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Joint press release:

EU Youth Conference in Amsterdam: enabling young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe

Amsterdam, 7 April 2016 // The Dutch Presidency of the Council, together with the Dutch National Youth Council, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum hosted the EU Youth Conference in Amsterdam on 4-7 April, bringing youth delegates and policy makers to the same table to discuss youth issues.

This EU Youth Conference kicks off the V cycle of the Structured Dialogue (an innovative and unique participative process where young people contribute to EU youth policy). In order to enhance a continuous dialogue between policy-makers and young people, the three EU Youth Conferences of the cycle of the current trio Presidency (Dutch, Slovakian, Maltese) will focus on the common theme “*Enabling all young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe*”.

Over four days, youth delegates and policy-makers sat at the same table to identify the main challenges faced by young people to be fully engaged in an inclusive society. They issued a guiding framework, which was presented today during the closing ceremony. An interactive debate on violent radicalisation with Commissioner Navracsics, the Deputy Minister Martin Van Rijn and the delegates concluded the conference.

The guiding framework will support the forthcoming consultations: “Young people need space and opportunity to develop their personal, social and civic competences. Without access to proper information and competences, young people can be misled and negatively influenced in their life options, opinion formulation, access to rights and the ability to exercise their active citizenship”. (Read the full version of the guiding framework [here](#).)

After the conference, youth delegates will carry out widespread consultations with young people in their countries. The results of these consultations will be discussed in the next EU Youth Conference in Slovakia. To make this process a success, views and opinions of young people from various backgrounds must be represented.

Luis Alvarado Martinez, Vice-President of the Youth Forum, Chairperson of the European Steering Committee of the Structured Dialogue:

"The EU and the Member States must ensure that young people's basic rights are respected and that they have the means to be fully engaged in society. Society is changing at a fast pace and new challenges arise. Young people are key players in identifying these. They must be supported to create a more cohesive society where dialogue is at the core. The EU Youth Conference in Amsterdam as well as the Structured Dialogue provides a space for young Europeans to have a strong policy impact on key issues. We hope that the European Commission will continue to strengthen and support this process, especially within the new framework after 2018"

Sjoukje van Oosterhout and Tibbe van den Nieuwenhuijzen, Dutch Youth representatives European Affairs of the Dutch National Youth Council:

"The core of our EU Youth Conference was to encourage youth representatives and policy makers to think outside of the existing structures and get us all out of the policy bubble. In order to achieve that, we have invited all participants to different working visits all around the city of Amsterdam, in order to get everyone acquainted with the challenges that young people are facing in Europe. Next to that, we introduced 'streets of Europe': all the youth delegates have asked young people in the streets of their countries about their ideas on a diverse, inclusive and connected Europe. We hope that all the participants had a good stay in Amsterdam and had a fruitful conference, and that we have inspired everyone to bring an inclusive, connected and diverse Europe a bit closer."

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport:

"Europe needs the input of its young generation to overcome the big challenges it is facing. I want to give all young people in Europe the chance to have their voice heard. The Structured Dialogue has an important role to play in this. I am more determined than ever to reach out to one million young people during my term as Commissioner. Together, we can build an open, diverse, strong Europe."

Martin Van Rijn, Deputy Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports:

"It was an honour to host so many young Europeans and discuss what's important for young people in the EU, today and in the coming years. Our closing debate on preventing radicalisation was very constructive for all participants. It takes a community to prevent radicalisation! We need to continue these debates, conversations and exchanges to make the European Union stronger and more inclusive for all Europeans."

Notes to editors

Read the [Guiding Framework](#).

Photos of the EU Youth Conference: www.flickr.com/photos/eu2016nl/albums
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About the Structured Dialogue with young people

The Structured Dialogue with young people originates from the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field adopted in 2009. Since then, this tool of joint reflection on the development of youth policy, which is meant to engage equally young

people and decision-makers, has been repeatedly revised. The current Team Presidency of Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta decided to further strengthen the link between Structured Dialogue and processes taking place in the Council. In three successive EU Youth Conferences, youth representatives and decision-makers together will transform the vast amount of input received from young people across the EU into a set of concrete proposals.

More information about the Structured Dialogue can be found [here](#).

About the European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. Independent, democratic, youth-led, it represents 100 National Youth Councils and international youth organisations from across the continent. The Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. For more information, visit www.youthforum.org

About the Dutch National Youth Council (NJR)

NJR is the national umbrella organization for youth-led organizations in the Netherlands. NJR promotes the interests of 39 youth-led organizations, ranging from youth organizations focusing on sustainable development to youth unions. NJR makes sure that youngsters are able to discover, develop and apply their talents for themselves as well as for others, now and in the future. In order to realize this goal, NJR organizes projects for and by youngsters. In addition, NJR also gives advice to local, national and international governments and other institutions in the area of youth policy.

For more information, visit www.njr.nl

About the Dutch Presidency:

Read more on <http://english.eu2016.nl/eu-presidency>