental bodies, Erasmus+ Offices and the Representation of the European Commission office:

- Should launch info points- in the form of multimedia stations- in popular places where young people congregate to inform and raise awareness about Erasmus + projects. In this way, young people will be informed about the wide range of volunteering opportunities that exist in their country but also in other EU countries. In the recent literature there are three prevalent claims about the interconnection between volunteering and citizenship. Namely, volunteering is said to develop civic values, enhance political participation, and improve democracy (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005: 230). It is argued that people are more likely to vote, to join political parties, and to participate in the political processes if they have been involved in volunteering (Rochester et al. 2010: 164).

The National Parliament:

- Could give funds to local organizations (e.g. NGOs) for the latter to involve more young people in various activities such as: environmental activities, activities that can raise awareness about social and political issues, informative sessions, debates, stimulations of the decision-making process. In this way, youngsters will be empowered, encouraged to contribute to society but also, they will become self-reliant adults.