

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Coordinator:	Municipality of Santa Comba
PIC number:	946975596
Project name and acronym:	YOUth and democracy: empowering Europe's next generation – EU4YOUth

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	4 th
Event name:	HOW DO I VOTE?
Type:	Conference
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	Figueira da Foz, Portugal
Date(s):	2-5 th February 2025
Participants	
Female:	53
Male:	44
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Austria]:	1
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	2
From country 3 [Croatia]:	2
From country 4 [Cyprus]:	1
From country 5 [Estonia]:	1
From country 6 [France]:	2
From country 7 [Greece]:	1
From country 8 [Hungary]:	1
From country 9 [Ireland]:	2
From country 10 [Italy]:	3
From country 11 [Latvia]:	1
From country 12 [Lithuania]:	4

From country 13 [Malta]:	2		
From country 14 [Portugal]:	67		
From country 15 [Poland]:	2		
From country 16 [Romania]:	1		
From country 17 [Slovakia]:	1		
From country 18 [Spain]:	3		
Total number of participants:	97	From total number of countries:	18

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The fourth event of the project “*YOUth and Democracy: Empowering Europe's Next Generation*” took place in Figueira da Foz, Portugal, from February 2 to 5, 2025. This impactful event gathered 97 local and international participants from 18 different European countries, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration to promote youth participation in democracy. The attendees included policymakers, youth leaders, experts from civic organizations, and educators, all united by a shared commitment to strengthening local democracy and engaging young people in the upcoming European Elections.

The event kicked off on Sunday, February 2, with participants arriving at Porto Airport, followed by organized transfers to Figueira da Foz, a coastal town renowned for its maritime heritage. The evening featured a welcome dinner that provided an opportunity for informal introductions and networking among the participants, setting the tone for collaboration throughout the event.

On Monday, February 3, the group visited Paiao, a village in the Figueira da Foz municipality, where the program began with a warm welcome from Mr. José Alberto Carvalho, President of Paiao, and Mr. Alberto Romar, Mayor of Santa Comba. They emphasized the importance of fostering youth participation and promoting democratic values. Following this, a youth-led video presentation showcased the local culture and heritage of Paiao, giving international participants an insight into the community's values.

The highlight of the morning was a debate on “*Young People and First-Time Voters: How to Motivate Them?*” featuring a panel of esteemed speakers including Ms. Ana Oliveira, a National Deputy from the Portuguese Assembly, and Mr. José Veranda, representing the National Youth Council. The discussions centered around strategies to engage young voters, specifically first-time voters, and the role that public institutions, youth associations, and policymakers can play in motivating them. Participants actively contributed to the conversation, reflecting on their own experiences and sharing successful initiatives from their home countries.

After a traditional coffee break with live cultural music, participants enjoyed a cultural exploration of Paiao, including visits to the Seíça Monastery and the Salt Museum, which provided an opportunity to understand the local history and maritime roots of the town.

On Tuesday, February 4, the group returned to Figueira da Foz for further sessions. They met with Mr. Pedro Santana Lopes, the mayor of Figueira da Foz, and participated in a conference led by Ana Catarina Mendes, a Member of the European Parliament. Mendes delivered a compelling address about the challenges facing youth in the 2024-2029 European Parliament legislature. She spoke about the importance of bridging the gap between young people and European institutions, particularly in more peripheral regions like Figueira da Foz. Mendes proposed initiatives aimed at making the European Parliament more accessible to youth, such as increasing outreach in schools and universities and promoting transparency in decision-making processes. This was followed by a group photo, capturing the spirit of unity and collaboration among the delegates.

Later, participants had the chance to explore the local markets, learning about Figueira da Foz's maritime culture through a guided visit to the fish and seafood market. The cultural immersion continued with a visit to the Museum of Salt, where participants gained deeper insight into the region's salt production and its significance to the local economy. Lunch in Figueira da Foz offered another opportunity to sample traditional Portuguese cuisine.

On Wednesday, February 5, the event wrapped up with breakfast, check-out, and final goodbyes. Before departing, participants had a chance to reflect on the key takeaways from the event and discuss how to continue the momentum toward empowering youth in democracy. The farewell dinner was a moment to celebrate the connections made, the lessons learned, and the collective commitment to youth participation in European governance.

Key conclusions from the event highlighted the critical importance of making democracy more inclusive and accessible to young people. Several strategies were proposed, including the use of social media campaigns to engage young voters, lowering the voting age, and creating local Youth Councils to provide young people with a

direct voice in decision-making. The event also emphasized the need for political education in schools and universities, where young people could learn about the power of their vote and the impact of democratic processes on their lives.

The participants agreed that the next steps should involve continued collaboration and networking, with a focus on disseminating the outcomes of the event across the EU. The insights gained from this gathering will contribute to future initiatives aimed at encouraging youth participation in elections, ensuring that the next generation of Europeans is actively involved in shaping the future of their societies and the European Union.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).