



EUROPEDGES PROJECT

EDGES E-MAGAZINE



Fundația IKAROS
pentru Tineri Activi



European Center for Research and
Regional Development



C.E.R.C.

Community Educational Research Center



Co-funded by
the European Union

EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

As we present to you the final edition of the EuropEdges EDGES e-Magazine, our hearts brim with pride, gratitude, and an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. Over the past two years, we have journeyed together through stories of transformation, innovation, and unwavering determination. This magazine has been more than a publication; it has been a testament to the incredible power of youth when given the platform to lead, create, and inspire.

From the remote corners of Europe to bustling urban centers, young people have stepped forward, breaking barriers and forging new paths. They have proven that they are not just the leaders of tomorrow but the changemakers of today. In this edition, we celebrate their achievements, share their stories, and look ahead to a future shaped by their vision and passion.

We are especially thrilled to highlight the upcoming European Youth Voice Conference in Bucharest—an event that symbolizes both the culmination of our collective efforts and the dawn of new beginnings. To all our readers, contributors, and partners, thank you for being an integral part of this remarkable journey. Your support, engagement, and enthusiasm have made all the difference.

With heartfelt appreciation,
The Youth Editorial Team



Main Content:



Introduction: EuropEdges - Voices from the Edges of Europe

By empowering youth, we empower a continent.

In an era where Europe stands at the crossroads of unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the EuropEdges project emerged as a beacon of hope and innovation. Recognizing that the true strength of Europe lies in its diversity and the untapped potential of its youth, EuropEdges set out to ensure that every young voice is heard, especially those from remote and disadvantaged regions often overlooked in mainstream discourse.

Over the past two years, this ambitious initiative unfolded across six countries—Italy, Romania, Portugal, Greece, Latvia, and Slovenia—weaving together a tapestry of stories, experiences, and transformative actions. The project's vision was not merely to equip youth with skills but to ignite a profound shift in how young people perceive themselves and their capacity to effect change.

At its core, EuropEdges was about bridging gaps—be it in access to education, technology, or civic engagement. By creating platforms where young individuals from diverse backgrounds could learn, connect, and lead, the project fostered a sense of belonging and collective purpose. Through innovative methodologies like human-centered design, digital empowerment initiatives, and hands-on civic projects, EuropEdges transcended being just a project; it became a movement.

A movement that empowered youth to actively shape the democratic processes and societal narratives that will define Europe's future. As we reflect on this incredible journey, we are reminded that when young people are given the opportunity and support to lead, they not only rise to the occasion but often surpass all expectations. Their stories, some of which we are privileged to share in this edition, are testaments to resilience, creativity, and the indomitable spirit of youth.



Legacy of Change: Impact Stories

Seeds of Change: Projects That Blossomed

Throughout the lifespan of EuropEdges, numerous youth-led projects sprouted, each addressing critical issues within their communities and sowing seeds of lasting change. These initiatives, born from passion and nurtured through collaboration, have blossomed into impactful movements. Here, we revisit some of these inspiring projects and celebrate their growth and achievements.

GreenVitalize (Latvia)

In the heart of Latvia, a simple yet profound idea took root: to transform neglected urban spaces into flourishing community gardens. GreenVitalize began as a small group of enthusiastic youths determined to reconnect people with nature and revitalize their neighborhoods. Today, it has evolved into a nationwide movement, turning derelict plots into vibrant green sanctuaries.

Project Leader's Reflection: "Watching a barren piece of land transform into a garden that feeds both body and soul has been incredible. But what's truly heartwarming is seeing neighbors who barely knew each other come together, share stories, and nurture not just plants but relationships." — Anna Petrov, GreenVitalize Coordinator

CARE (Greece)

Amid rising concerns about mental health among young people, the CARE initiative in Greece emerged as a crucial lifeline. Recognizing the stigma and lack of resources surrounding mental wellness, a group of passionate youths established peer support groups within schools. These safe spaces allowed students to share experiences, express emotions, and support one another without judgment.



The initiative quickly gained traction, receiving national recognition and securing funding to expand its reach. CARE launched a mental health app tailored for teenagers, offering resources, coping strategies, and direct access to professional help. Workshops facilitated by mental health professionals and CARE leaders have reached students, fostering a culture of openness and understanding.

Participant's Experience: "Before CARE, I felt isolated in my struggles. Joining the support group changed everything. I realized I wasn't alone, and together, we found strength. Now, I'm training to become a peer mentor to help others navigate their journey." — Dimitris Papadopoulos, CARE Participant

Racial Discrimination Awareness (Portugal)

In a multicultural society, addressing issues of racial discrimination is vital for fostering inclusivity and harmony. In Portugal, a youth-led project took a stand against discrimination by organizing workshops, community events, and awareness campaigns. Through storytelling, art, and dialogue, the initiative sought to challenge prejudices and promote empathy.

Stories That Inspire: The Creation of "EDGES"

In an effort to capture the myriad experiences and voices emerging from the EuropEdges project, participants launched "EDGES," a youth-driven e-magazine. Serving as both a creative outlet and a platform for advocacy, EDGES became a vibrant mosaic of personal essays, project highlights, artwork, and photography.

One particularly moving contribution came from Maria Santos in Portugal. She penned a heartfelt essay about revitalizing her small village by renovating an abandoned community center. With the help of local youths, the center transformed into a hub for cultural events, educational workshops, and social gatherings. Maria's story highlighted the profound impact that dedicated individuals can have on their communities.

Another inspiring narrative was shared by Alexandru Popescu from Romania. In his piece, he candidly discussed his battles with anxiety and depression. By sharing his journey, Alexandru broke down stigmas surrounding mental health and encouraged others to seek support. His vulnerability resonated deeply with readers, prompting widespread discussions and increased awareness.

EDGES not only amplified these voices but also connected them with a broader audience. The magazine has been read and shared by thousands across Europe, fostering a sense of solidarity and inspiring others to take action.



Collaborative Futures: Continuing the Journey

The Road Ahead: Opportunities for Youth Engagement

As the EuropEdges project concludes, it leaves behind a wealth of opportunities and resources for continued youth engagement across Europe. Young people eager to make a difference can tap into various programs and networks designed to support their initiatives and amplify their impact.

EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

This comprehensive framework focuses on three core areas: Engage, Connect, and Empower. It provides a roadmap for enhancing youth participation in democratic life, fostering youth social inclusion, and ensuring young people have the necessary resources to thrive.

Erasmus+ Program

Erasmus+ continues to be a cornerstone of youth education and mobility, offering opportunities for learning, training, and cultural exchange. It encourages cross-border collaboration and fosters a sense of European identity and solidarity.

European Solidarity Corps

This initiative offers young people the chance to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities across Europe. It emphasizes solidarity, social inclusion, and the importance of contributing to societal improvement.



Staying Connected: Building a Transnational Youth Network

Join Online Communities

Engagement doesn't end with the project. Participants and interested youths are encouraged to join forums, social media groups, and online platforms dedicated to youth empowerment and activism. These spaces provide avenues for discussion, idea exchange, and collective action.

Attend Events and Workshops

Continuing education and networking are vital. Keep an eye out for regional and international events where you can meet peers, learn new skills, and stay informed about the latest developments in youth engagement.

Collaborate on Projects

Leverage the networks and relationships built during EuropEdges to initiate new projects. Applying the human-centered design principles learned, you can address pressing issues in your communities and beyond. Consider joint applications for EU funding opportunities to expand your reach and impact.

Empowerment Toolbox: Resources for Changemakers

To support ongoing efforts in youth empowerment and activism, we have compiled a selection of resources that offer inspiration, guidance, and practical tools.

Books

- "How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas" by David Bornstein
- This book profiles individuals who have successfully driven social change, offering insights into their strategies and the impact of their work.
- "The Good Ancestor: A Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking" by Roman Krznaric
- Krznaric explores how we can become good ancestors, emphasizing the importance of long-term thinking in shaping a sustainable future.
- "Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It" by Roman Krznaric
- A guide to understanding and cultivating empathy, a crucial skill for anyone involved in social change and community work.

Podcasts

- "The Activist"
- Featuring stories from activists around the world, this podcast delves into the challenges and triumphs of those working to make a difference.
- "Youth on Air"
- Created by young people, for young people, this podcast discusses global issues, shares solutions, and highlights youth-led initiatives.



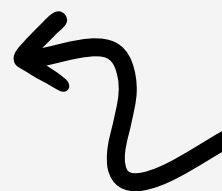


Online Platforms

- YouthOp
- A platform listing opportunities such as scholarships, internships, and conferences for youth seeking to expand their horizons.
- Global Youth Mobilization
- A movement empowering young people to take action in response to global challenges, particularly those exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- EuropEdges Resources
- Access a comprehensive compilation of tools, guides, and resources shared throughout the project on our website.

Training and Workshops

- Human-Centered Design Toolkit
- A resource for designing solutions to social problems with the community at the center, fostering innovation and empathy.
- Digital Advocacy Training
- Online courses to enhance skills in using digital tools for advocacy, essential in today's connected world.





Engaging Youth: Local Roundtables and Online Debates

Local Roundtables: Amplifying Youth Voices

An integral part of the EuropEdges project was the organization of local roundtables across partner countries. These events aimed to increase youth participation, create environments where young people felt heard, and foster open dialogue among students, educators, parents, and community stakeholders.

Italy

In Padua, USMA Caselle hosted two roundtables on October 12th and November 9th, 2023. By splitting the event into two sessions, they maximized involvement from various NGOs and schools. Participants ranged from 12 to 18 years old, providing a spectrum of perspectives and allowing organizers to better understand the diverse needs and aspirations of the youth.

Portugal

Rosto Solidário organized a roundtable on May 13th at Arrifana Secondary School, gathering 51 participants including teachers, students, and city council representatives. Youth technician Carla Palhares facilitated discussions on global issues such as environmental sustainability and inclusion. The event emphasized weakening radicalism and populist discourses by promoting diversity and open dialogue.



Greece

On September 20th, 2024, PYLON ONE held a roundtable in Skydra with 30 participants from local schools, NGOs, and authorities. The focus was on discussing the achievements of the EuropEdges project and exploring further democratization of youth engagement within the community. The event underscored the importance of empowering young people in democratic processes.

Romania

The IKAROS Foundation for Active Youth conducted three roundtables on May 3rd, June 10th, and August 20th, 2024. Participants included students, teachers, youth workers, and volunteers from various schools and NGOs. Hosted in a non-formal format, these events centered on youth participation and addressed specific needs and challenges faced by young people in Bucharest.

Latvia

In Riga, ECREED organized a roundtable on September 24th, 2024, bringing together students, youth organizations like the Latvian Youth Council, educators, and government representatives. The diverse group engaged in rich discussions on critical societal challenges and explored strategies to enhance youth engagement and address community issues.

Collective Impact

Across all events, over 229 participants were involved. These roundtables successfully amplified youth voices, fostered open dialogue, and strengthened the role of young people in shaping decisions that affect their lives and communities.

Online Debates with Policymakers: Bridging the Gap

To further bridge the gap between youth and policymakers, EuropEdges facilitated a series of online debates focused on youth policy. These sessions provided platforms for young leaders to exchange ideas with experts, discuss their roles in policy-making, and drive positive change at both local and European levels.

First Online Debate

- Hosted by: ECREED
- Date: April 30, 2024
- Participants: Approximately 50
- Focus: Youth empowerment and the role of young people in shaping policies across diverse European regions.

Second Online Debate

- Hosted by: PYLON ONE
- Date: September 11, 2024
- Participants: 40
- Focus: Inclusive youth policies and contributions to European policy dialogues, with discussions conducted in Greek to engage local policymakers.



Third Online Debate

- Hosted by: USMA Caselle
- Date: September 20, 2024
- Participants: 30
- Focus: Policy development and sustainability within Europe's diverse regions. The event featured participation from GECT/Go, the entity managing the European City of Culture 2025.

Fourth Online Debate

- Hosted by: Fundatia Ikaros
- Date: September 27, 2024
- Title: "I'm Standing in Front of You, See Me!"
- Participants: Approximately 46
- Focus: Mental health among youth, understanding signs of anxiety and depression, and fostering supportive environments.

Collective Impact

These online debates engaged over 166 participants, fostering mutual understanding and encouraging youth participation in shaping policies that directly affect them.

An Insightful Youth Policy Debate: Amplifying the Call

Building on the momentum of previous events, EuropEdges organized an interactive online Youth Policy Debate on September 16, 2024. This event invited young leaders to engage in meaningful discussions on shaping the future of European youth policies.

Objectives

- Engage in discussions on European youth policies.
- Exchange ideas with experts, policymakers, and fellow young leaders.
- Amplify youth voices in broader European policy contexts.

Outcomes

The debate successfully brought together a diverse group of participants, facilitating rich exchanges of ideas and perspectives. It underscored the importance of youth participation in policy-making and highlighted actionable steps to increase engagement at various levels.



European Youth Voice Conference: Bucharest 2024

A Celebration of Youth Empowerment and Transnational Collaboration

As the EuropEdges project reaches its pinnacle, all roads lead to Bucharest, Romania, where the European Youth Voice Conference will take place on November 28, 2024. This highly anticipated event marks the culmination of two years of dedication, innovation, and collaboration among young people across Europe.

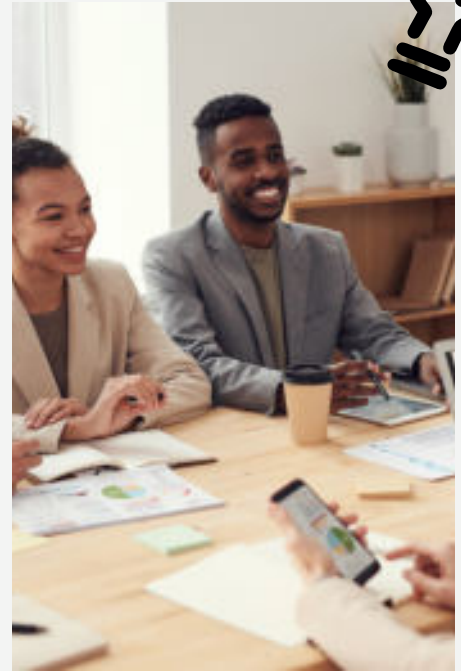
About the Conference

The Bucharest conference serves as both a celebration of achievements and a platform for future initiatives. It brings together young leaders, youth workers, policymakers, and stakeholders from across Europe to share insights, discuss best practices, and reflect on the future of youth engagement in democratic processes.

Agenda Highlights

Morning Session

- Welcome Address
 - Opening remarks by project coordinators and representatives from partner organizations.
- Youth Presentations
 - Participants from various countries will share their projects, experiences, and the impacts they've made in their communities.
 - Presentations will focus on success stories, challenges overcome, and lessons learned.



Afternoon Session

- Interactive Workshops
 - Mental Health Advocacy
 - Strategies for promoting mental well-being among youth, facilitated by professionals and leaders from initiatives.
 - Digital Empowerment
 - Leveraging technology for social change, including sessions on digital tools, social media advocacy, and cybersecurity.
 - Sustainability and the Environment
 - Youth roles in combating climate change, with collaborative brainstorming.
- Panel Discussions
 - Future of Youth Engagement in Europe
 - Exploring opportunities and challenges ahead, featuring policymakers, activists, and representatives from youth organizations.
 - Voices from the Edges
 - Personal stories of overcoming barriers and driving change, encouraging open dialogue and sharing.



Evening Gala

- Cultural Performances
 - Showcasing the rich heritage of participating countries through music, dance, and art.
 - Performances by youth groups and artists celebrate diversity and unity.

Join Us in Bucharest

We invite all participants, partners, supporters, and interested individuals to join us for this inspiring event. Together, we will celebrate the voices and efforts of young Europeans who are shaping a brighter and more connected future.



Link for registering
to the event:



Event Details

- Date: November 28, 2024
- Venue: Palace of the Parliament, Bucharest, Romania



Highlights Reel: Moments to Remember

As we reflect on the journey of EuropEdges, countless moments stand out—instances of inspiration, collaboration, and joy. This section captures some of those unforgettable experiences through vivid narratives.

Local Roundtables: Voices Rising

In community halls and school auditoriums across Europe, young people gathered to share their thoughts, hopes, and ideas. These roundtables were more than meetings; they were spaces where youth felt heard and valued.

In Portugal, the energy was palpable as students passionately discussed environmental issues, proposing innovative solutions for sustainability. In Romania, heartfelt stories were shared, highlighting the need for mental health support and inclusive education.

Online Debates: Bridging Distances

Despite geographical separations, technology brought participants together in meaningful dialogue. The online debates with policymakers allowed youths to voice their concerns directly to those in positions of influence.

One participant remarked, "It was empowering to have my questions addressed by policymakers. It felt like our opinions genuinely mattered."



International Youth Meeting in Santa Maria da Feira

The vibrant town of Santa Maria da Feira hosted an international gathering where participants from five countries collaborated on projects and engaged in workshops. The cultural exchange was enriching, with evenings spent sharing traditions, music, and stories.

Community Projects: Action in Motion

From urban gardens blooming in Latvia to clean-up drives in Greece, youths took action to improve their communities. These projects not only addressed local issues but also fostered a sense of ownership and pride among participants.

In Italy, a group of students organized a cultural festival that celebrated diversity, drawing crowds from neighboring towns. "Seeing everyone come together was incredible. It showed that when we unite, we can create something beautiful," shared one organizer.

Training Sessions: Skills for a Lifetime

Workshops on human-centered design, digital literacy, and leadership equipped participants with valuable skills. The interactive sessions were characterized by lively discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and the forging of lasting friendships.

Closing Remarks: As We Turn the Page

As we reach the final pages of this magazine and the conclusion of the EuropEdges project, it's important to recognize that this is not an end but a transition. The experiences shared, the connections made, and the lessons learned will continue to resonate and inspire future endeavors.

A Message from the Project Coordinator

"EuropEdges has been more than a project; it's been a movement. We've witnessed the incredible potential of youth when they are empowered and given the tools to lead. The passion and dedication displayed by our participants have been nothing short of inspiring. As we look to the future, I am confident that the seeds planted through EuropEdges will continue to grow and flourish, shaping a brighter, more inclusive Europe for all."

Thank you for being a vital part of this journey. Your support and engagement have made all the difference.

SUBSCRIBE TO EUROPEDGES by sending an email to:

europedges@gmail.com

Amplify the Message!

Share "EDGES" with your network. Together, let's spread the word, inspire more individuals, and expand our community.



Acknowledgments & Credits

Thank You

Our deepest gratitude goes to everyone who contributed to the success of EuropEdges:

- Participants: Your passion, creativity, and dedication have been the heart of this project.
- Partner Organizations:
 - USMA Caselle (Italy)
 - Fundatia Ikaros (Romania)
 - Rosto Solidário (Portugal)
 - PYLON ONE (Greece)
 - ECREED (Latvia)
- Editorial Team: For crafting and curating the stories that brought this magazine to life.
- Supporters and Sponsors: Your contributions have been instrumental in making this journey possible.
- Readers: Your engagement and feedback have been invaluable.

Special Thanks

We extend special thanks to the European Union and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) for their support and funding, which made the EuropEdges project a reality.







EUROPEDGES PROJECT

EDGES E-MAGAZINE



Fundația IKAROS
pentru Tineri Activi



European Center for Research and
Regional Development



CERC

Community Educational Research Center



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.