



ADVOCACY CURRICULUM



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Acknowledgements

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This curriculum is designed to support young people in strengthening their knowledge on advocacy and how to be active factors of change.

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About this Training Curriculum

This training curriculum has been developed within the framework of the [ParticipACTION project](#), an initiative designed to empower young people from diverse backgrounds to actively shape European policies through capacity-building, advocacy activities, and cross-border cooperation. By fostering meaningful connections between youth and decision-makers, the project promotes democratic participation, inclusion, and solidarity across Europe.

The curriculum is composed of **two complementary modules** that combine **knowledge-building** with **practical skills development**.

Module 1 – Building an Advocacy Strategy equips young people with the tools and confidence to participate meaningfully in advocacy processes. It introduces the concept of advocacy, supports participants in identifying priorities, and guides them step by step in designing effective advocacy strategies. The module explores key questions such as: ***What is advocacy? Who are the relevant decision-makers? What tools and partnerships can support advocacy efforts? How can impact be measured?*** Through practical exercises, worksheets, examples, and structured activities, young people gain transferable skills to advocate on issues that matter to them — whether at school, community, national, or EU level.

Module 2 – EU Decision-Making and Youth Advocacy provides participants with a solid understanding of how decisions are made within the European Union, how these decisions affect their daily lives, and what rights they hold under EU law. It combines theoretical insights on EU institutions and policymaking processes with practical exercises that help young people navigate institutional structures and engage constructively with decision-makers.

Together, the two modules offer a comprehensive pathway: **from understanding the European decision-making system to actively influencing it.**

The two modules are intended to be self-paced for youth, allowing learners to engage with the material at their own rhythm. In support of this, the curriculum includes two annexes: Annex 1, which provides a worksheet summarizing the exercises, and Annex 2, which contains the solutions to these exercises. Moreover, the curriculum features Facilitation Guidelines (Annex 3) that have been specifically tailored to the ParticipACTION project and can be used in contexts where the modules are not self-paced but administered by facilitators for guided instruction or support.

The curriculum directly aligns with the European Union Youth Strategy (2019–2027) and contributes in particular to the following Youth Goals:

- Youth Goal #3: Inclusive Societies
- Youth Goal #4: Information & Constructive Dialogue
- Youth Goal #6: Youth Organisations & European Programmes
- Youth Goal #9: Space & Participation for All
- Youth Goal #11: Youth Organisations

By combining knowledge, skills, and practical application, this curriculum supports young people in becoming informed, confident, and effective advocates for change.

Module 1

Building an Advocacy Strategy

Learn what advocacy means and how to turn ideas into action.

This module guides young people through identifying priorities, designing advocacy strategies, choosing the right tools, engaging decision-makers, and promoting policy proposals – building the skills needed to advocate for real change.

1. Introduction

This module introduces young people to the **foundations of advocacy** and supports them in **developing the skills needed to advocate effectively for issues that matter to them**. It provides a clear and accessible understanding of what advocacy is, why it matters, and how it can be used as a tool for social change at local, national, and European levels.

Throughout the module, participants are guided step by step in identifying advocacy priorities, setting objectives, mapping stakeholders and decision-makers, selecting appropriate tools, and building partnerships. Special attention is given to designing a structured advocacy strategy and to understanding how to monitor and measure impact.

The module is highly practical and participatory. It includes interactive exercises, worksheets, examples, and reflection activities that help participants translate theory into action. By the end of the module, **young people will have strengthened their confidence, strategic thinking, and capacity to engage constructively with decision-makers and communities**.

2. What is Advocacy?

Advocacy can be defined in many ways. In general terms, it refers to the act of actively supporting, arguing for, or defending a specific cause, policy, idea, or group of people, with the aim of influencing decisions and bringing about positive change within political, social, or economic systems. Advocacy often involves raising awareness, sharing evidence and experiences, and empowering voices that may otherwise go unheard.

Put more simply, advocacy means taking action to influence people in power so that a problem is solved or something unfair is improved. It is about speaking up, being heard, and working to make change happen, whether that change is big or small.

Advocacy can include:

- Raising awareness: helping people understand an issue and why it matters.
- Changing laws or policies: influencing rules, systems, or decisions.
- Improving services or programmes: making community services, or public systems work better for everyone.
- Holding decision-makers accountable: ensuring promises and policies are kept and rights are respected.
- Speaking up on behalf of others: especially when they cannot safely or easily do so themselves.

A note on ethical advocacy

Advocacy should always be done with respect and responsibility. When advocating for others, especially people who face discrimination or exclusion, it is important to listen to their experiences, avoid making assumptions, and, whenever possible, involve them in shaping the message and solutions. Ethical advocacy means amplifying voices rather than replacing them, and aiming for change with people, not just for them.

2.1 Young advocates and inspirational figures

If you think it takes hundreds of citizens to start a change, let's have a look at these individual and inspirational figures, with whom you might find similarities.

Do you know some of them? What do they mean or represent to you?



Yusra Mardini, a Syrian-born refugee who became a symbol of hope after fleeing Syria.

During their journey through Lesbos, Yusra and her sister **saved 20 persons on the small boat that crosses from Izmir to Lesbos, thanks to their swimming skills.**

She got international protection in Germany and **competed in the Refugee Olympic Team during the 2016 Olympics in Rio.**

In 2017, she became a UNHCR goodwill ambassador, using her influence to raise awareness about the struggles refugees face to encourage inclusion policies and support for refugees in Europe.

Through her advocacy, **Yusra has been able to influence public opinion about refugees, challenging negative stereotypes and calling for greater opportunities for refugees in Europe.**

Image credits: Refugee, Olympic swimmer and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Yusra Mardini during training for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. © UNHCR/Paul Wu

Mohammed Al Jounde, originally from Syria, arrived in France in 2015.

He then **co-founded the Syrian Youth Assembly to ensure that young refugees, particularly those in Europe, had a platform to advocate for their rights and integration.**

He worked alongside various European institutions, including the European Parliament, to call for better refugee policies, focusing on education, integration, and youth empowerment.

His advocacy helped shape policies on education and inclusion at the European level. He also worked on campaigns that directly influenced the EU's approach to refugee integration.



Image source: KidsRights Foundation – “Mohamad Al Jounde.” Retrieved from <https://www.kidsrights.org/advocacy/winners/mohamad-al-jounde/>



Rima Hassan is a young Syrian-Palestinian lawyer who arrived in France as a child after being born in a refugee camp in Syria to Palestinian parents. In 2019, she **founded the NGO *Refugees in Libya***, which documents human rights violations against asylum seekers and migrants trapped in detention centres, helping bring international attention to their situation. In 2024, she was **elected as a Member of the European Parliament on the list of La France Insoumise, becoming one of the youngest French MEPs.**

She is known for her outspoken and often thunderous interventions in Parliament, particularly on issues related to Palestine, international law, and human rights.

Image credits: French-Palestinian legal scholar Rima Hassan, in the northern Paris suburb of Villepinte, March 16, 2024. BERTRAND GUAY / AFP

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish climate activist who became internationally known for **launching the Fridays for Future school strikes**, pressuring governments to act on climate change and involving millions of young people across continents.

She has addressed major global forums such as the UN Climate Action Summit, COP conferences, and the European Parliament, becoming known for her direct, science-based criticism of political and economic leaders for failing to act on the climate crisis.

Beyond climate issues, she has taken public positions on broader social and political causes, including expressing solidarity with Palestinians and supporting the Gaza Freedom Flotilla as a form of non-violent protest and humanitarian advocacy.

She has received multiple Nobel Peace Prize nominations.



Image source: IFOP – “Étude internationale sur l’image de Greta Thunberg.” Retrieved from <https://www.ifop.com/article/etude-internationale-sur-limage-de-greta-thunberg/>

Exercise 2.1 - Your turn: Tick all the actions you think are advocacy.

- Sharing information online about an issue you care about
- Meeting a local official to ask for improvements
- Organising a community event to raise awareness
- Creating a petition to change a rule or decision
- Organising an event to raise money to go on an excursion
- Supporting a friend experiencing discrimination
- Sending a letter to a Ministry to describe a challenge and ask for a solution
- Voting in local or EU elections
- Going to the cinema with your friends
- Researching a problem and presenting solutions
- Wearing a T-shirt with a social message

What did you tick? Are any of the above actions not advocacy? Why? Did the actions you ticked seek positive change?

When thinking about advocacy, it can be useful to reflect on moments when you or others experienced something unfair. For example, being left out, facing a stereotype, or having unequal access to opportunities. Many acts of advocacy start with identifying these everyday experiences of unfairness and deciding that they should change for everyone.

Here are some examples:

Values and Rights, Rule of Law, Security

A young person joins a peaceful protest in their city. During the protest, they notice that only some participants are being stopped and questioned by the police, while others are not. The young person feels this is unfair and decides to speak up by calmly asking the police why certain people are treated differently. They are nervous, but they feel it is important to question the situation and defend equal treatment.

Reflection prompts:

- What made it difficult or risky to speak up?
- What values or rights are involved?
- How does power affect who feels able to speak?

Migration

A student with a migrant background is told by the school that they cannot join a regular class or a school activity because their language level is considered 'not good enough'. The decision is made without properly assessing their abilities or offering language support. The student feels this is unfair and discriminatory.

They decide to speak up by asking the teacher or school staff why they are being excluded and by explaining that they want support to improve their language, not to be left out of learning or activities.

Reflection prompts:

- Why can language-based decisions become discriminatory?
- What power imbalance exists in this situation?
- What support could make it easier for a student to speak up?

Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

In a youth centre, a cultural or sports activity is organised, but only information in one language is shared and the participation fee is quite high. A young person notices that some peers are excluded and cannot join. They decide to speak up during a group meeting, suggesting lower fees or more accessible communication so that everyone can participate. At first, they feel worried about being seen as ‘complaining’, but they speak up because they want the activity to be fair for all.

Reflection prompts:

- What stopped or encouraged the person to speak up?
- Who benefits when someone raises this issue?
- What kind of change could follow from this action?

Exercise 2.2 - Your Turn: What advocacy means to you

Now think about your experience of something unfair, how it affected you or others and how you would like to change this and fill out this table:

<p>Your experience of something unfair that affects many people (for example a stereotype, barrier, or unequal treatment)</p>	<p>How did it affect you or others?</p>	<p>Is this something you want to change? How?</p>

3. Identifying advocacy priorities

Choosing what to advocate for is one of the most important steps in any advocacy journey. There are often many challenges, many problems, and many issues we care about. But effective advocacy requires focus: **choosing one issue at a specific moment in time that you have the power, evidence, and opportunity to influence.**

Sometimes priorities come from the bottom-up: a problem affects you or your community directly and urgently, and change is needed now. Other times priorities come from the top-down: a new law, policy, or initiative is being discussed, and decisions made soon could affect people on the ground. Both approaches are valid and powerful.

To choose the right issue, **ask yourself:**

- Is this issue important? Why does it matter?
- Does it affect many people? Who is impacted?
- Do I have evidence? Stories, data, personal experience?
- Am I best placed to speak about this? Do I have lived experience, expertise, interest?
- Is this issue already on the agenda? Whether local, national, or EU?
- Do I have allies or supporters? Friends, teachers, NGOs, youth groups.
- Do I have a chance of success? Can something realistically change?
- How long would it take to see change? Weeks, months, years?

When identifying priorities, think about whether the issue affects different groups in different ways.

For example:

- Am I supporting others whose voices are less heard? If so, how can I involve them, represent their views responsibly, or work alongside them?
- Does it impact women and men differently?
- Does age play a role?
- Does it create additional barriers for people who identify as LGBTQIA+, those with migratory backgrounds or those with disabilities?

Thinking about these differences helps you choose priorities that are fair, inclusive, and realistic.

Exercise 3.1 - Your turn: Advocacy Prioritization Matrix

Rate the issues you care about, based on the criteria column. Give higher points of the criteria you feel are more fulfilled. The final score will give you an indication of which issues may be the best to tackle now (highest points) and those that may be best to leave for later or for someone else (lowest points).

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
CRITERIA	POINTS FROM 1 TO 5			
<p>Policy change needed is clear: It is clear what needs to change and who has the power to change it. You can explain the problem and the solution in a few simple sentences.</p>				
<p>Number of people that will be affected by this issue: Many people are affected by this issue, now or in the future. The impact goes beyond just one person. <i>Tip: Look for numbers or estimates from trusted sources, such as national statistics offices, local authorities, or EU data (e.g. Eurostat), to show how many people are affected.</i></p>				
<p>Level of effort required: This issue can be worked on with the time, money, and energy you realistically have. (Score higher if it requires less effort.)</p>				
<p>Potential for success: There is a real chance that your advocacy could lead to change. The goal feels possible, not just ideal. <i>Tip: potential for success means that there is a realistic chance that the advocacy can achieve change. It is based not only on belief, but on logic: the goal is specific, the decision-maker has the power to act, the demand is feasible, and there are allies or existing frameworks to build on. Broad ideals inspire, but concrete and targeted goals are more likely to succeed.</i></p>				

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
CRITERIA	POINTS FROM 1 TO 5			
<p>Level of public support for the issue: Many people already care about this issue or could easily support it if they understood it better.</p> <p><i>Tip: You can check opinion polls, surveys, or media coverage, or even run a simple poll yourself (online or in your community) to see how many people care about the issue.</i></p>				
<p>Level of support from people in charge: Some people who make decisions (like school leaders, local officials, or politicians) are already interested in this issue, open to change, or talking about it.</p>				
<p>Evidence that the issue is important: You have facts, data, stories, or personal experiences that show the issue is real and important.</p>				
<p>Importance to you or your group: This issue matters to you personally or reflects your values and priorities.</p>				
<p>Am I best placed to lead on this issue? You have lived experience, knowledge, access, or motivation that makes you a good person or group to work on this issue.</p>				
TOTAL POINTS				

4. Understanding power & decision-makers

Advocacy only works when you know who has the power to make the change you want. This person or institution is called a decision-maker. A decision-maker is someone who has the authority to decide, approve, fund, or change something. For example, a school principal, a municipal official, a ministry, or an EU institution.

Every issue, whether big or small, has one or more decision-makers behind the scenes. Your role as an advocate is to identify who they are and understand how they fit into the bigger picture. **But power is not just about one decision-maker.** Successful advocacy also requires spotting your allies: those who can support you, amplify your voice, or open doors. And just as importantly, you need to understand who might oppose your idea or benefit from keeping things the way they are. This whole process is called **power mapping**, and it is one of the most essential skills in advocacy, whether you are influencing your school, your city council, your national government, or the EU.

If you analyze the different actors from a stakeholder point of view, the actors fall into four main categories (bearing in mind there will always be overlap between these categories).

- **Targets:** decision-makers; the people who have the power to make the necessary changes; people with influence over decision-makers.
- **Constituents:** the people you work with and for; those who are expected to benefit from your advocacy; those who support your organisation's mission and work.
- **Allies:** those who share your aims and can help to influence or put pressure on the decision-makers and may be prepared to work with you.
- **Opponents:** those who are opposed to what you want to achieve and will try to block the changes you want to see.

Imagine this: You want healthier food options in your school cafeteria. Great idea! But who actually makes that decision? Is it the cafeteria manager? The school principal? The municipal councilor in charge of schools or public health? Or someone even higher up? Next, think about your supporters. Who might help you push for change? Fellow students who want healthier meals? Teachers who care about nutrition? Parents? A local group promoting healthy eating? And of course, consider who might push back: A company that profits from selling sugary snacks? Local businesses with contracts to supply junk food?

When discussing healthier food, consider whether students with different religious or cultural backgrounds have options that respect their needs (e.g., Halal, kosher, or vegetarian choices). Think about whether girls and boys feel equally able to speak up about cafeteria options, or whether migrant students may feel less confident to raise concerns. Power mapping can help you understand who speaks up easily, who feels silenced, and how to ensure everyone's needs are represented.

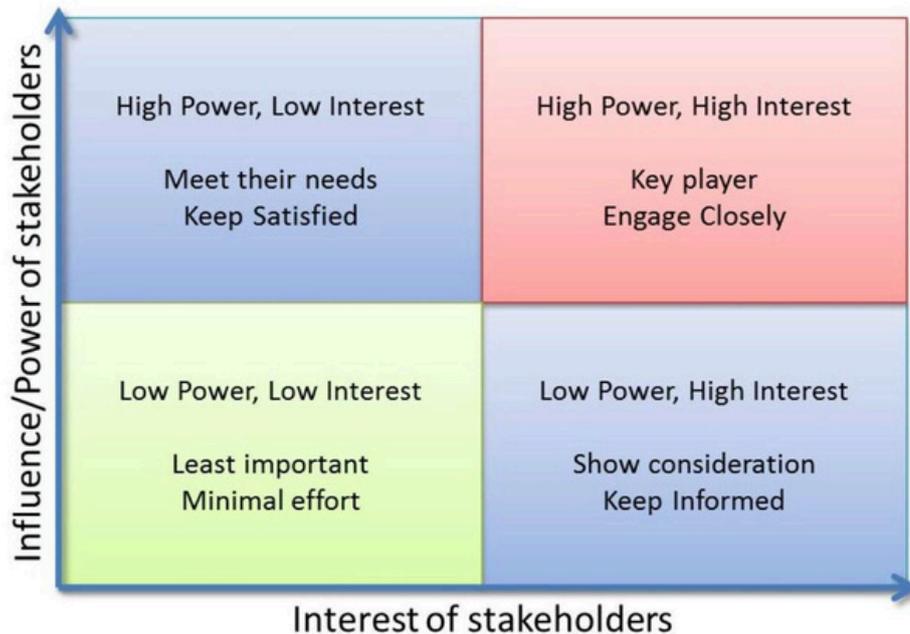
4.1 Power mapping tool: influence–interest grid

A simple and famous way to understand who matters most for your advocacy is the **Influence–Interest Grid**. It helps you sort key actors based on:

- **Influence** → How much power they have to change your issue
- **Interest** → How much they care about your issue (positively or negatively)

Once you place people or institutions into this grid, you will know who to prioritise, who to inform, and who to watch out for.

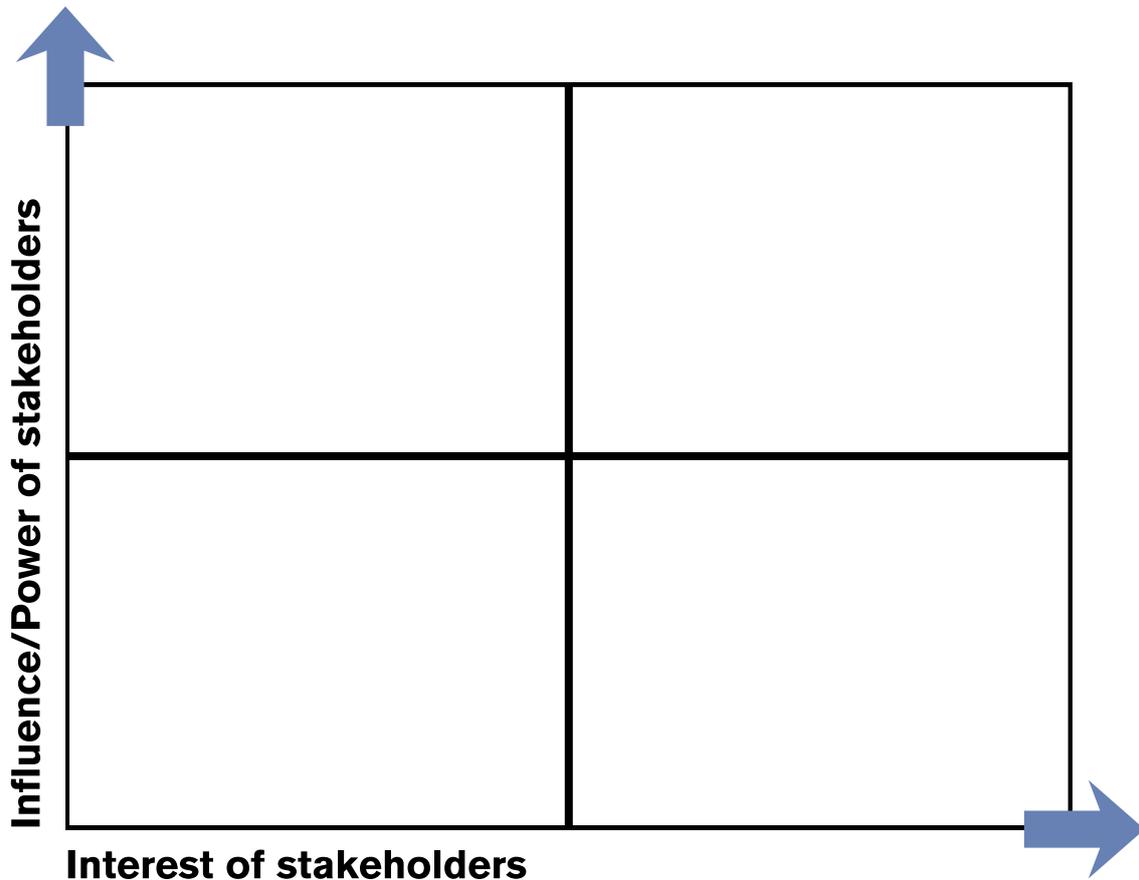
Influence–Interest Grid



Exercise 4.1 - Your turn: Build your power grid

Take the issue of healthier food at your school cafeteria:

- **List all actors** connected to the issue
- **Think of their influence:** Can they directly make the change? Can they block or delay it? Do others listen to them?
- **Rate their interest:** Will they strongly support your idea? Are they neutral or unaware? Might they oppose you?
- **Place each actor in the grid below:** This shows you who to engage with first, who to persuade, and who to monitor.



5. Setting advocacy goals

When choosing the issues you want to seek change for, the next step is to set a clear advocacy goal. An advocacy goal is a clear statement of the change you want to see. It explains what should change, who has the power to make that change, and when you want it to happen. Having a clear goal helps you stay focused and makes your advocacy more effective.

The easiest way to create a strong advocacy goal is to use the SMART method. A SMART advocacy goal is:

- **Specific:** Clear, concrete, and easy to understand.
- **Measurable:** You can track progress or know when it is achieved.
- **Achievable:** Realistic and possible within your resources and context.
- **Relevant:** It fits your overall advocacy priorities and actually helps solve the problem.
- **Time-bound:** There is a clear deadline.

SMART goals keep your advocacy focused and stop you from trying to fix everything at once. When setting your goal, check whether it is inclusive.

For example, language classes might need flexible timetables for young women with care responsibilities, or separate group options if this makes girls feel safer. Think about whether LGBTQIA+ youth and migrant youth would feel welcome and safe in the proposed classes. How people with disabilities would be able to access them. Adjust your goal as needed.

Example: Turning an idea into a SMART goal

Let's imagine that you want to advocate for free language courses for young migrants, so they can integrate better and access education, employment, and services.

Goal (not SMART yet): *"Free language courses for young migrants should be provided."*

Let's transform it into a SMART advocacy goal, step by step:

SPECIFIC

Ask: *What exactly do we want to change and who is responsible?*

✓ Specific version: "We want the municipality to offer free A1–B1 language courses to all young migrants aged 16–23."

MEASURABLE

Ask: *How will we know when the goal is achieved?* Add numbers or concrete indicators.

✓ Measurable version: "...providing at least 50 course places per semester, with official enrolment data published publicly."

ACHIEVABLE

Ask: *Is this realistic? Do we have evidence and allies? Can the municipality afford this?* If the municipality already funds some programmes, expanding them is achievable.

✓ Achievable version: "...by reallocating part of the existing youth integration budget and partnering with local NGOs."

RELEVANT

Ask: *Does this goal actually solve the problem? Does it match our priorities?* Language is a barrier to access education, employment, and participation → yes, highly relevant.

✓ Include a relevance statement: "...because language is a key barrier preventing young migrants from accessing school, work, and opportunities."

TIME-BOUND

Ask: By when do we want this to happen? Set a realistic deadline.

✓ Time-bound version: "...with the programme launched by September 2028."

Final SMART goal that is also inclusive: "By September 2028, the municipality will offer free A1–B1 language courses to all migrants aged 16–23, providing at least 50 course places per semester with publicly published enrolment data. Courses will be inclusive, with flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, safe group options, accessible to people with disabilities and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment. This will be achieved by reallocating part of the youth integration budget and partnering with local NGOs, because language is a key barrier to education, work, and participation."

Exercise 5.1 - Your turn: Craft a SMART Advocacy Goal

Take the issue of the healthy food in the school cafeteria from section 3 and make it a SMART advocacy goal, ensuring inclusiveness.

Issue identified as priority	SMART advocacy goal

6. Developing your advocacy message

Once you know your advocacy goal, you need a **clear, persuasive message**. Your message should answer three questions:

1. **What is the problem?**
2. **What change do you want?**
3. **Why does it matter (and to whom)?**

The advocacy goal defines **what change you want to achieve**, while the advocacy message defines **how you communicate that goal to a specific audience in a persuasive way**.

You should also check whether your message acknowledges how different groups experience the issue. For example, language barriers may affect recently arrived girls differently if they face family expectations at home, LGBTQIA+ youth who may feel unsafe in mixed groups or young people with disability who may face access issues. Being inclusive makes your message stronger and fairer.

Example: *Access to free language courses for young migrants*

- **Problem:** Young migrants cannot access language classes, causing delays in their education and social inclusion.
- **Change:** Local authorities should create and fund 12-month free language courses for migrants aged 16–23.
- **Why:** It accelerates integration, improves employability, and reduces long-term public costs.

After drafting a clear SMART and inclusive goal, the next step is to turn it into an advocacy message by shifting from technical planning language to a persuasive narrative aimed at decision-makers. In this case, the SMART goal of section 5 could be the following advocacy message:

Young migrants want to study, work, and contribute to their new communities but many cannot even begin, because they do not have access to language classes. Without language skills, they face delays in education, struggle to find jobs, and feel isolated in everyday life.

We are asking local authorities to create and fund 12-month, free language courses for migrants aged 16–23, ensuring they are accessible to all. This is a practical, affordable change that would make a real difference.

Investing in language learning accelerates integration, improves young people's chances of employment, and reduces long-term public costs. It helps build confident, connected communities and gives young refugees the tools they need to participate fully in society.

Free language courses are not just support. They are the foundation for inclusion.

While the SMART goal is detailed and technical, the advocacy message simplifies it, focuses on human impact, and uses persuasive language to influence decision-makers.

Exercise 6.1. - Your turn: Develop your advocacy message

Think back to the example of the school cafeteria and write a 150–200 word message for healthy food.

Use this structure:

- **Sentence 1-2:** Describe the problem.
- **Sentence 3-4:** Explain your solution.
- **Sentence 5-6:** Explain why the decision maker should care (social, economic, fairness, human rights).

Optional: Create a headline for your message (max 10 words) or a final punchline.

Tip: Read it aloud to check if it is clear and under 30 seconds. Check with a friend.

7. Choosing advocacy tools

An advocacy tool is a method used to influence decisions, raise awareness, or promote change on an issue.

Examples include:

- Meetings with decision-makers (lobbying)
- Social media campaigns
- Petitions
- Letters or emails to officials
- Public events
- Storytelling and testimonies
- Policy papers with recommendations

The tool(s) you use depend on your capacity, access to decision-makers, and the context of your issue. Effective advocacy often combines several tools strategically.

Practical tip: If direct access to decision-makers is difficult, start with tools that require less access, such as a clear letter, a short video explaining the issue, or social media outreach.

These steps can build momentum for more direct advocacy later. Once you have gathered evidence and strengthened your position, you can then request a meeting to discuss the proposals in more detail.

Most advocates follow an escalation strategy: beginning with private, constructive engagement, such as a face-to-face meeting request or a formal letter, and gradually increasing visibility if the issue remains unresolved. Over time, this might include public statements, social media campaigns, or partnerships with other groups to increase pressure.

Your capacity also plays a key role. Some tools require more time, research, skills, or resources than others. A meeting request or a short letter may be achievable for small youth groups, while a full campaign or detailed policy report might require collaboration with allies or support from an organisation.

Other factors that influence which tools to use include:

- **Access and opportunity:** Is the decision-maker reachable?
- **Urgency:** Does the issue require fast action (e.g., an upcoming vote)?
- **Evidence:** Do you already have strong arguments, or do you need time to gather more information?
- **Political timing:** Is the topic already being discussed in the media or parliament?
- **Risk:** Could public pressure damage relationships or cause backlash?
- **Allies:** Are organisations, youth groups, or experts available to support your message?
- **Audience:** Which tools will resonate most with the people you are trying to influence?

Tool Check

1. Can you meet the decision-maker?

- A. No → Use simple tools (letters, videos)
- B. Maybe → Use mid-tools (petitions, short briefings)
- C. Yes → Use direct tools (meetings, presentations)

2. How much time do you have?

- A. Very little → Quick tools (social posts, short letters)
- B. Some → Mid-tools (petitions, short videos)
- C. A lot → In-depth tools (policy paper, campaign)

3. Is the issue urgent?

- A. Yes → Fast tools (letters, posts, petition)
- B. Not urgent → Mix of tools

If you circled mostly A → Start small. Mostly B → Use a mix. Mostly C → Try bigger tools.

Choosing the right advocacy tools means balancing these considerations to create a strategy that is realistic, impactful, and adaptable to changing circumstances.

Exercise 7.1 - Your turn: Pick your advocacy tool

Tick one tool you think fits each situation. Then try to explain why it works.

1. You want to show that many people support your idea.

- Policy paper Short letter Press release Petition Private meeting Newspaper article

2. You can't meet the decision-maker yet but want to reach them.

- Letter Protest Long report

3. You want to raise awareness fast.

- Social media post Academic study Email to friends

8. Creating your advocacy tool

Once you have chosen the advocacy tools that best fit your situation, it is time to actually create them. Each tool has a different purpose, tone, and level of effort. This module gives you simple, step-by-step guidance to help you produce clear, effective tools, whether it's a letter, a social media post, a meeting request, or a short briefing.

Remember:

- Your goal is to communicate clearly, respectfully, and persuasively.
- Start small and build up.
- Use the language you already have: authentic messages are powerful.

1. A letter or email to a decision-maker

Purpose: Explain your issue and what you want changed.

Best for: When you do not have access to the decision-maker yet or need quick action.

Steps:

1. **Start with respect:** "Dear Councillor... / Dear Mayor..."
2. **State the problem clearly in one sentence.**
3. **Explain why it matters**, especially for the affected group.
4. **Say what change you want** (your SMART goal helps!).
5. **Ask for something small but concrete:** a reply, a meeting, or for them to consider your proposal.
6. **Keep it short (max one page).**
7. **Sign with your full name + contact.**

If writing about an issue that affects groups differently (e.g., migrant girls, LGBTQIA+ students), include a short line explaining how and why their specific needs should be considered.

Example:

Dear Councillor,

I am writing to raise a concern about the lack of accessible language courses for young migrants in our municipality.

Many young migrants want to study, work, and contribute to their new communities, but cannot even begin because they do not have access to language classes. Without language skills, they face delays in education, struggle to find jobs, and feel isolated in everyday life.

I am therefore asking the municipality to create and fund free A1–B1 language courses for migrants aged 16–23, with at least 50 places per semester. These courses should be inclusive, with flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, safe group options, accessibility for people with disabilities, and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment.

This is a practical and affordable change that would make a real difference. Investing in language learning accelerates integration, improves young people’s chances of employment, and reduces long-term public costs. It helps build confident, connected communities and enables young migrants to participate fully in society.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and would appreciate your response or a short meeting to explore possible next steps.

Yours sincerely,

[Your full name]

[Organisation, if relevant]

[Email address / phone number]

2. A Social Media Post

Purpose: Raise awareness fast and mobilise support.

Best for: Urgent issues, public engagement, or when you have limited time.

Steps:

1. **Hook the reader** with a short, emotional first line.
2. **Explain the issue** in 1–2 sentences.
3. **Say what needs to change** (your ask).
4. **Add a call-to-action** (“Share this”, “Sign the petition”).
5. **Use a simple image or graphic** if you can.
6. **Tag relevant accounts** (organisations, local authorities).
7. **Keep it positive and factual.**

Check whether your post represents everyone affected, not just the most visible group.

Example:

Young migrants want to learn, work, and belong. But many can't even start.

In our city, too many young migrants aged 16–23 have no access to free language classes. Without language skills, they face barriers to education, jobs, and everyday participation.

We are calling on the municipality to fund free and inclusive A1–B1 language courses, with flexible schedules, safe group options, accessibility for people with disabilities, and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment.

*Language learning is not a luxury — it's the foundation for inclusion. **Share this post and support our call for change!***

*#LanguageForAll #YouthInclusion #MigrantRights #EducationMatters @CityCouncil
@YouthServices @LocalNGOs*

3. A Meeting Request

Purpose: Get direct access to the decision-maker.

Best for: When you have some access or want to escalate politely.

Steps:

1. **Briefly introduce yourself** and your group.
2. **Explain why you want the meeting.**
3. **Mention your evidence or your tool** (“We wrote a short briefing”).
4. **Propose 2–3 dates.**
5. **Say the meeting will be short** (15–20 minutes).
6. **Thank them for their time.**

Example:

Dear Councillor,

My name is [Your name] and I am writing on behalf of [your group/organisation], which works with young migrants in our municipality.

We would like to request a short meeting with you to discuss the lack of access to free language courses for young migrants aged 16–23, and how this affects their education, employment, and social inclusion.

We have prepared a short briefing outlining the situation and our proposal for creating inclusive, free A1–B1 language courses, including flexible schedules, safe group options, accessibility for people with disabilities, and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment.

We believe this is a practical and affordable solution that would make a real difference for young people and the wider community.

We would be grateful for 15–20 minutes of your time and are available on the following dates:

- *[Date and time option 1]*
- *[Date and time option 2]*
- *[Date and time option 3]*

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Kind regards,
[Your full name]
[Organisation]*

4. A Policy Paper

Purpose: Show you understand the issue deeply and have researched solutions.

Best for: When you have more time or want to speak with authority.

Steps:

1. **Title + 2–3 sentence summary** (the “so what”).
2. **The problem** — describe what is happening and to whom.
3. **Evidence** — a statistic, testimony, or example.
4. **Impact** — why this is unfair or harmful.
5. **Recommendations** — the change you want, written clearly and simply.

Consider and include a paragraph on how solutions can be gender-sensitive and inclusive.

5. A Short Video

Purpose: Tell a story in a fast, relatable way.

Best for: Awareness, social media, or supporting a meeting request.

Steps:

1. **Start with a strong message** (“Young migrants need language classes now”).
2. **Explain the problem in 10 seconds.**
3. **Show or tell one example** (no sensitive personal details).
4. **Say what change is needed.**
5. **End with a call-to-action.**
6. Keep it **30–45 seconds maximum.**

Consider and include a sentence on how solutions can be gender-sensitive and inclusive.

You can find a relevant example from the IRC [here](#).

Exercise 8.1 - Your turn: Create your advocacy tool

Scenario: You want your municipality to provide free language courses for young migrants.

STEP 1 — Choose Your Tool

Tick your choice:

- Short letter to the municipality
- Social media post
- Meeting request
- Short policy briefing

STEP 2 — Draft Your Tool

STEP 3 — Self-Review

If you chose a letter:

- Did you say the problem in one clear sentence?
- Did you explain why it matters?
- Did you ask for one concrete change?
- Is it under one page?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

If you chose a social media post:

- Is your first line catchy?
- Is the message short?
- Did you include your key ask?
- Did you add a simple call-to-action?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

If you chose a meeting request:

- Did you introduce yourself?
- Did you explain why a meeting matters?
- Did you propose 2–3 dates?

If you chose a policy briefing:

- Did you include a short summary?
- Did you explain the problem + evidence?
- Did you list 1–3 simple recommendations?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

If yes - congratulations! You have created your advocacy tool.

Exercise 8.2 - Your turn: Advocacy Role-Play

You meet a decision maker you recognize in the elevator. What do you say to him/her about your issue?

Step 1 – Group Preparation

Groups prepare a 2-minute “elevator pitch” answering the following, based on their theme: (example at the end)

- *What problem do we want to solve?*
- *What change do we want?*
- *Why does this matter for young people?*
- *How do gender or discrimination appear in this issue?*

Tips:

- Keep it under 2 minutes
- Focus on clarity, not detail
- Make one strong inclusion point
- End with a clear ask

Step 2 – Expectations Before the Presentation

- Each group has 2 minutes maximum
- Decision-makers will have 1–2 minutes to respond
- They may ask up to 2 questions
- Advocates respond briefly (no long explanations)

Step 3 – Role-Play Interaction Phase

Assign the roles:

1. **Advocates:** Youth participants

2. **Decision-makers:**

3. **Migration group:** Mayor / Ministry officer / MEP assistant

4. **Youth/Education/Sport group:** School principal / Youth officer / DG EAC representative

5. **Rights group:** Justice adviser / Equality body / Parliament assistant

Decision-makers should ask realistic questions, raise budget/feasibility concerns, respond respectfully but critically

For each group:

1. Assigned person/advocate delivers pitch (2 min max)
 - Decision-maker responds: can clarify or raise concerns (budget, feasibility, political risk)
2. Advocate responds concisely (max 1 minute total response)

Step 4 – Immediate Mini-Reflection (Before Full Debrief)

After each group finishes, answer this quick question:

- “Was the ask clear?” OR
- “What was one strong argument?”

Keep this very short (30–60 seconds).

Do not start full analysis yet! Then move to the next group.

Step 5 – Full Debrief

Now move into structured reflection.

Suggested questions:

- *What arguments worked best and why?*
- *Which pitches were the clearest?*
- *How did decision-makers react differently?*
- *Did inclusion strengthen the argument?*
- *What made some pitches more persuasive?*
- *What would you change next time?*

Why full debrief matters: Without clear interaction instructions, role-play can feel chaotic, some participants dominate and debrief becomes unfocused. This structure ensures equal participation, realistic challenge and productive reflection.

Sample: 2-Minute Elevator Pitch (Model Example)

Young migrants in our city want to study, work, and contribute, but many cannot even begin because they lack access to language classes. Without language skills, they face delays in education, struggle to find employment, and feel excluded from everyday life.

We are asking the municipality to create and fund free A1–B1 language courses for migrants aged 16–23, with at least 50 places per semester. These courses must be inclusive, offering flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, accessible classrooms for youth with disabilities, and safe, LGBTQI+-friendly learning environments.

This is a practical and affordable investment that reduces long-term public costs and accelerates integration.

Language is not a luxury - it is the foundation for participation, opportunity, and belonging.

9. Designing your advocacy strategy

Once you have identified your issue (Section 3), mapped decision-makers (Section 4), set a SMART goal (Section 5), developed your message (Section 6), chosen your tools (Section 7), and created at least one tool (Section 8), you are ready to bring everything together into a strategy.

An advocacy strategy is an organised plan that brings together all the steps you have explored in this curriculum into one clear roadmap. It helps you understand what change you want, who you need to influence, how you will influence them, what tools you will use, and when you will take action.

A strategy is important because advocacy can feel overwhelming or chaotic without structure. Decision makers respond better when you are consistent, focused, and prepared. A strategy ensures your advocacy stays targeted and realistic, uses your resources wisely, builds momentum over time and helps you measure whether you are making progress.

Even small actions benefit from a strategy. It does not need to be long or complex. A clear, one-page table can be enough.

How to build your strategy (step by step)

1. Start with your issue & SMART goal

This anchors everything. Example: *“Free A1–B1 language courses for young migrants aged 16–23 by September 2026.”*

2. Identify your primary targets

These are the people who can make the change happen. Example: Municipal councillor for youth and education; budget committee.

Before naming specific people, it is important to decide at which level your advocacy should focus (local, national, or EU), based on where decisions about your issue are made.

3. Identify your allies

Friends, youth groups, teachers, NGOs, migrant associations, student unions. They add visibility, credibility, and energy. Allies can include young people who do not experience the issue themselves but want to support those who do. For example, non-migrant students supporting language access, or boys supporting safer spaces for girls. Allyship strengthens advocacy and helps counter stereotypes.

4. Choose your tools

Match your tools to your target and your capacity (from Section 7). Letters → meetings → social media → petitions → public events → coalitions.

5. Plan the timing

Not everything can happen at once. Start private → escalate later if needed → respond to political moments (budget vote, elections, debates). Find opportunities, such as relevant events, international days etc.

6. Decide the message for each audience

Different people respond to different things; for example, politicians may be more receptive to arguments around budgets and public benefit, youth to fairness, inclusion and solidarity, and teachers to education outcomes, though this is not an exhaustive or fixed list, just indicative examples.

7. Set indicators for success

These can range from agreements to meetings, politicians sharing your message, influencers taking up your cause, to achieving your goal of language classes for young migrants. For guidance on how to track and measure these indicators, see **Section 10: Measuring Impact**, which explains practical ways to assess whether your advocacy is making a difference over time.

8. Think about risks and opportunities

Risks: Sometimes advocacy can create problems instead of solutions. There can be backlash, political tension, or people may misunderstand the message. For example, some groups might feel left out if the message does not reflect their real experiences, such as LGBTQIA+ youth, migrant girls, or young people with disabilities.

Opportunities: There are also good moments to speak up and make change. These can include elections, local campaigns, EU initiatives, or news stories. For example, you can use these moments to show how your idea helps different groups and reduces inequalities.

In the next page you will find a sample advocacy strategy on access to free language courses for young migrants.

<p>SMART goal</p>	<p>By September 2028, the municipality will offer free A1–B1 language courses to all migrants aged 16–23, providing at least 50 course places per semester with publicly published enrolment data. Courses will be inclusive, with flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, safe group options, accessibility for people with disabilities, and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment.</p>
<p>Targets / decision makers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal councillor responsible for youth and education • Head of the municipal education department • Municipal budget committee
<p>Allies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NGOs working with migrants and refugees • Youth organisations and student unions • Teachers and adult education providers • Migrant associations and community groups • Parents’ associations and social workers • Non-migrant youth supporting inclusion and education
<p>Tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter/email to decision-makers • Meeting request and short briefing (policy paper) • Social media campaign to raise awareness • Petition or open letter supported by allies • Public event or panel discussion on youth inclusion
<p>Timing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with letters and meeting requests (private advocacy) • Follow up with social media and petition if no response • Link campaign to key moments: municipal budget discussions, elections, International Migrants Day, back-to-school period • Escalate to public events if needed
<p>Key messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For politicians: Investing in language courses is cost-effective and reduces long-term public spending. • For youth: Language is the foundation for education, work, and belonging. • For educators: Language access improves learning outcomes and participation. • For the public: Free language courses help build inclusive, connected communities.

<p>Indicators of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from at least one key decision-maker • Meeting held with municipal authorities • Public statement or commitment from the municipality • Inclusion of language courses in the municipal budget • Launch of the programme with enrolment data published
<p>Risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political backlash or negative media framing • Misunderstanding of the issue (e.g. “special treatment”) • Some groups feeling excluded (e.g. migrant girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities) • Limited resources or competing political priorities
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local or national elections • Budget planning cycles • Media coverage on migration or education • EU or national funding programmes on integration • Public debates on youth unemployment or social cohesion
<p>Inclusivity check: How does your strategy ensure that different groups are included, safe, and represented?</p>	<p>This strategy ensures inclusivity by actively involving diverse migrant groups, including young women, LGBTQIA+ youth, and young people with disabilities, both in messaging and in solution design. Allies include organisations representing different communities, and all advocacy tools explicitly promote safe, accessible, and welcoming learning environments for all young migrants.</p>

Exercise 9.1 - Your turn: Build your advocacy strategy

Scenario: You want your school cafeteria to offer healthier meals.

Step 1 — Fill in each section of the strategy table above. Use your answers from previous exercises. E.g. the example of the healthy food at the school cafeteria or the language classes for young migrants. If you are unsure, make your best guess.

Step 2 — Check your plan:

- Does your goal match your tools?
- Do the people you identified actually have influence?
- Is your message clear and consistent?
- Is your timeline realistic?
- Do you have at least one ally?

If yes: you have just created your advocacy strategy.

10. Measuring your impact

Advocacy does not end when you send a letter or post a video. To grow as an advocate, you need to assess your impact, understand what worked, and adjust your strategy.

Impact assessment helps you:

- Stay on track
- Learn from your actions
- Demonstrate success
- Improve your strategy
- Keep allies and supporters motivated
- Show decision-makers that you are serious and organised

Impact can be big or small, and both matter.

What to measure

1. Outputs (what you did)

These are the activities you completed.

Examples:

- Letter sent
- Meeting held
- Video posted
- Petition launched
- Policy paper delivered

2. Engagement (who reacted)

Examples:

- Number of people reached on social media
- Number of petition signatures
- Decision-maker replied
- Allies joined your campaign
- Media shared your content

3. Outcomes (what changed as a result)

Examples:

- Decision-maker agreed to meet
- Your proposal was included in a committee agenda
- A pilot language course was launched
- Budget was allocated
- Youth groups formed a coalition

4. Learning (what you would do differently)

Examples:

- “We should have contacted allies earlier.”
- “Short videos work better than long posts.”
- “We need clearer asks in our letters.”
- “We realised we did not include everyone’s voice and will consult more diverse groups next time.”

Impact is not only success. It is also progress and learning.

10.1 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Table

A simple monitoring and evaluation table for your advocacy strategy can be found below:

Indicators	Targets (What you hoped to achieve)	Results (What actually happened)
Outputs		
Letters sent		
Meetings held		
Videos posted		
Petitions launched		
Policy papers delivered		
Engagement		
Number of people reached on social media		
Number of petition signatures		

Decision-makers replied		
Engagement		
Number of people reached on social media		
Number of petition signatures		
Decision-makers replied		
Allies joined your campaign		
Media shared your content		
Outcomes		
Decision-makers agreed to meet		
Proposal included in committee agendas		
Pilot programmes launched		
Budget allocated		
Youth groups formed a coalition		

Exercise 10.1 - Your turn: Assess your future impact

Using the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) table above, imagine you are planning your advocacy action. E.g., the example of the healthy food at the school cafeteria or the language classes for young migrants. If you are unsure, make your best guess.

Fill in the first two columns of the table above:

- **Target Outputs** — what you plan to produce
- **Target Engagement** — how people might react
- **Target Outcomes** — what change you hope to see

Then answer:

- Which one do you think will be hardest to achieve, and why?
- Did your actions reflect the needs of different groups (e.g. Gender, migration background, LGBTQIA+ youth)? How will you improve this?

Congratulations! You now know how to assess and strengthen your advocacy.

11. Conclusions

Advocacy is about making change happen. This curriculum has shown you how to identify issues, set clear goals, communicate persuasively, choose the right tools, and plan strategically. These steps help you advocate effectively on real issues, like providing free language classes for young migrants, but they also teach skills you can use anywhere.

Advocacy is not just for big campaigns or formal politics. You use it every day: at work, in school, in your community, or even in your family. Asking for what you need, influencing decisions, and standing up for fairness are all forms of advocacy.

Even if you do not follow every step exactly, the key ideas, such as being clear, understanding your audience, choosing the right approach, and including everyone, make your efforts stronger. Advocacy empowers you to take action, support others, and create positive change, whether it's small or large, private or public.

Module 2

EU decision-making and advocacy

Understand how decisions are made in the European Union and how they impact your life.

This module introduces young people to EU decision-making processes, their rights under EU law, and how advocacy can influence policies that affect them.

1. Introduction

This module focuses on understanding **how the European Union (“EU”) works and how young people can engage with its decision-making processes.** It provides participants with essential knowledge about EU institutions, legislative procedures, and the ways in which EU policies influence their everyday lives.

Participants will explore how decisions are made at the European level, what rights they hold under EU law, and how they can navigate institutional structures to make their voices heard. The module combines theoretical explanations with practical exercises, real-life examples, and guided activities that make complex processes accessible and relevant.

By the end of the module, participants will have developed a **solid understanding of EU governance and increased confidence in engaging with European institutions and policymakers,** equipped with the knowledge needed to advocate effectively within the European context.

2. What is the European Union (EU) and how was the EU created?

The community that we know today as the EU first began in the **1950s** after the Second World War. Originally there were **six “founding countries”**: Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Among other things, the community was designed to help break down trade barriers between countries in Europe, to increase competition between Member States, and establish common agricultural and trade agreements and standards through a single market. Since then, more countries have joined and the community has changed its name several times: European Economic Community (EEC), European Community (EC), European Union (EU).

In 1992, the EU was officially formed via the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed by 12 countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom – hence the 12 golden stars in the EU flag). Most significantly, the Maastricht Treaty launched a **common currency** – the Euro. Later the treaty was amended by the Treaty of Lisbon, enacted in 2009, which gave the EU more powers. **There are now 27 EU member states.** On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom was the first country to leave the EU. The EU is also negotiating the entry of new members (candidate countries) e.g., Albania and Serbia.

Exercise 2.1 - Your turn: Tick the countries that were initial founders of the EU

- France
- Spain
- Germany
- Italy
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Greece
- Luxembourg
- Austria

3. The core values of the European Union

The European Union is not only an economic or political project, but also a community based on shared values.

Exercise 3.1 - Your turn: Values

Select the options that represent the official core values of the European Union.

- Freedom
- Kindness
- Democracy
- Honesty
- Equality
- Rule of law
- Respect for human rights

The values of the EU were decided by the EU Member States, through treaties that have been negotiated, signed and ratified. The EU's core values are officially written in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (TFEU):

Article 2

*“The Union is founded on the values of respect for **human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law** and respect for **human rights**, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.”*

The values and rights of the EU were not chosen by chance. They are a **response to Europe's past**. In the first half of the 20th century, Europe experienced two World Wars, dictatorships, genocide, and massive violations of human rights. Millions of people were killed or persecuted because of who they were, what they believed, or where they came from. Democracies collapsed, laws were abused, and power was used without limits. After the Second World War, European countries agreed on something essential: this must never happen again. To prevent future violence and injustice, they decided that cooperation between countries had to be based not only on economic interests, but also on shared values.

Respect for human dignity, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights were therefore set as non-negotiable principles. These values are meant to protect people from abuse of power, ensure fair laws, and guarantee that everyone is treated with respect.

When a country joins the European Union, it promises to respect shared values that are not just symbolic, they come with real responsibilities. If a Member State starts to move away from these principles, the EU can step in. First, it opens dialogue and raises concerns, giving the country a chance to correct the situation. If problems continue and become serious, the EU can apply formal measures, including limiting a country's influence in EU decision-making or restricting access to EU funds.

However, rules and sanctions alone are not enough: protecting EU values also depends on active participation and advocacy by people. When governments take decisions that weaken democracy, limit freedom of expression, or undermine the independence of courts, it is often citizens, journalists, civil society organizations, and young people who raise the alarm. This is where advocacy becomes essential: speaking out, organizing campaigns, using legal tools, and putting public pressure on decision-makers to respect shared principles.

A recent example is the situation in Poland and Hungary, where EU institutions raised concerns about threats to the rule of law, such as limits on judicial independence and restrictions on fundamental rights. These concerns were not raised only by the EU, but also by citizens, activists, judges, and youth movements within those countries. Their advocacy played a key role in making the issues visible and pushing the EU to act.

Exercise 3.2 - Group discussion - Values in action

1. **Where do you see one or more of the EU values not being respected?** (At school, online, in your city, in the news...)
2. **What is one small thing you could do about it?** (Talk about it, share information, ask questions, support a group.)

4. How are decisions made at the EU level?

The EU is governed by four main bodies: the European Parliament, which is based in Strasbourg (France), Brussels (Belgium) and Luxembourg; and the European Council, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, which are all based in Brussels (Belgium).

1. **The European Council role:** it sets the EU's overall policy direction and priorities, by bringing together the heads of state or government of the member states.

Its composition is made up of the **Heads of State or Government of the EU member states, together with its President and the President of the European Commission.**

New laws in the EU are usually made following a standard procedure involving the three EU legislative bodies: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU.

2. The European Commission's role: proposes EU laws, enforces them, manages EU policies and budget, and represents the EU's interests independently of member states. It also allocates EU fundings, and represents diplomatically the EU internationally.

The European Commission is composed of **one Commissioner from each EU member state, including a President and several Vice-Presidents**, all appointed for a five-year term. When a law is proposed by the Commission, the **European Parliament** and the **Council of the European Union** then debate, amends and adopt new EU laws proposed.

3. The European Parliament represents EU citizens.

The European Parliament is composed of **directly elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)** from each EU Member State, with seats allocated roughly in proportion to population.

4. The Council of the European Union represents **the governments** of EU Member States.

The Council of the European Union is composed of **national government ministers from each EU Member State**, with the relevant minister attending depending on the policy area being discussed.

There are European elections **every five years** where EU citizens elect Members of the European Parliament – the next one will be in 2029. After the Parliament and the Council of the European Union decide on EU laws, the Commission works to ensure EU law is properly applied in the member states.

Additional EU institutions include the European Central Bank in Frankfurt (Germany) and the Court of Justice of the European Union, which is based in Luxembourg. The Court gives judgments (decisions) on a wide range of issues affecting the lives of EU citizens and it interprets EU law to make sure that EU law is applied in the same way in all the member states.

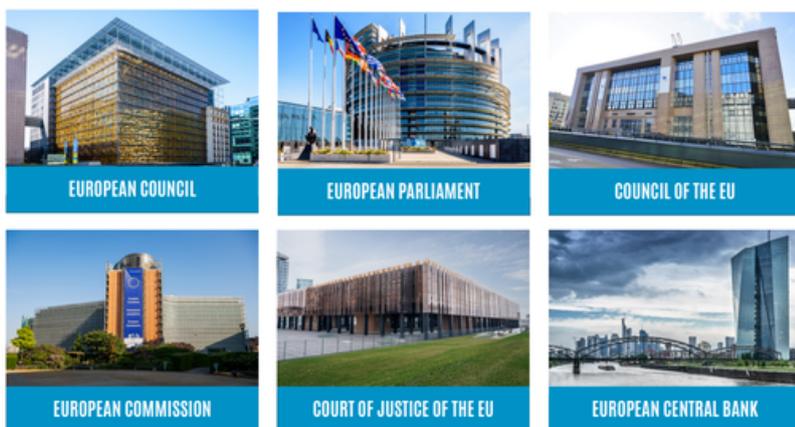


Image source: [Reconnect Platform](#), funded by a European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation grant

Exercise 4.1 - Your turn: How well do you know EU institutions?

1. Can you put these steps in the good chronological order?

- A. European Parliament & Council debate and amend
- B. European Commission proposes a law
- C. EU law is adopted
- D. European Commission ensures the law is applied

2. Can you connect these institutions with what they do?

Institutions:

- European Parliament
- European Council
- European Commission
- European Council
- Council of the European Union

Actions:

- Proposes new EU laws, enforces them, manages budget
- Represents EU citizens
- Represents national governments
- Sets the EU's overall political direction
- Ensures EU laws are applied

5. How do EU decisions affect national laws?

When the EU adopts legislation, it does not always automatically change the rules in each country. Instead, in some cases each Member State must translate EU rules into national law so that they can be applied locally. This process ensures that EU policies, on topics from environmental protection to workers' rights, digital regulations, or consumer safety, become part of everyday life across Europe.

There are different types of EU legislation, and each is absorbed into national legal systems in different ways:

Regulations: they are binding in all Member States as soon as they come into force. They apply directly and do not need to be implemented into national law.

For example:

- An EU regulation on the recognition of qualifications ensures that students and young professionals moving between countries have their diplomas and skills recognized automatically.
- A regulation on data sharing for cross-border crime prevention must be followed by all countries in the same way.
- Regulations on equal pay standards apply directly, requiring national authorities to enforce them in workplaces.

Directives: they set goals that all Member States must achieve but leave flexibility in how to reach them. Each country must adopt national laws to meet the requirements of a directive within a set deadline.

For example:

- An EU directive might aim to increase access to digital learning for all young people. Each country can decide whether to update school curricula, provide devices, or train teachers.
- A directive could set common standards for asylum procedures, which countries implement according to their own legal systems.
- Directives on combating gender-based violence require countries to adapt their criminal laws and support services.

Decisions: they are binding, but they usually apply to specific Member States, companies, or individuals rather than all countries. For example, the EU can issue a decision ordering a company to stop unfair competition practices. National authorities must enforce it, and it becomes part of national law for those affected.

For example:

- The EU might issue a decision funding a particular youth mobility program in certain countries. National authorities implement and monitor the program locally.
- A decision could order a specific law enforcement agency to share information about a criminal network.

Recommendations and Opinions: these are not legally binding but guide Member States on best practices or policy directions. Countries may choose to follow them fully, partially, or not at all, depending on their own laws and priorities. Even though they are not mandatory, they often influence national policies and can lead to new legislation.

For example:

- The EU may issue recommendations on fostering intercultural learning in schools, encouraging national authorities to develop new programs.
- Recommendations could suggest ways to integrate refugees into local communities.
- Opinions may guide countries on improving women's participation in decision-making roles.

Exercise 5.1 - Group discussion - Reflect together

- Why do you think some EU legislation is applied the same way in every country, while other is adapted differently in each country?
- Do you think it is important that countries adapt EU legislation to their national legal systems? Why or why not?
- If the EU suggested a new rule to make digital learning better in all schools, how do you think your country would apply it?
- If you could suggest a new EU law to improve your community or school, what would it be and how would your country implement it?

Bottom-up influence: from national to EU law

The process is not only top-down (i.e., from the EU to Member States). Sometimes, a policy or law developed first in one EU country can inspire EU-wide legislation. For example, a successful national program on renewable energy or digital education can become a model for a directive or regulation at the EU level, which then spreads to all Member States. This two-way interaction ensures that EU rules reflect both shared European priorities and local realities.

This system allows the EU to create shared rules while respecting the diversity of national legal systems. Citizens, companies, and governments experience these rules every day, whether they are protecting the environment, ensuring fair working conditions, or regulating the digital world. This two-way interaction between EU and national laws shows that legislation is not just something “made far away” in Brussels. Laws and policies at the national level can also influence what happens at the EU level. For this reason, it is important to understand how your own country or local community creates and applies laws and how citizens can participate or influence the process. By learning this, you can see how local actions sometimes shape wider European rules.

6. How are these decisions affecting young people?

What are your rights under EU law as youth living in the EU?

All young people living in the EU (regardless of nationality) enjoy fundamental rights, including:

- Equal treatment and non-discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation
- Right to education and training, including access to compulsory education
- Freedom of expression, thought, religion, and assembly
- Right to privacy and data protection
- Right to protection of health, safety, and well-being, with special protection for minors
- Right to fair working conditions (for those who work), including limits on child labour
- Right to access justice and legal protection

Is there a distinction of rights between all youth living in the EU, depending on their nationality?

In addition to the common rights listed above, EU citizen youth have extra rights such as free movement, political participation, and EU citizenship rights, which do not fully apply to all youth living in the EU.

Free movement

- EU citizens have an automatic right to free movement and residence across all EU Member States. They can live, work, study, or retire in another EU country with minimal formalities and no need of a visa.

- All youth living in the EU but coming from a third country (called Third-country Nationals, TCNs) do not have free movement rights. Their right to live and work in the EU is limited to the specific member state that issued their residence permit or visa. Moving to another EU country usually requires a new visa or residence permit. That being said, long-term resident TCNs (generally after 5 years of legal residence) gain stronger rights, including limited mobility to other EU states, even if it remains more restricted than the free movement enjoyed by EU youth citizens.

Political participation

- EU citizens have full political rights in the EU: they can vote and stand as candidates in European Parliament elections and local/municipal elections in their country of residence, even if it is not their home country. A Hungarian citizen, for example, can stand as a candidate and vote in Spain if he or she lives there.
- TCNs generally cannot vote or stand in EU or national elections. Some EU countries allow TCNs to vote in local elections (such as Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, etc.), but this depends on national law or bilateral agreements, not EU law.

Take action into political life

- Young EU citizen can propose new laws to the European Commission: any EU citizen can call on the European Commission to propose new laws through the European Citizen's Initiative. Once support for an initiative has reached 1 million signatures, from citizens of at least 7 EU countries, the Commission will decide on what action to take. The [European Citizens' Initiative](#) is a unique way for citizens to help shape the EU directly. This mechanism, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, has proven to be a particularly powerful tool for direct democratic action, allowing youth movements to have a significant impact on EU law and policy.
- TCNs living in the EU cannot propose new EU laws through the European Citizens' Initiative. They can, however, submit petitions to the European Parliament or complaints to the European Commission, to address a personal need or raise an issue that is a matter of public interest. Additionally, complaints can be sent to the European Ombudsman about misconduct by an EU institution or body. When contacting the EU institutions directly, you are entitled to a reply in any of the EU's 24 official languages.

Exercise 6.1 - Your turn: EU Rights

Here are some examples of rights. For each one, indicate who holds the right: EU citizens only, third-country nationals only, both, or neither.

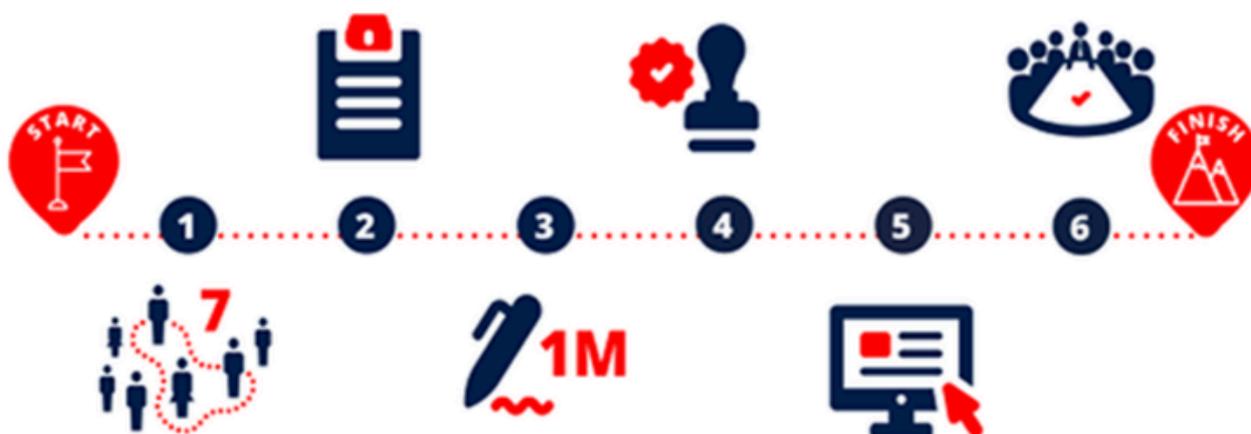
- Has the right to education and training
- Can move freely to live and work in any EU country without a visa
- Is protected against discrimination
- Has the right to apply for asylum in a EU country

- Right to vote in national elections of any EU Member State
- Can vote in European Parliament elections
- Can submit a petition to the European Parliament
- Can propose a law through the European Citizens' Initiative
- Has the right to privacy and data protection

The European Citizen's Initiative

The European Citizen's Initiative is a form of participatory democracy. It is a way for EU citizens to influence the shaping of laws and policies in the EU. All those who are old enough and eligible to vote in elections for the European Parliament can register an initiative (if it meets certain criteria).

Let's see the steps together:



1. **Find another six people from another six EU countries**, who are eligible to vote in European elections, to form a team with you: in total, it takes no more than 7 people from 7 EU countries to initiate an ECI.
2. **Define your objectives** and ask the European Commission to register the initiative.
3. After a positive decision, the initiative is **published on the ECI website**.
4. **Collect at least 1 million signatures** from at least seven EU countries within 12 months (online or on paper).
5. **Get the statements of support verified** by national authorities.
6. **Submit your initiative to the Commission.**
7. **Meeting with the Commission.**
8. **Public hearing at the European Parliament.**
9. **Response from the European Commission.**
10. **Follow-up by the Commission on proposed actions**, if applicable.

Now, let's see a concrete example: **have you ever seen this logo, and what it represents?**

**MY VOICE
MY CHOICE**

**WE COLLECTED 1,2 MILLION
SIGNATURES FOR SAFE AND
ACCESSIBLE ABORTION IN EUROPE**

Join our community, receive updates on the progress of our ECI, ways you can get involved, and all the beautiful things our community is doing.

JOIN



Image source: [My Voice, My Choice website](#).

Answer: this is [“My Voice My Choice”](#), a campaign for safe abortion and care across the EU, launched after an ECI.

Background: "My Voice, My Choice" is a major European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and feminist movement advocating for safe and accessible abortion across the European Union. The initiative calls on the European Commission to establish a voluntary EU-funded financial mechanism, to help Member States provide safe abortion care to individuals who cannot access it in their home countries. It specifically aims to support women in countries like Poland and Malta, where abortion is either severely restricted or criminalized, or address barriers in countries like Italy and Spain, where "conscientious objection" by doctors often limits its access.

Action taken: the movement went viral and collected over 1.2 million signatures across the EU, surpassing the 1-million-signature threshold required to trigger a formal response from EU institutions.

Success: Organizers presented their demands at a public hearing in the European Parliament early December 2025 and on December 17, 2025, the European Parliament officially adopted a resolution backing the initiative with 358 votes in favor. On February 26, 2026, the European Commission formally responded and confirmed that Member States can use the existing European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) to support access to safe and legal abortions.

Discussion question: *Think about a topic/issue you really care about, and you think need change. How would you collect 1 million signatures on this topic?*

7. How are your rights protected?

We can find some of the rights of EU citizens in **Chapter 5 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is the EU's main text protecting fundamental rights and freedoms. It sets out civil, political, economic, and social rights - such as dignity, equality, and justice - for everyone living in the EU, not only EU citizens. Since 2009, it has been legally binding, meaning EU institutions and Member States must respect it when they apply EU law. The governments of EU countries have to follow the over 50 Articles in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As detailed below, being a youth living in the EU, even without holding an EU citizenship, also offers a systematic set of rights (such as access to education, healthcare, protection, non-discrimination, etc.) and these rights are enshrined in the Charter.

We can also find some of the rights of EU citizens in the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)**. Treaties are agreements made by the EU member countries. EU citizen rights are also established in the so-called EU laws enacted by the European Parliament (regulations and directives), for instance on the protection of personal data, on protection from discrimination in employment, or on the right of non-EU citizens to reunite with their EU citizen family members.

Claims about the incorrect application of the Charter, the Treaties and of EU laws by governments and by the EU institutions can be brought before the Court of Justice of the EU.

Remember that all youth living in the EU, even without holding an EU citizenship, have access to a specific set of rights (such as access to education, healthcare, protection, non-discrimination, etc.) and all these rights are enshrined in the Charter and the TFEU, without distinction of nationalities.

Exercise 7.1 - Your turn: How are your rights protected?

1. Which text guarantees fundamental rights for all youth living in the EU, even without EU citizenship?

- A) National constitutions only
- B) EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- C) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- D) Schengen Borders Code

2. True or False: Only EU citizens are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

- A) True
- B) False

8. What are the competencies of the EU?

To get a clear understanding of how the EU and its institutions work, it is fundamental to understand its competencies, defined in the EU Treaties. The EU has 3 types of competencies: exclusive, shared or supportive.

1. **Exclusive competencies** mean that only the EU can legislate, and concerns international trade, competition rules, and monetary policy for the euro, as mentioned in the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Article 3.
2. **Shared competencies** mean that the Member States remain competent, as long as the EU has not intervened. Therefore, a Member State can no longer intervene once an EU legislation has entered into force, as mentioned in Article 4 of the TFEU, and it concerns the areas of energy, environment, transport and consumer protection.
3. **Other thematics such as education, tourism and sport are handled exclusively by Member-States**, and the sole role of the EU is to provide support and coordination or supplement the actions of the Member States: this is called supporting competencies.

Which stakeholders and agencies are involved within the EU institutions when we talk about EU youth?

EU institutions set the legal framework, EU agencies monitor and support implementation, and civil society and national authorities play a crucial role in applying youth rights on the ground, including for TCN youth.

EU agencies and bodies:

- **EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA):** monitors and advises on fundamental rights of all people in the EU, including TCN youth.
- **European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA):** supports Member States on asylum, including protection of young asylum seekers.
- **European Labour Authority (ELA):** protects labour rights of young workers, including legally resident TCNs.
- **EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency):** manages programmes like Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, open to some TCN youth.
- **European Ombudsman:** handles complaints about maladministration by EU institutions (open to everyone, not only EU citizens).

Key stakeholders:

- **Member State governments and public authorities:** implement EU law and provide services (education, healthcare, youth support).
- **Civil society organisations & NGOs:** represent youth, migrants, and refugees at EU level.
- **Social partners** (trade unions, employer organisations): involved in youth employment and labour rights.
- **Youth organisations and networks** (e.g. European Youth Forum): advocate for youth rights and inclusion.

Exercise 8.1 - Your turn: Role playing exercise

Fictional scenario: After an online harassment campaign that went viral with dramatic consequences, the EU country you live in decided, in a radical move, to block all access to mobile phones for people under 18 for two weeks, while the government works on a new law regulating access to phones and the protection of minors on social networks. It is not yet clear what this law will entail, but it seems obvious that several restrictions on minors' access to social networks will be implemented in the near future.

Many voices are rising against the government, condemning the decision as authoritarian, while others say they feel reassured by this initiative.

Imagine you are under 18 and suddenly cannot access your phone, which has been blocked. You are afraid your voice will not be heard on the matter - even though you are among those most directly affected by the upcoming measures - so you decide to join your friends at school and launch an action to make your voices heard at the EU level.

1. **Gather with your group** (one will be in favor of the restrictions against phone use and social networks, judged as “protective”, while the other group will strongly disagree with this measure, judged as “repressive” for individual liberties) and take time to discuss on your arguments to support or oppose the measure. (15')
2. Taking into consideration the instances and mechanisms we saw earlier, **tell us which institution can help you make your voice heard, and how.** Who will you reach out to/Who, at the EU level, has the power to propose a legislation? Which alternative mechanisms could you use to make your voice heard? (15')

Young participants are expected to quote the EU Commission/EU directives but can also mention alternative mechanisms such as the European Citizen Initiative, petitions, etc...

Team pro-restriction of social networks on minors' devices	Team against restriction of social network on minors' devices
Will reach out to:	Will reach out to:
Because it has the power to:	Because it has the power to:

After filling out all the requested information, present it to the rest of the group (10 min per group).

You raised your voice as a young citizen and made it heard at the EU level thanks to your thorough knowledge of the EU institutions and mechanisms, congrats!

Exercise 8.2 - Your turn: Youth Advocacy Campaigns

Can you recognize these campaigns? They were the result of young activists who were familiar with how EU institutions work and were able to bring about change by challenging them directly.

What does it inspire you? Now that you do understand and acknowledge better how the EU is working and the way you can do action at your own level, **do you feel that these kinds of actions, as presented above, are feasible?**



Image source: "I am an immigrant" poster Campaign by Movement Against Xenophobia

Example 1: "Right to Stay Campaign", to protect young migrants

Background: In 2018, many young migrants in the EU were facing deportation despite having lived in the EU for years. Young activists launched the [Right to Stay](#) campaign to fight against forced deportations and ensure that young migrants, particularly those who arrived as children, had the right to stay and build a future in Europe.

Action Taken: The campaign involved organizing protests, online petitions, and lobbying EU officials. In the UK, young migrants shared their personal stories, which helped humanize the issue and garner broad public support. It also included legal challenges to deportation orders in some EU Member States.

Success: The campaign successfully pressured several EU countries to halt deportations of young migrants and even helped in securing permanent residency for some of them. It also contributed to the wider public discourse on the rights of undocumented migrants in Europe.

Example 2: Sea Watch and the youth-led campaign “OpenthePorts”



Image source: <https://solidaritaetsnetzbern.ch/>

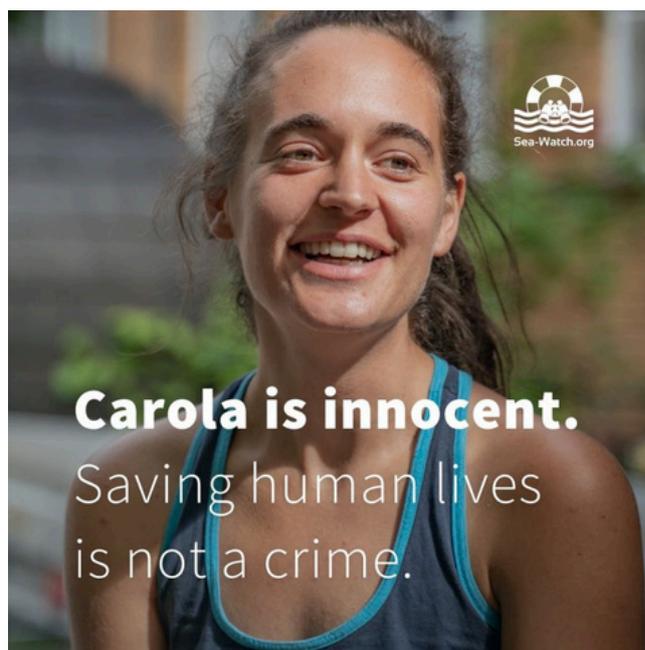


Image source: Sea-Watch e.V. via [linkedin](#), 2022.

Background: Sea Watch, a German NGO, is known for rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2019, it was blocked in Lampedusa, Italy, and her captain, Carola Rackete, was arrested. In reaction, many young activists across Europe joined in solidarity with Sea Watch to demand that EU Member States allow boats carrying rescued migrants to dock in EU ports.

Action Taken: Young citizens launched the #OpenThePorts campaign, which called for EU states to fulfill their obligations under international law and allow humanitarian ships to bring rescued migrants to safe ports. The campaign included petitions, social media activism, and even protests in front of EU institutions.

Success: This movement helped shine a spotlight on the EU's lack of solidarity and the [human rights violations](#) in the Mediterranean. Although there have been challenges, young people successfully pressured certain EU states (such as Spain and Italy) to allow migrants to disembark in their ports. The activism also led to public debates that influenced some EU members to soften their hardline positions on migration.

Example 3: The #StandUp4HumanRights Campaign: advocating for Refugee Rights

STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS

Image source: OHCHR, 2020

Background: In 2015, at a moment where important arrivals of refugees happened in all Europe, young people across the EU, including through networks like the European Youth Forum (YFJ), organized campaigns to raise awareness of the plight of refugees and demand greater support and more humane policies from EU institutions.

Action Taken: The **#StandUp4HumanRights** campaign, supported by youth organizations, highlighted the need for EU governments to uphold human rights, ensure safe passages, and provide asylum to refugees fleeing conflict zones.

Success: The EU responded to growing public pressure and youth-led activism by increasing the relocation quotas for refugees under the [EU Refugee Relocation Scheme](#) (though controversial and unevenly applied). Activists also helped mobilize public opinion against the rise of anti-migrant rhetoric, contributing to greater public awareness and advocacy for better asylum systems.

If you want to further delve into the topic of EU...

Some **civic education modules and interactive games on the EU:**

- [EU Learning Materials](#)
- [Learning Resources from the Youth Hub of the European Parliament](#)
- [RECONNECT Resources for Educators](#) related to the EU, rule of law, human rights and democracy
- [Educational Toolkit](#) from the European Citizens Initiative (ECI)
- [YouthPartEQUALITY Educational Toolkit](#) on Gender Equality and Inclusive Policy Engagement
- [EU Play Games Learning Corner](#)
- [Europa Quest interactive tool](#)

Module 1 and 2

Worksheet

This worksheet brings together all the exercises from Module 1 – Building an Advocacy Strategy and Module 2 – EU Decision-Making & Advocacy.

Through practical activities, discussions, and role-plays, you will explore what advocacy means, how to identify priorities, design strategies, and engage decision-makers. You will also learn how the European Union makes decisions, how these affect your daily life, and what rights you have under EU law.

Module 1

Exercise 2.1. Tick all the actions you think are advocacy.

- Sharing information online about an issue you care about
- Meeting a local official to ask for improvements
- Organising a community event to raise awareness
- Creating a petition to change a rule or decision
- Organising an event to raise money to go on an excursion
- Supporting a friend experiencing discrimination
- Sending a letter to a Ministry to describe a challenge and ask for a solution
- Voting in local or EU elections
- Going to the cinema with your friends
- Researching a problem and presenting solutions
- Wearing a T-shirt with a social message

What did you tick? Are any of the above actions not advocacy? Why? Did the actions you ticked raise awareness or seek positive change?

Exercise 2.2. What advocacy means to you.

Now think about your experience of something unfair, how it affected you or others and how you would like to change this and fill out this table:

Your experience of something unfair that affects many people (for example a stereotype, barrier, or unequal treatment)	How did it affect you or others?	Is this something you want to change? How?

Exercise 3.1. Advocacy Prioritization Matrix.

Rate the issues you care about, based on the criteria column. Give higher points of the criteria you feel are more fulfilled. The final score will give you an indication of which issues may be the best to tackle now (highest points) and those that may be best to leave for later or for someone else (lowest points).

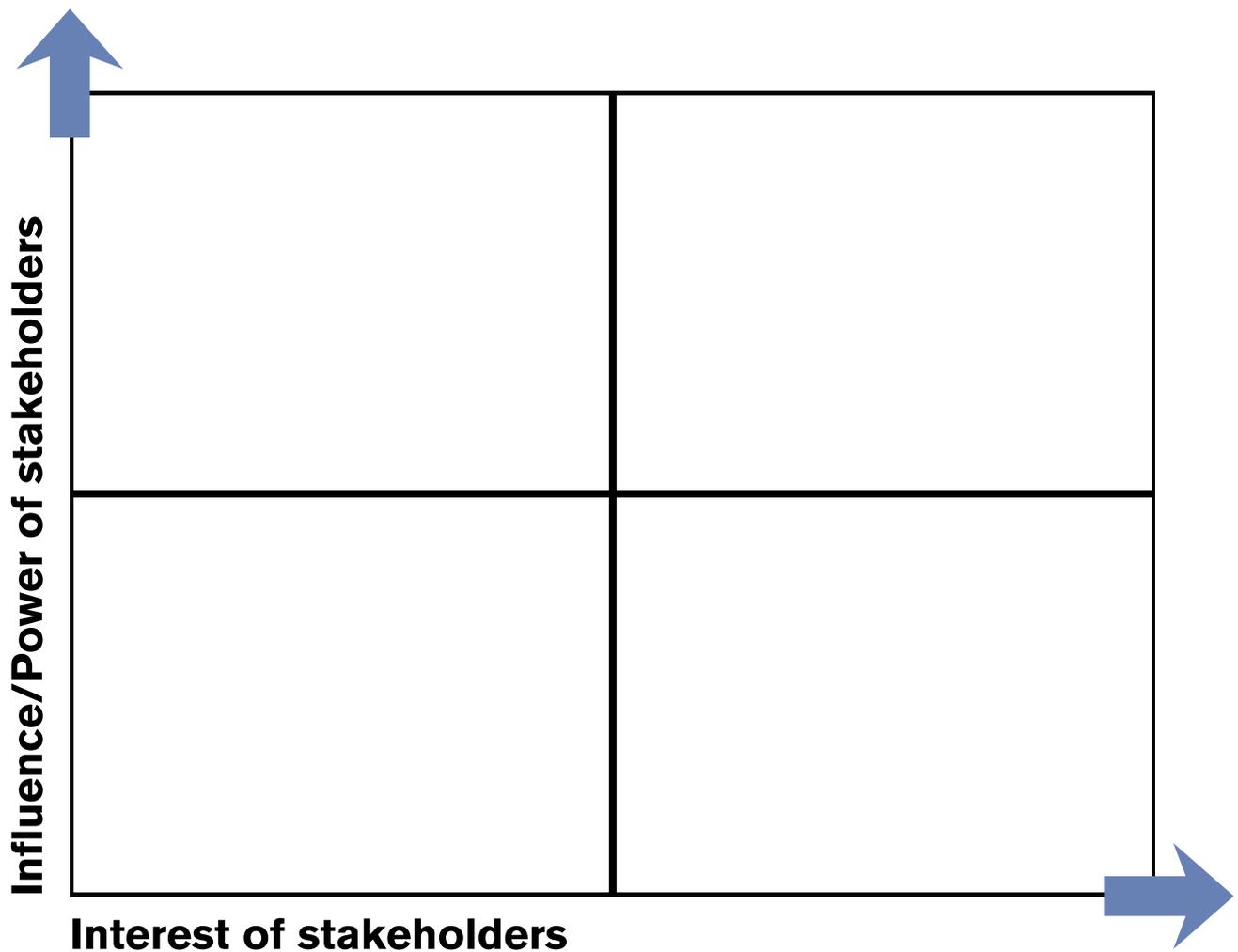
	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
CRITERIA	POINTS FROM 1 TO 5			
<p>Policy change needed is clear: It is clear what needs to change and who has the power to change it. You can explain the problem and the solution in a few simple sentences.</p>				
<p>Number of people that will be affected by this issue: Many people are affected by this issue, now or in the future. The impact goes beyond just one person. <i>Tip: Look for numbers or estimates from trusted sources, such as national statistics offices, local authorities, or EU data (e.g. Eurostat), to show how many people are affected.</i></p>				
<p>Level of effort required: This issue can be worked on with the time, money, and energy you realistically have. (Score higher if it requires less effort.)</p>				
<p>Potential for success: There is a real chance that your advocacy could lead to change. The goal feels possible, not just ideal. <i>Tip: potential for success means that there is a realistic chance that the advocacy can achieve change. It is based not only on belief, but on logic: the goal is specific, the decision-maker has the power to act, the demand is feasible, and there are allies or existing frameworks to build on. Broad ideals inspire, but concrete and targeted goals are more likely to succeed.</i></p>				

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
CRITERIA	POINTS FROM 1 TO 5			
<p>Level of public support for the issue: Many people already care about this issue or could easily support it if they understood it better.</p> <p>Tip: You can check opinion polls, surveys, or media coverage, or even run a simple poll yourself (online or in your community) to see how many people care about the issue.</p>				
<p>Level of support from people in charge: Some people who make decisions (like school leaders, local officials, or politicians) are already interested in this issue, open to change, or talking about it.</p>				
<p>Evidence that the issue is important: You have facts, data, stories, or personal experiences that show the issue is real and important.</p>				
<p>Importance to you or your group: This issue matters to you personally or reflects your values and priorities.</p>				
<p>Am I best placed to lead on this issue? You have lived experience, knowledge, access, or motivation that makes you a good person or group to work on this issue.</p>				
TOTAL POINTS				

Exercise 4.1. Build your power grid.

Take the issue of healthier food at your school cafeteria or any other example:

- **List all actors** connected to the issue (for example: students' representatives, teachers, parents, School's Principals, etc.)
- **Think of their influence:** Can they directly make the change? Can they block or delay it? Do others listen to them?
- **Rate their interest:** Will they strongly support your idea? Are they neutral or unaware? Might they oppose you?
- **Place each actor in the grid below:** This shows you who to engage with first, who to persuade, and who to monitor.



Place each actor in the grid above: this shows you who to engage with first, who to persuade, and who to monitor.

Exercise 5.1. Craft a SMART Advocacy Goal.

Example: Turning an idea into a SMART goal

Let's imagine that you want to advocate for free language courses for young migrants, so they can integrate better and access education, employment, and services.

Goal (not SMART yet):

"Free language courses for young migrants should be provided."

Let's transform it into a SMART advocacy goal, step by step:

SPECIFIC

Ask: What exactly do we want to change and who is responsible?

✓ Specific version:

"We want the municipality to offer free A1–B1 language courses to all young migrants aged 16–23."

MEASURABLE

Ask: How will we know when the goal is achieved? Add numbers or concrete indicators.

✓ Measurable version:

"...providing at least 50 course places per semester, with official enrolment data published publicly."

ACHIEVABLE

Ask: Is this realistic? Do we have evidence and allies? Can the municipality afford this? If the municipality already funds some programmes, expanding them is achievable.

✓ Achievable version:

"...by reallocating part of the existing youth integration budget and partnering with local NGOs."

RELEVANT

Ask: Does this goal actually solve the problem? Does it match our priorities? Language is a barrier to access education, employment, and participation → yes, highly relevant.

✓ Include a relevance statement:

"...because language is a key barrier preventing young migrants from accessing school, work, and opportunities."

TIME-BOUND

Ask: By when do we want this to happen? Set a realistic deadline.

✓ Time-bound version:

"...with the programme launched by September 2028."

Final SMART goal that is also inclusive: “By September 2028, the municipality will offer free A1–B1 language courses to all migrants aged 16–23, providing at least 50 course places per semester with publicly published enrolment data. Courses will be inclusive, with flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, safe group options, accessible to people with disabilities and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment. This will be achieved by reallocating part of the youth integration budget and partnering with local NGOs, because language is a key barrier to education, work, and participation.”

Now, take the issue from Section 3 and make it a SMART advocacy goal, ensuring inclusiveness.

Issue identified as priority	SMART advocacy goal

Exercise 6.1. Develop your advocacy message.

Your turn: Write a 150–200 word message for healthy food at the school cafeteria.

Use this structure:

- **Sentence 1–2:** Describe the problem.
- **Sentence 3–4:** Explain your solution.
- **Sentence 5–6:** Explain why the decision maker should care (social, economic, fairness, human rights).

Optional: Create a headline for your message (max 10 words) or a final punchline.

Tip: Read it aloud to check if it's clear and under 30 seconds. Check with a friend.

Advocacy message example:

“Young migrants want to study, work, and contribute to their new communities but many cannot even begin, because they do not have access to language classes.

Without language skills, they face delays in education, struggle to find jobs, and feel isolated in everyday life.

We are asking local authorities to create and fund 12-month, free language courses for migrants aged 16–23, ensuring they are accessible to all. This is a practical, affordable change that would make a real difference.

Investing in language learning accelerates integration, improves young people’s chances of employment, and reduces long-term public costs. It helps build confident, connected communities and gives young refugees the tools they need to participate fully in society.

Free language courses are not just support. They are the foundation for inclusion.”

While the SMART goal is detailed and technical, the advocacy message simplifies it, focuses on human impact, and uses persuasive language to influence decision-makers.

Exercise 7.1. Pick your advocacy tool.

Tick one tool you think fits each situation. Then try to explain why it works.

1. You want to show that many people support your idea.

- Policy paper
- Short letter
- Press release
- Petition
- Private meeting
- Newspaper article

2. You can't meet the decision-maker yet but want to reach them.

- Letter
- Protest
- Long report

3. You want to raise awareness fast.

- Social media post
- Academic study
- Email to friends

Exercise 8.1. Create your advocacy tool.

Scenario: You want your municipality to provide free language courses for young migrants.

STEP 1 — Choose Your Tool

Tick your choice:

- Short letter to the municipality
- Social media post
- Meeting request
- Short policy briefing

STEP 2 — Draft Your Tool

STEP 3 — Self-Review

If you chose a letter:

- Did you say the problem in one clear sentence?
- Did you explain why it matters?
- Did you ask for one concrete change?
- Is it under one page?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

If you chose a social media post:

- Is your first line catchy?
- Is the message short?
- Did you include your key ask?
- Did you add a simple call-to-action?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

If you chose a meeting request:

- Did you introduce yourself?
- Did you explain why a meeting matters?
- Did you propose 2–3 dates?

If you chose a policy briefing:

- Did you include a short summary?
- Did you explain the problem + evidence?
- Did you list 1–3 simple recommendations?
- Are gender-specific experiences, roles, and barriers considered and addressed?
- Have you removed all language and assumptions, that could reinforce stereotypes or discrimination?

Exercise 8.2. Advocacy Role-Play

You meet a decision maker you recognize in the elevator. What do you say to him/her about your issue?

Step 1 – Group Preparation

Groups prepare a 2-minute “elevator pitch” answering the following, based on their theme: (example at the end)

- *What problem do we want to solve?*
- *What change do we want?*
- *Why does this matter for young people?*
- *How do gender or discrimination appear in this issue?*

Tips:

- Keep it under 2 minutes
- Focus on clarity, not detail
- Make one strong inclusion point
- End with a clear ask

Step 2 – Expectations Before the Presentation

- Each group has 2 minutes maximum
- Decision-makers will have 1–2 minutes to respond

- They may ask up to 2 questions
- Advocates respond briefly (no long explanations)

Step 3 – Role-Play Interaction Phase

Assign the roles:

1. **Advocates:** Youth participants
2. **Decision-makers:**
3. **Migration group:** Mayor / Ministry officer / MEP assistant
4. **Youth/Education/Sport group:** School principal / Youth officer / DG EAC representative
5. **Rights group:** Justice adviser / Equality body / Parliament assistant

Decision-makers should ask realistic questions, raise budget/feasibility concerns, respond respectfully but critically

For each group:

1. Assigned person/advocate delivers pitch (2 min max)
 - Decision-maker responds: can clarify or raise critical questions and/or concerns (budget, feasibility, political risk)
2. Advocate responds concisely (max 1 minute total response)

Step 4 – Immediate Mini-Reflection (Before Full Debrief)

After each group finishes, answer this quick question:

- “Was the ask clear?” OR
- “What was one strong argument?”

Keep this very short (30–60 seconds).

Do not start full analysis yet! Then move to the next group.

Step 5 – Full Debrief

Now move into structured reflection.

Suggested questions:

- *What arguments worked best and why?*
- *Which pitches were the clearest?*
- *How did decision-makers react differently?*
- *Did inclusion strengthen the argument?*
- *What made some pitches more persuasive?*
- *What would you change next time?*

Why full debrief matters: Without clear interaction instructions, role-play can feel chaotic, some participants dominate and debrief becomes unfocused. This structure ensures equal participation, realistic challenge and productive reflection.

Sample: 2-Minute Elevator Pitch (Model Example)

Young migrants in our city want to study, work, and contribute, but many cannot even begin because they lack access to language classes. Without language skills, they face delays in education, struggle to find employment, and feel excluded from everyday life.

We are asking the municipality to create and fund free A1–B1 language courses for migrants aged 16–23, with at least 50 places per semester.

These courses must be inclusive, offering flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, accessible classrooms for youth with disabilities, and safe, LGBTQI+-friendly learning environments.

This is a practical and affordable investment that reduces long-term public costs and accelerates integration.

Language is not a luxury — it is the foundation for participation, opportunity, and belonging.

Exercise 9.1. Build your advocacy strategy.

How to build your strategy (step by step)

1. Start with your issue & SMART goal

This anchors everything.

Example: “Free A1–B1 language courses for young migrants aged 16–23 by September 2026.”

2. Identify your primary targets

These are the people who can make the change happen.

Example: Municipal councillor for youth and education; budget committee.

Before naming specific people, it is important to decide at which level your advocacy should focus (local, national, or EU), based on where decisions about your issue are made.

3. Identify your allies

Friends, youth groups, teachers, NGOs, migrant associations, student unions. They add visibility, credibility, and energy. Allies can include young people who do not experience the issue themselves but want to support those who do. For example, non-migrant students supporting language access, or boys supporting safer spaces for girls. Allyship strengthens advocacy and helps counter stereotypes.

4. Choose your tools

Match your tools to your target and your capacity (from Section 7).

Letters → meetings → social media → petitions → public events → coalitions.

5. Plan the timing

Not everything can happen at once.

Start private → escalate later if needed → respond to political moments (budget vote, elections, debates). Find opportunities, such as relevant events, international days etc

6. Decide the message for each audience

Different people respond to different things; for example, politicians may be more receptive to arguments around budgets and public benefit, youth to fairness, inclusion and solidarity, and teachers to education outcomes, though this is not an exhaustive or fixed list, just indicative examples.

7. Set indicators for success

These can range from agreements to meetings, politicians sharing your message, influencers taking up your cause, to achieving your goal of language classes for young migrants. For guidance on how to track and measure these indicators, see Section 10: Measuring Impact, which explains practical ways to assess whether your advocacy is making a difference over time.

8. Think about risks and opportunities

Risks: Sometimes advocacy can create problems instead of solutions. There can be backlash, political tension, or people may misunderstand the message. For example, some groups might feel left out if the message does not reflect their real experiences, such as LGBTQIA+ youth, migrant girls, or young people with disabilities.

Opportunities: There are also good moments to speak up and make change. These can include elections, local campaigns, EU initiatives, or news stories. For example, you can use these moments to show how your idea helps different groups and reduces inequalities.

Step 1 — Fill in each section of the strategy table below.

Use your answers from previous exercises. E.g. the example of the healthy food at the school cafeteria or the language classes for young migrants. If you're unsure, make your best guess.

Step 2 — Check your plan:

- Does your goal match your tools?
- Do the people you identified actually have influence?
- Is your message clear and consistent?
- Is your timeline realistic?
- Do you have at least one ally?
- If yes: you've just created your advocacy strategy.

Below is a sample advocacy strategy on access to free language courses for young migrants.

<p>SMART goal</p>	<p>By September 2028, the municipality will offer free A1–B1 language courses to all migrants aged 16–23, providing at least 50 course places per semester with publicly published enrolment data. Courses will be inclusive, with flexible schedules for young women with care responsibilities, safe group options, accessibility for people with disabilities, and an LGBTQIA+-friendly environment.</p>
<p>Targets / decision makers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal councillor responsible for youth and education • Head of the municipal education department • Municipal budget committee
<p>Allies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NGOs working with migrants and refugees • Youth organisations and student unions • Teachers and adult education providers • Migrant associations and community groups • Parents' associations and social workers • Non-migrant youth supporting inclusion and education
<p>Tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter/email to decision-makers • Meeting request and short briefing (policy paper) • Social media campaign to raise awareness • Petition or open letter supported by allies • Public event or panel discussion on youth inclusion
<p>Timing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with letters and meeting requests (private advocacy) • Follow up with social media and petition if no response • Link campaign to key moments: municipal budget discussions, elections, International Migrants Day, back-to-school period • Escalate to public events if needed
<p>Key messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For politicians: Investing in language courses is cost-effective and reduces long-term public spending. • For youth: Language is the foundation for education, work, and belonging. • For educators: Language access improves learning outcomes and participation. • For the public: Free language courses help build inclusive, connected communities.

<p>Indicators of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from at least one key decision-maker • Meeting held with municipal authorities • Public statement or commitment from the municipality • Inclusion of language courses in the municipal budget • Launch of the programme with enrolment data published
<p>Risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political backlash or negative media framing • Misunderstanding of the issue (e.g. “special treatment”) • Some groups feeling excluded (e.g. migrant girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities) • Limited resources or competing political priorities
<p>Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local or national elections • Budget planning cycles • Media coverage on migration or education • EU or national funding programmes on integration • Public debates on youth unemployment or social cohesion
<p>Inclusivity check: How does your strategy ensure that different groups are included, safe, and represented?</p>	<p>This strategy ensures inclusivity by actively involving diverse migrant groups, including young women, LGBTQIA+ youth, and young people with disabilities, both in messaging and in solution design. Allies include organisations representing different communities, and all advocacy tools explicitly promote safe, accessible, and welcoming learning environments for all young migrants.</p>

Use the template in the next page to develop your advocacy strategy!



SMART goal	
Targets / decision makers	
Allies	
Tools	
Timing	
Key messages	



<p>Indicators of success</p>	
<p>Risks</p>	
<p>Opportunities</p>	
<p>Inclusivity check: How does your strategy ensure that different groups are included, safe, and represented?</p>	

Exercise 10.1. Assess your future impact.

Using the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) table below imagine you are planning your advocacy action. e.g., the example of the healthy food at the school cafeteria or the language classes for young migrants, or any other example. If you are unsure, make your best guess.

Fill in the first two columns of the table above:

- **Target Outputs** — what you plan to produce
- **Target Engagement** — how people might react
- **Target Outcomes** — what change you hope to see

Then answer:

- Which one do you think will be hardest to achieve, and why?
- Did your actions reflect the needs of different groups (e.g. Gender, migration background, LGBTQIA+ youth)? How will you improve this?

Indicators	Targets (What you hoped to achieve)	Results (What actually happened)
Outputs		
Letters sent		
Meetings held		
Videos posted		
Petitions launched		
Policy papers delivered		
Engagement		
Number of people reached on social media		
Number of petition signatures		

Decision-makers replied		
Engagement		
Number of people reached on social media		
Number of petition signatures		
Decision-makers replied		
Allies joined your campaign		
Media shared your content		
Outcomes		
Decision-makers agreed to meet		
Proposal included in committee agendas		
Pilot programmes launched		
Budget allocated		
Youth groups formed a coalition		

Module 2

Exercise 2.1. Tick the countries that were initial founders of the EU

- France
- Spain
- Germany
- Italy
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- Netherlands
- Greece
- Luxembourg
- Austria

Exercise 3.1. Values

Select the options that represent the official core values of the European Union.

- Freedom
- Kindness
- Democracy
- Honesty
- Equality
- Rule of law
- Respect for human rights

Exercise 3.2. Group discussion - Values in action

Answer the following questions:

1. Where do you see one or more of the EU values not being respected? (At school, online, in your city, in the news...)

2. What is one small thing you could do about it? (Talk about it, share information, ask questions, support a group.)

Exercise 4.1. How well do you know EU institutions?

1. Can you put these steps in the good chronological order?

- A. European Parliament & Council debate and amend
- B. European Commission proposes a law
- C. EU law is adopted
- D. European Commission ensures the law is applied

Answer: _____

2. Can you connect these institutions with what they do?

Institutions:

- European Parliament
- European Council
- European Commission
- European Council
- Council of the European Union

Actions:

- Proposes new EU laws, enforces them, manages budget
- Represents EU citizens
- Represents national governments
- Sets the EU's overall political direction
- Ensures EU laws are applied

Exercise 5.1. Group discussion - Reflect together

- Why do you think some EU legislation is applied the same way in every country, while other is adapted differently in each country?
- Do you think it's important that countries adapt EU legislation to their national legal systems? Why or why not?
- If the EU suggested a new rule to make digital learning better in all schools, how do you think your country would apply it?
- If you could suggest a new EU law to improve your community or school, what would it be and how would your country implement it?

Exercise 6.1. EU Rights

Here are some examples of rights. For each one, indicate who holds the right: EU citizens only, third-country nationals only, both, or neither.

- Has the right to education and training
- Can move freely to live and work in any EU country without a visa
- Is protected against discrimination
- Has the right to apply for asylum in a EU country
- Right to vote in national elections of any EU Member State
- Can vote in European Parliament elections
- Can submit a petition to the European Parliament
- Can propose a law through the European Citizens' Initiative
- Has the right to privacy and data protection

Exercise 7.1. How are your rights protected?

Answer the questions:

1. Which text guarantees fundamental rights for all youth living in the EU, even without EU citizenship?

- A) National constitutions only
- B) EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- C) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- D) Schengen Borders Code

2. True or False: Only EU citizens are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

- A) True
- B) False

Exercise 8.1. Role playing exercise

Advice: Divide the group in two groups, one pro and one against.

Fictional scenario: After an online harassment campaign that went viral with dramatic consequences, the EU country you live in decided, in a radical move, to block all access to mobile phones for people under 18 for two weeks, while the government works on a new law regulating access to phones and the protection of minors on social networks. It is not yet clear what this law will entail, but it seems obvious that several restrictions on minors' access to social networks will be implemented in the near future.

Many voices are rising against the government, condemning the decision as authoritarian, while others say they feel reassured by this initiative.

Imagine you are under 18 and suddenly cannot access your phone, which has been blocked. You are afraid your voice will not be heard on the matter - even though you are among those most directly affected by the upcoming measures - so you decide to join your friends at school and launch an action to make your voices heard at the EU level.

1. **Gather with your group** (one will be in favor of the restrictions against phone use and social networks, judged as “protective”, while the other group will strongly disagree with this measure, judged as “repressive” for individual liberties) and take time to discuss on your arguments to support or oppose the measure. (15')
2. Taking into consideration the instances and mechanisms we saw earlier, **tell us which institution can help you make your voice heard, and how.** Who will you reach out to/Who, at the EU level, has the power to propose a legislation? Which alternative mechanisms could you use to make your voice heard? (15')

Young participants are expected to quote the EU Commission/EU directives but can also mention alternative mechanisms such as the European Citizen Initiative, petitions, etc...

Team pro-restriction of social networks on minor's devices	Team against restriction of social network on minor's devices
<p>Will reach out to:</p>	<p>Will reach out to:</p>
<p>Because it has the power to:</p>	<p>Because it has the power to:</p>

Exercise 8.2. Youth Advocacy Campaigns

Can you recognize these campaigns? They were the result of young activists who were familiar with how EU institutions work and were able to bring about change by challenging them directly.

What does it inspire you? Now that you do understand and acknowledge better how the EU is working and the way you can do action at your own level, do you feel that these kinds of actions, as presented above, are feasible? Discussion, 10'

MY VOICE
MY CHOICE

WE COLLECTED 1,2 MILLION
SIGNATURES FOR SAFE AND
ACCESSIBLE ABORTION IN EUROPE

Join our community, receive updates on the progress of our ECI, ways you can get involved, and all the beautiful things our community is doing.

JOIN



Image source: [My Voice, My Choice website](#).

Answer: this is "[My Voice My Choice](#)", a campaign for safe abortion and care across the EU, launched after an ECI

Background: "My Voice, My Choice" is a major European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and feminist movement advocating for safe and accessible abortion across the European Union. The initiative calls on the European Commission to establish a voluntary EU-funded financial mechanism, to help Member States provide safe abortion care to individuals who cannot access it in their home countries. It specifically aims to support women in countries like Poland and Malta, where abortion is either severely restricted or criminalized, or address barriers in countries like Italy and Spain, where "conscientious objection" by doctors often limits it access.

Action taken: the movement went viral and collected over 1.2 million signatures across the EU, surpassing the 1-million-signature threshold required to trigger a formal response from EU institutions.

Success: Organizers presented their demands at a public hearing in the European Parliament early December 2025 and on December 17, 2025, the European Parliament officially adopted a resolution backing the initiative with 358 votes in favor. On February 26, 2026, the European Commission formally responded and confirmed that Member States can use the existing European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) to support access to safe and legal abortions.

Discussion question: *Think about a topic/issue you really care about, and you think need change. How would you collect 1 million signatures on this topic?*



Image source: "I am an immigrant" poster Campaign by Movement Against Xenophobia

Answer: this is "Right to Stay Campaign", to protect young migrants

Background: In 2018, many young migrants in the EU were facing deportation despite having lived in the EU for years. Young activists launched the [Right to Stay](#) campaign to fight against forced deportations and ensure that young migrants, particularly those who arrived as children, had the right to stay and build a future in Europe.

Action Taken: The campaign involved organizing protests, online petitions, and lobbying EU officials. In the UK, Young migrants shared their personal stories, which helped humanize the issue and garner broad public support. It also included legal challenges to deportation orders in some EU Member States.

Success: The campaign successfully pressured several EU countries to halt deportations of young migrants and even helped in securing permanent residency for some of them. It also contributed to the wider public discourse on the rights of undocumented migrants in Europe.



Image source: <https://solidaritaetsnetzbern.ch/>



Image source: Sea-Watch e.V. via [linkedin](#), 2022.

Answer: this is the Sea Watch and the youth-led campaign “OpenthePorts”

Background: Sea Watch, a German NGO, is known for rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2019, it was blocked in Lampedusa, Italy, and her captain, Carola Rackete, was arrested. In reaction, many young activists across Europe joined in solidarity with Sea Watch to demand that EU Member States allow boats carrying rescued migrants to dock in EU ports.

Action Taken: Young citizens launched the #OpenThePorts campaign, which called for EU states to fulfill their obligations under international law and allow humanitarian ships to bring rescued migrants to safe ports. The campaign included petitions, social media activism, and even protests in front of EU institutions.

Success: This movement helped shine a spotlight on the EU's lack of solidarity and the [human rights violations](#) in the Mediterranean. Although there have been challenges, young people successfully pressured certain EU states (such as Spain and Italy) to allow migrants to disembark in their ports. The activism also led to public debates that influenced some EU members to soften their hardline positions on migration.

STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS

Image source: OHCHR, 2020

Answer: this is the #StandUp4HumanRights Campaign: advocating for Refugee Rights

Background: in 2015, at a moment where important arrivals of refugees happened in all Europe, young people across the EU, including through networks like the European Youth Forum (YFJ), organized campaigns to raise awareness of the plight of refugees and demand greater support and more humane policies from EU institutions.

Action Taken: The #StandUp4HumanRights campaign, supported by youth organizations, highlighted the need for EU governments to uphold human rights, ensure safe passages, and provide asylum to refugees fleeing conflict zones.

Success: The EU responded to growing public pressure and youth-led activism by increasing the relocation quotas for refugees under the [EU Refugee Relocation Scheme](#) (though controversial and unevenly applied). Activists also helped mobilize public opinion against the rise of anti-migrant rhetoric, contributing to greater public awareness and advocacy for better asylum systems.

Module 1 and 2

Solutions

Worksheet

Module 1

Solutions Worksheet

Exercise 7.1. Pick your advocacy tool.

Tick one tool you think fits each situation. Then try to explain why it works.

1. You want to show that many people support your idea.

- Policy paper Short letter Press release Petition Private meeting Newspaper article

2. You can't meet the decision-maker yet but want to reach them.

- Letter Protest Long report

3. You want to raise awareness fast.

- Social media post Academic study Email to friends

Answer key and explanations

1. You want to show that many people support your idea.

- Petition: A petition collects signatures from many people, showing decision-makers that your idea has wide support.

2. You can't meet the decision-maker yet but want to reach them.

- Letter: A letter allows you to communicate directly with decision-makers, even if you can't meet them in person.

3. You want to raise awareness fast.

- Social media post: Social media spreads your message quickly to many people, including the public and decision-makers.

Module 2

Solutions Worksheet

Exercise 2.1. Tick the countries that were initial founders of the EU

- France ✓
- Spain ✗
- Germany ✓
- Italy ✓
- United Kingdom ✗
- Belgium ✓
- Netherlands ✓
- Greece ✗
- Luxembourg ✓

Exercise 3.1. Values

- Freedom ✓
- Kindness
- Democracy ✓
- Honesty
- Equality ✓
- Rule of law ✓
- Human rights ✓
- Respect

Exercise 4.1. How well do you know EU institutions?

1. Can you put these steps in the good chronological order?

- A. European Parliament & Council debate and amend
- B. European Commission proposes a law
- C. EU law is adopted
- D. European Commission ensures the law is applied

(Answer is: B → A → C → D)

2. Can you connect these institutions with what they do?

Institutions: European Parliament / European Council / European Commission / European Council / Council of the European Union

Actions:

- Proposes new EU laws, *enforces them, manages budget*
- Represents EU citizens
- Represents national governments
- Sets the EU's overall political direction
- Ensures EU laws are applied

Answer is:

- **European Commission** → **Proposes laws, enforces them, manages budget**
- **European Parliament** → **Represents EU citizens**
- **Council of the European Union** → **Represents national governments**
- **European Council** → **Sets overall direction and priorities**
- **European Commission** → **Ensures EU law is applied**

Exercise 6.1. EU Rights

- Has the right to education and training → Both
- Can move freely to live and work in any EU country without a visa → EU citizen only
- Is protected against discrimination → Both
- Has the right to apply for asylum in a EU country -> TCN only (EU citizen cannot apply for asylum in another EU Member State because they are presumed to already enjoy protection from an EU country.)
- Right to vote in national elections of any EU Member State → Neither
- Can vote in European Parliament elections → EU citizen only
- Can submit a petition to the European Parliament → Both
- Can propose a law through the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) → EU citizen only
- Has the right to privacy and data protection → Both
-

Exercise 7.1. How are your rights protected?

1. Which text guarantees fundamental rights for all youth living in the EU, even without EU citizenship?

- A) National constitutions only
- B) EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- C) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- D) Schengen Borders Code

2. True or False: Only EU citizens are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

False

Facilitation Guidelines

These guidelines, tailored to the ParticipACTION project, help trainers deliver the curriculum through engaging activities, discussions, and reflections, supporting participants to build advocacy skills and confidence.

Introduction

Goal: Help young people understand what advocacy is and create an advocacy plan linked to an issue under one of the three topics selected in WP2:

1. Migration
2. Education, Culture, Youth & Sport
3. Values & Rights, Rule of Law and Security

Approach: Fun, participatory, accessible, inclusive, and based on real experiences.

Cross-cutting themes: Gender equality, anti-discrimination, inclusion of LGBTQI+, migrant, refugee and minority youth.

Draft agenda for a three-hour session

Introduction	Introduction to the sessions, attendance sheet signature, short icebreaker	10 min.
Module 1 (approx. 95 min)		
2. What is advocacy	Introduction to the module, Wordcloud, ex. 2.1 and 2.2 - can be skipped if participants attended <i>Coming across Challenge (CAC)</i>	10 min.
3. Identify advocacy priorities	Division in groups and selection of the issue to work on through advocacy prioritization matrix (ex. 3.1)	25 min.
4. Understanding power & decision-makers	Identify relevant stakeholders through power grid (ex.4.1)	15 min.
5. Setting advocacy goals	Use the SMART framework to set advocacy goals	10 min.
6. Developing an advocacy message	Following ex. 6.1 write a 150-200 message to be included in the strategy	15 min.
9. Design an advocacy strategy	Compile the previous exercises into a coherent advocacy strategy + presentation of the strategy if time allows	15 min.

Break (5 min)		
Module 2 (approx. 70 min)		
2. What is the EU and how was it created	Introduction to the module and EU history and foundation	5 min.
3. Core values of EU	Introduction to EU core values and group discussion if time allows	5 min.
4. How are decisions made at EU level	Introduction to EU decision-making and test of knowledge with exercises (ex. 4.1)	10 min.
5. How EU decisions affect national law	Introduction to different types of EU legislation and presentation of national decision-making process	15 min.
6. How EU decisions affect young people	Introduction to rights of youth living in the EU and of the European Citizens' Initiative	15 min.
7. How are your rights protected	Introduction to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)	5 min.
8. What are the competencies of the EU	Division of competences between national law and EU, role playing exercise (ex.8.1) and showcasing of youth advocacy campaigns	15 min.
Monitoring & Evaluation	Participants fill out the post-session survey and the EU survey on Justice, Rights and Values	10 min.

Please note that this agenda is designed for a session of 3 hours which is the minimum required for the implementation of the advocacy curriculum.

Due to time limits, some activities and exercises may need to be shortened or omitted; the key objective is for participants to complete the advocacy strategies (which they can also finalize at home and send to you if needed). If you have more time available, you can extend the session to include all exercises and additional breaks.

Introduction to the session - welcome & safe space

Introduction to the session and what we will learn today

“Today we’re going to kick things off by talking about what advocacy actually is. We’ll look at how to choose a priority issue, how to understand who the stakeholders are, how to build a plan, and then we’ll zoom out and see how the EU decision-making process works and why it matters for advocacy.”

By the end of this activity, the main result will be three advocacy strategies, one for each theme of the project, that you will create while working in groups.

For those of you who joined the Social and Emotional Asset Development (SEAD) activity (WP6) and the Coming Across Challenge (WP7), you’ve spent time exploring your own identity, your assets and competences and personal plans, and what you want to change. Up until now the focus has been on you as individuals.

Today we’re moving into a new phase of the project, where the focus becomes more collective. You’ll be working together in groups on a shared topic. What you learned about yourselves in the previous activities is still valuable, so bring those insights with you, because they will help you contribute to the group and shape the advocacy strategy.”

Attendance Sheet and Registration Forms

At the start of the session, while welcoming participants and introducing the activity, facilitators should ensure that **all attendees sign the attendance sheet and that registration forms are completed by participants attending ParticipACTION activities for the first time.**

Facilitator role

Facilitators are not lecturers but rather guides and enablers, as well as providers of structure and clarity, guardians of safe, respectful space, and role models for ethical, inclusive advocacy.

Approach and learning principles

- **Experiential learning:** learning by doing through exercises and real-life examples
- **Youth-centred:** participants' experiences are the starting point
- **Practical and action-oriented:** focus on realistic advocacy actions
- **Inclusive and intersectional:** attention to how different identities experience issues differently, in particular:
 1. **Promote non-discrimination within the group:** Consider the different intersections of traits that make up the youth you are going to be working with and how each of these may reference different power levels, risks, and impact individual members' sense of safety and comfort in the group.
 2. **Promote inclusiveness:** Consider how to create a group that is inclusive of all youth and provides a sense of safety for everyone involved especially those who have less power in society and/or are members of minority groups who face discrimination, stigma, or oppression by majority groups.
 3. **Foster an environment of respect for every participant.** Make clear and monitor that statements disregarding or disrespecting any other person's cultural or religious beliefs, background, education level, disability, gender, or sexual orientation, etc. is not acceptable in the group.

Group safety & inclusion

Before starting:

- Agree on group rules (respect, confidentiality, right to pass)
- Encourage use of inclusive language
- Be attentive to power dynamics within the group (gender, confidence, language skills)
- Ensure examples and discussions do not reinforce stereotypes

Icebreaker: “Values in a Circle”

Objective: Break the ice, encourage brief introductions, and start a conversation about shared values (or other meaningful aspects, depending on what suits the group, e.g., personal strengths, things that matter to them).

Duration: 10–12 minutes

Facilitator Instructions:

1. **Forming the Circle:** Ask participants to form a circle. They can be standing or seated, depending on what works best for the group.
2. **Setting the Tone and Respect:** Before starting, clarify the group expectations:

“In this exercise, there are no right or wrong answers. We respect everyone's contributions and will not judge each other's gestures or guesses. We're here to have fun, learn about each other, and practice observing and listening.” It's helpful if the facilitators go first, modeling the activity and showing that it's safe to participate.

Explaining the Activity:

“Each person will share something important to them. Decide beforehand what you want to share—this could be a value, a personal strength, or anything else meaningful. Instead of saying it in words at first, express it with a gesture. The rest of the group will try to guess what it is before you explain it in words.”

Facilitating the Turns:

- a. Go around the circle, giving each participant a turn until everyone has shared.
- b. You can use a ball, object, or another token to indicate whose turn it is to help structure the flow.

Debrief (2–3 minutes):

1. “Which values or qualities surprised you?”
2. “Which ones do you see as relevant to advocacy or EU values?”

Facilitator Role:

- Guide the turns, ensuring everyone has a chance to participate without rushing.
- Encourage careful observation, curiosity, and non-judgmental responses.
- Connect the shared items (values, strengths, or other) to the project context or broader themes such as EU values.

Module 1

1. Introduction

The first module of the curriculum will teach young people what advocacy is, how we identify advocacy priorities, how we design an advocacy strategy, what tools can be used, who can help them achieve their advocacy goals, how decision-makers are identified and contacted, how to promote a policy paper; political lobbying role-play etc.

2. What is advocacy?

Learning objectives

- Understand advocacy as action to influence decision-makers
- Recognize everyday advocacy actions
- Reflect on ethical advocacy

A good way to start is by creating a word cloud together so participants can share what advocacy means to them. You can do it on a whiteboard, or online with tools like [Slido](#) or [Mentimeter](#).

Key messages for facilitators

Advocacy is about change, not just awareness. Change in (for example):

- Laws
 - Policies
 - Practices (implementation of policies and laws)
 - Behaviours (knowledge, attitudes)
 - Power relations and structures
 - Civil space and capacity
 - Transparency and accountability
 - People's quality of life and human rights
- Anyone can do advocacy, even without experience.
 - You can advocate for yourself (self-advocacy) or for others.
 - Advocacy can be small or large, formal or informal
 - Ethical advocacy means amplifying voices, not speaking over others

Facilitation tips

- Validate different understandings of advocacy that participants may suggest
- Challenge the idea that advocacy is only for experts or politicians
- Highlight informal advocacy actions with which participants can relate (possibly mentioning examples of informal advocacy included in the upcoming exercise)

Exercise 2.1. Tick all the actions you think are advocacy

This exercise should be done individually.

Suggest participants to take into consideration three guiding questions to assess each action:

1. Is there an intention to change something?
2. Is there a target (decision-maker, institution, public opinion)?
3. Does it aim influence or accountability?

After participants have completed the exercise, the facilitator asks people to share their replies with the rest of the group.

Prompt questions:

- Which actions did you all agree on?
- Which actions caused disagreement?
- Why did you include or exclude certain actions?

Exercise 2.2. What advocacy means to you

Participants share one moment where they spoke up (in school, home, online, community). Facilitators may use examples on the three project themes reported in the advocacy module and prompt some discussion around them.

The exercise is intended for individual work and may be skipped if time constraints apply and the group has previously undertaken the CAC (WP7). In such instances, reference the earlier activity and invite them to review their topic once more, informing them that they will subsequently transition from it to engage in group work on a collective topic.

3. Identifying advocacy priorities

Learning objectives

- Learn how to choose realistic and impactful advocacy issues
- Understand bottom-up vs. top-down priorities
- Apply criteria to prioritize issues

Key messages for facilitators

- Focus is essential for effective advocacy
- Not every issue can be tackled at once
- First-hand data and lived experience are valuable evidence

Facilitation tips

- Encourage participants to think about who is affected
- Ask: Who is missing from the conversation?
- Support participants who feel their issue is "too small"

Introduction to the three themes of the projection and division into three thematic groups

The facilitator re-introduces the three project themes: Migration; Youth, Education, Culture, Sport; and Values & Rights, Rule of Law, Security. The facilitator may use the following information to re-introduce the themes:

• Migration

A forward-looking and comprehensive European migration policy based on solidarity is a key objective for the European Union. Immigration policy aims to establish a balanced approach to addressing both regular and irregular immigration.

EU competences:

- Asylum & Protection: developing a common European asylum system (CEAS) and managing the rights of beneficiaries of international protection.
- Border Management: setting rules for managing the EU external borders.
- Regular migration: setting rules for conditions of entry and residence for third-country nationals (e.g., family members, students, workers).
- Integration: the EU can provide incentives and support for measures taken by Member States to promote the integration of third-country nationals residing legally in the EU; however, EU law does not provide for any harmonization of Member States' laws and regulations.

Objectives

- Establishing a balanced approach to immigration: the EU aims to establish a balanced approach to managing migration. Proper management of migration flows involves ensuring fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, strengthening measures to combat irregular immigration, including trafficking and smuggling, and promoting greater cooperation with third countries in all areas. The EU aims to develop a uniform level of rights and obligations for legal immigrants, comparable to that of EU citizens.
- Principle of solidarity: under the Lisbon Treaty, immigration policies are governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility between Member States, including in financial terms.

• Youth, Education, Culture, Sport

The EU's role in education, youth, culture, and sport is to provide a framework for cooperation between Member States for the exchange of information and experience in areas of common interest.

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meets three or four times a year. The Council mainly adopts incentive measures and recommendations for Member States. However, initiatives approved by the Council, such as the Erasmus+ or Creative Europe programs, can have a very direct impact on EU citizens.

EU actions in the field of education, youth, culture, and sport are designed to preserve Europe's cultural heritage, support cultural and creative industries, encourage student and teacher mobility, and promote physical activity and social inclusion through sport.

- **Values & Rights, Rule of Law, Security**

The European Union is founded on six fundamental values that underpin our society:

- Respect for human dignity
- Freedom (movement, work, expression)
- Democracy (right to vote)
- Equality (equal rights for all EU citizens)
- Rule of law
- Respect for human rights, including those of minorities

The EU values are shared by all Member States and ensure that pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity, non-discrimination, and equality prevail in society.

The rule of law is one of the founding values of the EU. This principle corresponds to the obligation for governments to refrain from making arbitrary decisions and the guarantee for citizens to be able to challenge their actions before an independent court.

The facilitator splits participants into three subgroups, one per theme (mixing profiles, experiences, backgrounds). Let participants know that they will stay in these groups for next sessions as well.

Facilitators can either:

1. allow young people to form groups based on their interests and experience (while ensuring a balanced mix of genders and backgrounds) or
2. they can create the groups in advance by clustering participants around similar topics from the CAC (WP7) for those who took part. For instance, participants who focused on gender equality could be placed in the “Values & Rights, Rule of Law and Security” group.

Advocacy priority selection

Each group discusses:

- What problems exist in this theme?
- How are young people affected?
- Which genders or social groups are affected?
- Is there a group that is disproportionately affected by the topic/theme?
- Is the proposed solution going to impact everyone the same way? (if they are proposing a solution or otherwise how can the problem be tackled in a way to bring equitable solutions for all those affected by it)

- Are there assumptions or generalizations being made? Are these stereotypes reinforcing inequality or exclusion? (or not allowing a group to be correctly represented in the topic being discussed)
- Which problem do we want to work on today?

Each group chooses ONE issue under their theme to turn into an advocacy plan.

Regarding topic selection, the facilitator may:

- Develop guiding prompts for each theme informed by the selections made during the CAC, allowing participants to identify overlaps and determine a common issue; or
- Ask the participants to work on the recommendations produced by ParticipACTION youth under WP5 in the [Joint Assessment Report](#) and select an issue from that list.

Exercise 3.1. Advocacy prioritization matrix

The selection of the topic must be done in the three subgroups and to select their issue participants can use the Table of exercise 3.1. at page 2 of the Worksheet.

4. Understanding power & decision-makers

Learning objectives

- Understand what power means in an advocacy context
- Identify who the decision-makers are for a specific issue
- Distinguish between decision-makers, allies, and opponents
- Understand the difference between influence and interest
- Use the Influence–Interest Grid to prioritize actors
- Recognize how power dynamics affect inclusion and participation

Key messages for facilitators

- Advocacy is effective only when it targets the people or institutions with real decision-making power.
- Power is not only formal authority; it can also be informal influence.
- Every issue has multiple actors involved, not just one decision-maker.
- Allies can amplify voices and open doors, even if they lack formal power.
- Some actors benefit from the status quo and may resist change.
- Power mapping is both a strategic tool and an inclusion tool.
- Understanding who is heard and who is silenced is part of ethical advocacy.

Facilitation tips

- Encourage participants to think beyond “the most visible person” and identify systems and institutions.
- Help clarify the difference between influence (power to affect decisions) and interest (level of concern).
- Normalize uncertainty: power maps are estimates, not exact science.

- Prompt reflection on inclusion by asking who may feel unable or unsafe to speak up.
- Use concrete, everyday examples (e.g. school cafeteria) to make power dynamics understandable.
- Ensure quieter participants have space to contribute by using small groups or structured turn-taking.

The facilitator introduces the exercise by mentioning that power mapping will help participants identify the main targets of their advocacy, i.e. the actors they want to influence in order to bring about the change they are seeking. Participants should analyze not just who has some kind of power or influence over the issue but also who supports them, who is neutral about the issue, and who actively opposes them.

If they analyze the different actors from a stakeholder point of view, the actors fall into four main categories (bearing in mind there will always be overlap between these categories).

- **Targets:** decision-makers; the people who have the power to make the necessary changes; people with influence over decision-makers
- **Constituents:** the people you work with and for; those who are expected to benefit from your advocacy; those who support your organisation's mission and work
- **Allies:** those who share your aims and can help to influence or put pressure on the decision-makers and may be prepared to work with you
- **Opponents:** those who are opposed to what you want to achieve and will try to block the changes you want to see.

Exercise 4.1. Build your power grid

The exercise is intended to be completed in groups.

The facilitator guides participants through the exercise suggesting to:

1. Have a brainstorm about all the actors that have some kind of power to bring about the change you are seeking
2. Write each actor on a different post-it note
3. Take a large piece of paper or posters and stick the most powerful actors in the centre of the paper and then work outwards so that you stick the least powerful actors around the edges of the paper.

Stakeholders aligned to the three project themes:

- **Migration group:** Ministries of Interior /Migration/ Equal Opportunities, local authorities, DG HOME, MPs and MEPs working on migration.
- **Youth/Education/Sport group:** Ministries of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport, school leaders, local youth offices, DG EAC (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture), MEPs on CULT committee (European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education).
- **Values/Rights/Rule of Law group:** Ministries of Justice, Equality, Education; judicial bodies; national human rights institutions; DG JUST; LIBE committee MEPs.

5. Setting advocacy goals

Learning objectives

- Translate ideas into clear advocacy goals
- Apply the SMART framework
- Integrate inclusivity into goal-setting

Key messages for facilitators

- A clear goal makes advocacy measurable and credible
- SMART does not mean small or unambitious
- Inclusive goals strengthen advocacy

Please note that participants who have taken part in the CAC (WP7) will have already been introduced to SMART Goals and should therefore be familiar with the concept. Nonetheless, a short recap is recommended.

A SMART advocacy goal is:

- **Specific:** Clear, concrete, and easy to understand.
- **Measurable:** You can track progress or know when it's achieved.
- **Achievable:** Realistic and possible within your resources and context.
- **Relevant:** It fits your overall advocacy priorities and actually helps solve the problem.
- **Time-bound:** There is a clear deadline.

Exercise 5.1. Craft a SMART advocacy goal

The facilitator explains the example included in Module 1 and invites participants to complete the exercise based on the issue previously selected on one of the three project themes.

The exercise is intended to be completed in groups.

Check the exercise for each group once it is finished and give relevant guidance to the groups if their goal is not SMART.

6. Developing your advocacy message

Learning objectives

- Clearly describe a problem in simple language
- Formulate a concrete and realistic solution
- Explain why decision-makers should care
- Integrate inclusivity and different lived experiences into their message
- Deliver a message that can be understood in under 30 seconds

Key messages for facilitators

The facilitator can introduce the topic and exercise 6.1 by saying “Advocacy messages are not academic essays. They are short, clear, and focused on change. Your goal is not to say everything, but to say the right things.”

The facilitator should write these three questions visibly, on a flipchart or on a PPT slide:

1. **What is the problem?**
2. **What change do you want?**
3. **Why does it matter – and to whom?**

Stress that **all three are necessary**. In fact, many messages fail because they:

- describe the problem but no solution, or
- ask for change without explaining why it matters.

Facilitation tips

The facilitator should emphasize:

- Clarity over complexity
- Solutions over complaints
- Respectful, non-aggressive tone

Exercise 6.1. Develop your advocacy message.

The exercise is intended to be completed in groups. Each group should write a 150–200 word message for the issue previously selected on one of the three themes.

Please note that sections 7, 8 and 10 of the Module 1 of the advocacy curriculum should be implemented as part of WP10 in the ParticipACTION project.

7. Choosing advocacy tools

(to be potentially completed during WP10)

Back in plenary, trainers elicit from participants examples of advocacy actions to create a toolkit. How do we raise our issue to each of the circles of the previous exercise? Eg:

- Talking to school staff or local authorities
- Posting videos or messages on social media about the theme
- Writing a letter or email to a decision-maker (e.g., MEP, municipality)
- Creating events or campaigns in school/community
- Collecting stories or testimonies (migration, discrimination, school issues)
- Joining youth structures (student councils, youth associations, youth media)

Reminder: Tools must be safe, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and free of harmful stereotypes.

Learning objectives

- Understand what an advocacy tool is
- Identify different types of advocacy tools
- Analyse which tool fits their specific context
- Assess their capacity, access, and timing before choosing a tool
- Develop a simple and realistic advocacy strategy

Key messages for facilitators

The facilitator can introduce the topic by saying: “Good ideas alone do not create change. The way you deliver your message matters just as much as the message itself. Choosing the right tool increases your chances of being heard. An advocacy tool is a method used to influence decisions, raise awareness, or promote change on an issue.

Core considerations:

When choosing an advocacy tool, ask:

- Do we have access to the decision-maker?
- How much time do we have?
- How urgent is the issue?
- What capacity and resources do we have?
- What risks are involved?
- Who are our allies?
- What tool will best influence our audience?

Stress that advocacy is strategic. Many efforts fail because groups:

- Choose tools that exceed their capacity
- Use public pressure too early
- Do not consider political timing
- Focus on visibility instead of impact

Most advocates follow an escalation strategy:

1. Start with private, constructive engagement (meeting request, formal letter)
2. Increase visibility if the issue remains unresolved
3. Move toward public statements, campaigns, or partnerships if needed

Facilitation tips

The facilitator should emphasize:

- Strategy over spontaneity
- Realistic planning over ambition
- Careful consideration of risks
- Collaboration when possible

Reminder: Tools must be safe, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and free of harmful stereotypes.

Exercise 7.1. Pick your advocacy tool.

The exercise can be completed individually or in small groups.

Participants should tick one tool they think fits each situation and briefly explain why it works.

After completing the exercise, the facilitator can ask:

- Why did you choose this tool?
- What makes it effective in this situation?
- What limitations might it have?

Remind participants that choosing the right advocacy tool means balancing capacity, urgency, access, and impact to create a strategy that is realistic and adaptable.

8. Creating your advocacy tool (to be potentially completed during WP10)

Learning objectives

- Understand the purpose of different advocacy tools
- Learn simple step-by-step guidance to create common advocacy tools
- Adapt tone and format depending on the tool
- Integrate inclusivity and different lived experiences into advocacy tools
- Produce a clear and practical advocacy product

Key messages for facilitators

The facilitator can introduce the topic and Exercise 8.1 by saying:

“Choosing the right tool is only the first step. Now you need to create it. A strong advocacy tool is clear, respectful, and focused on change.”

Explain that each tool has a different purpose, tone, and level of effort.

Remind participants:

- Your goal is to communicate clearly, respectfully, and persuasively.
- Start small and build up.
- Use language you are comfortable with, authentic messages are powerful.

Facilitators should highlight the fact that the policy paper will be the subject of an ad hoc curriculum of ParticipACTION (WP9 and WP11) and also linking the short video to the one created under the CAC tool (WP7).

Facilitation tips

The facilitator should emphasize:

- Clarity over long explanations
- Concrete requests over general complaints
- Short and focused content
- Encourage participants to think about:
 - Who is the audience?
 - What action do I want from them?
 - Is my request realistic and specific?
- Remind participants to consider inclusivity: if an issue affects different groups differently (for example young women, migrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth), this should be reflected clearly and respectfully in the tool.

Exercise 8.1. Create your advocacy tool.

The exercise can be completed individually or in small groups.

Exercise 8.2. Advocacy Role-play.

Back in the same groups, each group prepares a 2-minute ‘elevator’ pitch:

- What problem do we want to solve?

- What change do we want?
- Why does this matter for young people?
- How do gender or discrimination appear in this issue?

Role-play setup in plenary

- Advocates = youth participants
- Decision-makers = other participants acting as:
 - Migration group: local mayor, ministry officer, MEP assistant
 - Youth/Education/Sport group: school principal, youth officer, DG EAC representative
 - Rights/Rule of Law group: justice ministry adviser, equality body, parliament committee assistant

Debrief:

- What worked well?
- Did we challenge stereotypes?
- Was our message clear and respectful?
- Did the message benefit everyone equitably?
- Was the message gender-sensitive?

9. Designing your advocacy strategy

Learning objectives

- Understand what an advocacy strategy is and why it matters
- Combine goals, targets, messages, and tools into one coherent plan
- Identify primary decision-makers and relevant allies
- Choose appropriate tools and timing based on capacity and context
- Set realistic indicators to measure progress and impact Anticipate risks and identify opportunities
- Reflect on inclusivity and representation within their strategy

Key messages for facilitators

- An advocacy strategy is a roadmap, not a rigid plan. Even small or local advocacy actions benefit from structure.
- Strategy helps advocacy stay focused, realistic, and credible.
- Decision-makers respond better to consistent and well-prepared advocacy.
- Not all actions need to happen at once; sequencing matters.
- Different audiences require different messages.
- Inclusive strategies are stronger and more sustainable.

Facilitation tips

- Emphasise that strategies do not need to be long or complex
- Encourage participants to use their previous exercises instead of starting from scratch.
- Help participants prioritise primary targets rather than listing too many actors.
- Prompt realism by asking: “Is this doable with your time and resources?”
- Support participants in aligning tools with goals (e.g. meetings for policy change, social media for awareness).
- Encourage flexibility and adaptation if context or opportunities change.
- Ask reflective questions about inclusion, such as who might be excluded or face barriers.
- Normalise uncertainty and imperfection; strategies can evolve over time.

Exercise 9.1 - Build your advocacy strategy

Each thematic group completes a simple Advocacy Plan, answering 11 short questions of a ready-made template:

- **Our theme:** (Migration / Education & Sport / Rights & Rule of Law)
- **Our issue:** What problem do we want to change? Who is affected?
- **Our SMART goal:** What small change do we want by 2028?
- **Targets and decision-makers for this theme:** Who decides?
- **Allies & helpers:** Who can help us?
- **Our tools:** List 2–3 simple actions (letters, meetings, videos, events)*
- **Timing:** When will we do each action?
- **Our key messages:** What is the key idea we want to communicate?
- **Indicators of success:** How will we measure success?
- **Risks and Opportunities:** Why it matters and which are the risks and opportunities for its success.
- **Inclusion check:** How are different people/genders/groups affected by it differently? Who is most affected and why? How do we ensure our plan is inclusive, gender-equal, and represents all backgrounds? Are the voices of those impacted most by the problem effectively incorporated?

Please note that advocacy strategies in ParticipACTION should directly related to the themes identified in WP2 and in line with the recommendations that came out of the transnational workshop in WP4 and 5) based on the issues youth previously selected.

*Sections 7, 8 and 10 of the Module 1 should be implemented within WP10. Thus facilitators should encourage participants to leave the column of advocacy actions and tools blank for the time being.

Sharing Plans

Each group presents their advocacy plan or shares it as a doc due to time constraints.

Trainer highlights:

- The importance of (self) advocacy
- How allies amplify marginalized voices
- How the three final advocacy plans will feed into the project's next steps

10. Measuring your impact

(to be potentially completed during WP10)

Learning objectives

- Understand why impact measurement matters in advocacy
- Differentiate between outputs, engagement, outcomes, and learning
- Identify simple indicators to track progress
- Reflect on successes and areas for improvement
- Strengthen future advocacy strategies through learning

Key messages for facilitators

The facilitator can introduce the topic by saying: “Advocacy does not end when you send a letter or publish a post. To grow as advocates, we need to reflect on what worked, what changed, and what we can improve.”

Explain that impact assessment helps groups:

- Stay on track
- Learn from their actions
- Demonstrate credibility
- Improve their strategy
- Keep allies motivated
- Show decision-makers they are organised and serious

Stress that impact can be big or small, and both matter. Remind participants that progress is not only policy change. It can also be visibility, new partnerships, or learning.

Facilitation tips

The facilitator should emphasize:

- Simple tracking methods
- Encourage participants not to measure everything, but to measure what is realistic and useful.
- Explain that impact measurement should be ongoing, not only at the end of a campaign.

Exercise 10.1. Assess your future impact

This exercise can be completed individually or in groups.

Using the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) table introduced earlier, make youth imagine they are planning their advocacy action. The goal is to plan and reflect, not be perfect.

The facilitator should ask:

- What outputs did you produce?
- What engagement did you observe?
- What outcomes (if any) resulted?
- What did you learn?

Encourage participants to be honest and specific.

Module 2

1. Introduction

This module aims to teach young people how decisions are made in the EU, how these decisions affect them and what their rights are, under EU law.

2. What is the European Union (EU) and how was the EU created?

Learning objectives

- Understand the basic structure of the European Union and its key institutions
- Describe how and why the EU was created and identify the six founding countries
- Explain, in simple terms, how EU decisions are made and why they matter

Key messages for facilitators

- The EU began as a peace and economic cooperation project after the Second World War.
- The original community started with six founding countries and expanded over time.
- The EU evolved step-by-step, and its changing names reflect deeper integration.
- The Maastricht Treaty formally established the EU and introduced the Euro.
- The Lisbon Treaty further strengthened EU institutions and decision-making powers.
- The EU currently has 27 Member States and continues to negotiate with candidate countries; The United Kingdom is the first and so far only country to leave the EU.

Facilitation tips

- Briefly ask participants what they already know about the EU to surface assumptions: “When you think of the European Union, what comes to mind?”
- Use a simple timeline or map to support understanding of enlargement and founding members.

Exercise 2.1 - Your turn: tick the countries that were initial founders of the EU

Let participants work individually first, then discuss in pairs before debriefing if time allows. After the exercise, ask participants why they think those six countries began cooperation.

3. The core values of the European Union

Learning objectives

- Understand that the EU is founded on shared core values
- Identify the official EU values in Article 2 of the Treaty on EU
- Identify real examples where EU values are challenged today
- Reflect on how advocacy can help defend values

Key messages for facilitators

- The EU is not only an economic or political project — it is also a community of values.
- EU core values include human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights.
- These values are written into Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union.
- Member States commit to respect these values when joining the EU.
- The EU can act when Member States move away from shared values.

Facilitation tips

- Emphasize that values are not symbolic: they guide laws, rights, and responsibilities.
- Keep political discussion focused on values and mechanisms, not party opinions.
- Reinforce that small advocacy actions can contribute to defending values.

Exercise 3.1. Values

Let participants work individually first, then discuss in pairs before debriefing if time allows, or Read the list of values aloud to the group and ask participants to identify which ones are official EU core values by raising their hand when the value is mentioned.

Exercise 3.2. Group discussion - Values in action

Encourage concrete examples (“at school,” “online,” “local news”) rather than abstract geopolitics.

Ask follow-ups:

- “Who is affected?”
- “Who has the power to change it?”
- “What small action could raise awareness?”

Reinforce that small actions count (asking questions, speaking up, sharing info, supporting groups).

4. How are decisions made at the EU level?

Learning objectives

- Identify the four main EU governing bodies
- Understand the roles of the European Council, Commission, Parliament and Council of the EU
- Describe the standard law-making procedure in the EU
- Recognize the role of European elections in representation
- Understand the function of additional institutions like the ECB and Court of Justice

Key messages for facilitators

- Law-making typically follows: Commission proposes → Parliament & Council amend → law adopted → Commission ensures application.

Facilitation tips

- Use a timeline to explain legislative steps (propose → debate → adopt → apply).

Highlight that EU citizens vote in European elections every five years, shaping representation.

Emphasize they can vote for MEPs from age 18 (or younger in some countries), and influence EU law in this way.

Exercise 4.1. How well do you know EU institutions?

Correct answers:

1. **Chronological order:** B → A → C → D (Commission proposes → Parliament/Council debate → law adopted → Commission ensures application)

2. **Matching:**

- a. European Commission: Proposes laws, enforces, manages budget
- b. European Parliament: Represents EU citizens
- c. Council of the EU: Represents national governments
- d. European Council: Sets the EU's overall political direction
- e. European Commission: (also) ensures EU laws are applied

5. How do EU decisions affect national laws?

Learning objectives

- Understand why EU laws are sometimes applied directly and sometimes adapted nationally
- Identify regulations, directives, decisions, and recommendations/opinions
- Distinguish between direct application and national implementation
- Explore how national lawmaking works and how citizens can participate

Key messages for facilitators

- EU legislation does not always apply the same way in every country.
- Regulations apply directly and identically in all Member States.
- Directives set goals but allow countries flexibility in how to achieve them.
- Decisions are binding on specific recipients (countries, companies, or individuals).
- Recommendations and opinions are non-binding but influence policy directions.
- Understanding national lawmaking shows where participation and advocacy are possible.

It is important that each partner adapts this section with national and local decision-making process. The following questions can be used as guidelines and first they can also spur discussions among participants in the group.

National/local decision-making process (to be adapted by each partner):

1. Who makes the laws?

- In your country, which institution or organ is responsible for creating laws? (For example, Parliament, Congress, National Assembly...)
- Are there different bodies for different types of laws?

2. Who can propose a law?

- Can only Members or Parliament or Ministers propose a new law?
- Can citizens or organizations propose new laws? Are there citizen initiatives, petitions, or referenda?

3. How does a proposed law become official?

- What steps does a law go through before it enters into force? (e.g., discussion in Parliament, committee review, voting...)
- Who has the power to approve or reject the law?

4. Public participation and consultation

- Can citizens give opinions or feedback before a law is adopted?
- Are there public hearings, debates, or consultations?

Facilitation tips

- Encourage examples from daily life (education, environment, digital rights, workers' rights).
- Use Exercise 5.1 to spark discussion about uniform vs. flexible approaches.
- Focus on participation: highlight opportunities for citizens to influence laws.

6. How are these decisions affecting young people?

Learning objectives

- Identify fundamental rights shared by all youth in the EU
- Compare rights of EU citizens and TCNs
- Understand how youth can influence EU law and policy
- Analyse a real example of youth action at EU level (My Voice My Choice)

Key messages for facilitators

- All youth living in the EU enjoy core rights (education, non-discrimination, data protection, etc.)
- Free movement + political participation are EU citizenship rights, not universal rights

EU citizens can:

- move freely in the EU – vote in EP and local elections in their country of residence – launch a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

TCNs cannot vote in EU or national elections and have restricted mobility, but can:

- petition the European Parliament – submit complaints to the European Commission – contact the European Ombudsman

The ECI is a major tool for **participatory democracy** “My Voice My Choice” is a successful example of youth-driven EU political influence

Facilitation tips

- Use everyday examples (travel, elections, education, work), highlighting differences between EU and TCN youth and also possible gender differences.
- Present the ECI process step-by-step to show feasibility

Exercise 6.1. EU Rights

1. Encourage **small group reasoning** rather than guessing.
2. Ask follow-ups such as:

“Why might the EU limit some rights only to its own citizens?”

“How could TCN youth make their voices heard if they cannot vote?”

How the ECI works

1. Highlight the ECI as a unique democratic tool at EU level.
2. Emphasise the steps and the effort behind collecting signatures.
3. Use the My Voice My Choice example to show concrete youth impact and promote reflection also around their advocacy strategy drafted in the earlier module, for example:
“How would you collect 1 million signatures?”

7. How are your rights protected?

Learning objectives

- Identify the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights as the main rights-protecting text
- Understand that rights apply to all youth living in the EU
- Know that Treaties and EU laws also protect rights

Key messages for facilitators

- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights protects civil, political, social, and economic rights
- The Charter protects everyone in the EU, not only EU citizens
- Legally binding on EU institutions + Member States when applying EU law
- The TFEU also provides rights (e.g., non-discrimination, citizenship rights)
- Claims for violations can go to the Court of Justice of the EU

Facilitation tips

- Start with a discussion on “where rights come from”
- Clarify difference between Charter, Treaties, and national constitutions
- Use Exercise 7.1 as a quick check of understanding

Exercise 7.1. How are your rights protected?

1. Which text guarantees fundamental rights for all youth living in the EU, even without EU citizenship?

- A) National constitutions only
- B) EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- C) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- D) Schengen Borders Code

1. **True or False:** Only EU citizens are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
False ✗

8. What are the competencies of the EU?

Learning objectives

- Distinguish between exclusive, shared, and supporting competencies
- Recognize which EU bodies and agencies are relevant to youth issues
- Apply this understanding to a fictional advocacy scenario

Key messages for facilitators

- The EU acts only within powers granted by Member States
- Exclusive competence = only EU legislates (e.g. trade, competition, euro monetary policy)
- Shared competence = EU + Member States, but Member State action stops after EU acts (e.g. transport, environment, consumer protection)
- Supporting competence = states lead, EU only assists (e.g. education, sport, tourism)
- Advocacy tools exist for young people (e.g. ECI, petitions, Ombudsman, campaigns)

Facilitation tips

- Use simple visualisation (e.g., 3 columns: Exclusive / Shared / Supporting) to avoid confusion.

Exercise 8.1. Role playing exercise

1. Divide the group in two groups, one pro (support restrictions) and one against (opposes restrictions).
2. Encourage participants to think about:
 - rights (privacy, participation, safety, protection of minors, freedom of expression...)
 - evidence (cyberbullying data, mental health studies, extremism risks)
 - stakeholders (parents, schools, social platforms, governments...)
3. Helpful prompt questions:
 - “What rights are affected?”
 - “Who benefits from this decision?”
 - “Who is harmed or excluded?”
 - “Is the measure proportionate to the problem?”
 - “Are there alternatives?”
4. Encourage creativity but guide participants to use correct institutional pathways (Commission proposals, ECI, petitions, Ombudsman, etc.).
5. Support critical thinking by asking: “Who has the power to propose laws?” “Who could you petition?” “Who could amplify your voice?”
6. For final presentations, suggested structure for each group:
 - **Their position** (pro or against)
 - **Key rights + risks** they identify
 - **Which EU institutions** they would engage
 - **Which mechanisms** they would use & why
 - **Expected outcome**

Debrief

Ask reflection questions: “Which institutions actually had power to change the situation?” “Was EU involvement realistic, or was this mainly national?” “Which advocacy tools seemed strongest?” “What surprised you most?”

Exercise 8.2. Youth advocacy campaigns

Emphasize how youth advocacy can influence EU processes, as seen in real campaigns. Showcase as many examples as time allows.

Discussion prompts about **feasibility**:

- “Do these campaigns feel realistic to you?”
- “What makes a campaign effective?”
- “What barriers do young activists face?”

About **tools**:

- “Which EU mechanisms did they use?”
- “Could they have used ECI? Parliament petitions? Ombudsman?”
- “Where do social media and storytelling fit?”

About **participation**:

- “What type of actions would you personally join?”
- “What issues matter to you right now?”