



European
Commission



All About Youth!
**EU Opportunities for
Young People in Ireland**



#TheFutureisYours



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Introduction

Welcome to 'All About Youth'. This publication was inspired by the European Year of Youth to highlight the many exciting EU opportunities on offer for young people in Ireland.

In these pages, you can find out how to get involved in youth-focused programmes, which are supported by the EU. Most importantly, you will hear from young Irish people who share their personal stories of taking part in these programmes and what this experience meant to them.

Young people make up 25% of the population of the EU, and Ireland is the youngest of the 27 Member States with almost 40% of the population aged under 30.

Young people hold the key to creating a better future. They care about peace, social inequality, and the environment. They have innovative ideas and energy to build a better society. They worry about job prospects and the cost of living. They want decision-makers to hear what they have to say and to respond to their calls for action.

The EU is listening to the voices of young people and is working to ensure that they feel a sense of belonging as European citizens and can avail of the many opportunities which come with being members of the EU.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, young people in particular faced huge challenges and missed important life events. In recognition of the sacrifices they made, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, designated 2022 the European Year of Youth.

In this context, the EU institutions, Member States, national authorities and stakeholders are working together to provide more young people with the possibility to learn, to develop new skills, and to forge unforgettable memories. This could be through participation in the EU's flagship programme for young people, Erasmus+, volunteering through the European Solidarity Corps, doing a traineeship, or becoming a youth climate ambassador.

The EU is also working to make youth programmes more inclusive so that they are not beyond the reach of any young person. The EU and Ireland's youth unemployment rate has fallen steadily since 2012. The number of young Irish people not in education, employment, or training has also dropped considerably in the last 10 years. This is all good news, but we must continue our efforts to support young people to reach their full potential.

As President von der Leyen rightly said, "Our Union will be stronger if it is more like our next generation: reflective, determined, and caring. Grounded in values and bold in action."

Barbara Nolan
Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland



Travel and Discover the EU

Travel opens up a world of opportunities. It can help us learn a lot about ourselves and different cultures. EU citizens can move freely in any of the 27 Member States, and young people can participate in exciting initiatives right across Europe.

DiscoverEU is one such EU initiative offering young people the chance to explore Europe with free 30-day travel passes. Launched in 2018, DiscoverEU is now part of the EU's flagship Erasmus+ programme. DiscoverEU gives 18-year-old residents of the EU the opportunity to discover Europe through learning experiences, travelling predominantly by rail.

"You'll explore Europe's diversity, learn about its cultural heritage and history, and connect with people from all over the continent. DiscoverEU enables you to develop life skills for your future," says **Janice McGarry**, DiscoverEU Coordinator with Léargas.

One young recipient of the free travel pass, **Cian**, says, *"DiscoverEU was an amazing experience. It pushed me outside of my comfort zone. It supported me to develop my digital competence by using the Discover EU train app nearly every day. This experience showed me that I can do anything I set my mind to. I made friends for life in other countries."*

How to apply: Applications open in spring and autumn on the European Youth Portal. Complete the quiz and make sure you have a valid passport. Successful applicants are notified by email and all participants are invited to become DiscoverEU ambassadors.

DiscoverEU travel pass



Eurodesk

Another initiative helping young people open their minds to the world is Eurodesk. Eurodesk is a European youth information network, which provides a free information service for young people aged 13 to 30, on opportunities to travel, work, volunteer, and study in Europe.

Malgorzata Fiedot-Davies, Eurodesk Ireland Coordinator in Léargas, says, *"Eurodesk encourages young people to take part in Erasmus+ and other EU-funded programmes. Eurodesk's role is to make EU youth information and opportunities accessible to all young people."*

Eurodesk runs a yearly campaign, **Time to Move**, which promotes Eurodesk services and EU opportunities available to young people.

Malgorzata adds, *"The EU offers many opportunities for young people. The experience of volunteering, training, working, or studying abroad can be a great asset when applying for a job."*

Ola Buczek is a young person who was supported by Eurodesk in Ireland. She says, *"I planned to take on a Student Exchange to Spain in Transition Year. I came across Eurodesk. Through Eurodesk, I found a host family in Spain."*

"I learned a lot about myself during my year in Spain, experiencing a different everyday environment and meeting so many new people. I would recommend it to anyone. Even two years later, I am still in contact with the friends I made there."

Find a Eurodesk Ireland contact point



Get Involved in Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to gain experience of new places, cultures and skills while helping others.

The European Solidarity Corps funds and supports young people aged 18 to 30 to volunteer or organise projects that benefit communities, either at home, or abroad.

Organisations benefit from having committed young people. Young people learn about diversity and inclusion and how to be an active citizen. They can volunteer individually (for up to 12 months) or in teams (up to 2 months) with an organisation in their own country, or abroad.

Volunteers are not paid but travel, food, and accommodation costs are covered.

From 2022, the European Solidarity Corps will offer new cross-border volunteering opportunities to those aged 18-35 in support of humanitarian aid projects. Volunteers will be trained.

Amy Collins is a young Irish person who has volunteered through the European Solidarity Corps. Amy had left school early and was approached by a Youth Worker who suggested that she get involved.

Amy says she didn't feel this opportunity was for someone like her.



Amy Collins

But after enrolling and completing her volunteering, she then enrolled in a course to become a qualified Youth Worker and has continued to work and further her education.

Amy says, "I think self-growth is the biggest thing that I took away from the course. Because when you go on a volunteering experience, you think that you're going there to help these people. But the biggest thing that I took away from it is that it isn't us and them, it's a sense of collective solidarity and regardless of skin colour, or culture, at the end of the day, we're all the same."

"I learned so much about myself. I've learned how resilient and confident I can be - it changed my life. I didn't do my Leaving Cert and I thought there was only one path for me. But once I was sent on that journey of volunteering, the ball just kept rolling. I don't think I would know half the things I know about myself if it wasn't for this experience."

Register in the European Solidarity Corps online portal





Learning and Studying in the EU

Studying and learning abroad takes you out of your comfort zone and boosts your personal and professional skills. Through its flagship **Erasmus+** programme, the EU supports young people to avail of opportunities in the areas of education, training, and sport in Europe:

Erasmus+ and higher education

This programme provides people with a diverse range of opportunities to learn, broaden their horizons, improve their skills, and make new friends.

To participate in Erasmus+, a student must be enrolled at a Higher Education Institution, or be a recent graduate.

Students can study abroad for 2-12 months. Or they can take part in a traineeship abroad which helps them improve their language skills and enhance their CV with international employment experience. These traineeships can lead to exciting opportunities.

If you are studying at third-level and you are interested in Erasmus+, contact your institution's International Office and see what options are available. Students have travelled all over the world with Erasmus+. While France, Spain, and Germany are the top three destinations for Irish students, students have also travelled to countries like Japan, Morocco, and Brazil.

Margarett Muldoon from Co Cavan participated in the Erasmus+ programme. She studied Corporate Law (International) with Legal French, at NUI Galway from 2017-2021. Margarett said she wanted to advance her language skills at L'Université Clermont Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France for eight months. For her, Erasmus+ was truly a unique experience.

Further study

If you have completed a primary degree, you can apply for the Erasmus Mundus programme and study at Masters level at partner universities in Europe. Scholarships are available.

Erasmus+ for all

Erasmus+ is for every learner, not just those in higher education. It funds Vocational Education and Training (VET) projects across Europe and supports organisations in sending learners or apprentices abroad to take part in work placements.

Carmel Walsh, who supports the implementation of Erasmus+ in Ireland within Léargas, says, *"The Erasmus+ programme highlights the advantages of inclusion, diversity, and solidarity with our peers in other parts of the world. Everyone should have the chance to be involved."*

Erasmus+ Youth Exchange

Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to meet, live together and work on shared projects for short periods, up to three weeks.

"We began the Erasmus process in our second year. We were told about the various student grants that could be awarded for partaking in Erasmus, which reassured us that this wouldn't be a financial burden."

"Erasmus was one of the best experiences of my life. When would I have another opportunity to live abroad, study a new language, and experience a new culture, with the support of my university and peers?"

"I studied law, but I got the opportunity to study subjects that I wouldn't have studied in Ireland. One of my modules was 'Studying the Auvergne as A Region'. I can't express enough how beautiful and exciting it was to live there."

"I've kept in contact with friends I met while on Erasmus - friends from Greece, Quebec, Mexico, France, and Mali. We all came over as strangers, with different language barriers, cultures, and degrees. But we all left as friends for life."

Erasmus is a chance to see the world, and still have the freedom of student life. When I look back now, as a full-time employee, we are so very fortunate to be able to take part in it."



Margarett Muldoon



Ayisha Lawal

For these youth exchanges, the projects need a minimum of 16 young people (up to age 30) from two countries to participate. Young people focus on informal learning. The exchange has a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, and outdoor activities.

Some young people face barriers to taking part. But there are inclusion supports available to ensure everyone can actively take part. Participants' learning experiences are recognised through a Youthpass.

"The exchange in Italy took place in a small town called Ortelle. We mingled with the locals. I have made a few friends here."

The youth exchange has opened my eyes a bit more to seeing that not everywhere is the same and you never know what a country has been through. For example, the pandemic was very hard for Italy."

"I would definitely recommend the programme to others because it educates you to think of others while making choices."

Involve Youth Services support young people from the traveller community and other minority groups in Ireland. In summer 2022, Involve organised an Erasmus+ youth exchange in Italy. **Ayisha Lawal**, aged 16, from Meath, was one of the participants and found the experience eye-opening.

Joseph McCrudden, aged 14, from Donegal, comes from a traveller background and also took part in the exchange, *"I made friends, saw landmarks, underground caves, and lots more. I hope to see more in the future and learn more about other places."*

For more on Erasmus+ or download the Erasmus+ App



Training and Employment in the EU

The EU is committed to ensuring young people have access to employment and training opportunities. Created in 2013 and strengthened in 2020, the **Youth Guarantee** is a commitment by EU Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. The Youth Employment Initiative exclusively supports young people who are not in education, employment or training, including the long-term unemployed or those not registered as job-seekers.

Youthreach

Youthreach is a youth employment initiative which provides early school leavers in Ireland aged between 15 and 20, with opportunities in education, personal development, vocational training and work experience. Courses last 12-24 months and are managed by the Education and Training Boards and community training centres in 110 locations across Ireland. Students can achieve

Former Youthreach student, **Conor Dewey** says, *"I was very shy. I knew I wanted an education, but couldn't see how I would achieve this in secondary school. I heard about Youthreach and decided to talk to the Coordinator."*

Conor ended up completing a QQI Level 4 in General Education and a QQI Level 5 in Business and Office Administration. *"As a result, I grew and became more confident. I went on to work in Dublin Airport, then in Specsavers in Swords and I am now the Retail Director. Youthreach provided this amazing positive journey for me."*



certification through QQI accredited courses or complete the Leaving Certificate / Leaving Cert Applied programmes. Once finished their studies, they are encouraged to progress further in their education or begin looking for a job in the career of their choice.

Youthreach is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Social Fund as part of the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

Supporting Entrepreneurs

Erasmus+ for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in the EU and beyond. New entrepreneurs can learn how to manage a small company, gain relevant skills and knowledge, get practical experience and build their network. You can apply for financial support from the EU to help towards your daily living costs and travel expenses while participating in the programme. As part of the programme, young people work with an experienced entrepreneur in their host's business for 1-6 months. They gain the relevant skills that they can use to manage their own business.

How to apply: Contact your national contact point with your application which should include a CV, motivation letter and, if you're a new entrepreneur, a business plan.

European Targeted Mobility Scheme

EU citizens aged 18+ who are relocating for work or travelling to an interview in another EU country, Norway or Iceland, can avail of financial assistance under the European Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS). Apply before you go! Email: tms@welfare.ie.



Europass

Young people looking for information on learning and working in Europe can access this through Europass - a set

of online tools to help create CVs, cover letters, and support users to find jobs and courses in the EU. It is available in English and Irish and most recently, Ukrainian. QQI is the Irish contact point for Europass.

Danay Berhane found his calling as a chef through Europass. He moved to Ireland in his early 20s and studied there. *"I was planning on becoming an engineer or architect, but ended up taking a different path,"* says Danay.

By this time, Danay knew he wanted to become a chef and he applied to a cookery course at the Cork College of Commerce. Danay studied there for a year, gained experience and found his first job.

"The skills I learned helped me to get into



Cork Institute of Technology and the experience I already had was an advantage. I represented Ireland in the Dairy Irish Chef of the Year competition in 2019 in Paris, and won. I was offered an internship in one of Ireland's top 5-Star luxury hotels. Today, I am a Demi Chef de Partie."

EURES – European Employment Services Network

The EURES network was established by the European Commission to facilitate the freedom of movement of workers and to help European citizens find work in another EU country. Managed by the Department of Social Protection, EURES Ireland has a network of advisers who can provide information on job searching in Europe and help them to contact European employers. They can also provide practical information on living and working conditions in another EU/EEA country.

Claire Petersen, a young Irish photographer who took part in Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, says the programme opened her eyes to the realities of running a photography business.

"As part of Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, I worked with an incredible photographer and saw first-hand how to run a successful photography business."

"I also got to try out living in an entirely new city, Berlin. I loved it so much that two years later I still live here, and have recently gone full-time with my photography business. Every day I use skills that I learned on the programme. I cannot recommend it enough for any budding entrepreneurs out there."



Contact Erasmus+ for Young Entrepreneurs



Find out more about Europass

Work for the EU

The EU offers a variety of career opportunities in Brussels, Luxembourg and other EU cities. It also offers posts in EU agencies across Europe and in EU delegations around the world. Depending on your background, you could work as a policy officer, a communications officer, an economist, a translator, or in administration and finance. Most EU jobs require you to speak at least two EU languages.

Traineeships in the EU Institutions

University graduates can apply for traineeships in the EU institutions and agencies. These typically last five months, and are paid. Each institution runs its own selection procedure. The European Commission offers five-month paid traineeships twice a year. These 'Blue Book' traineeships provide graduates with the exciting opportunity to work within an EU institution and to gain experience in their chosen field, while working in an international workplace.

Alison O’Riordan, studied law and French at University College Cork, and then went on to do an LL.M. in International and European Law in Brussels. She did a traineeship at the Commission. Alison says, “You’re kept informed about contract and temporary positions as they eventually pop up. The opportunity also gives you a first taste of policy-making, and this is something that will stand to you no matter what career path you decide to go down.”

The **European Parliament** offers two types of traineeships: Traineeships in the Secretariat (Schuman traineeships) twice a year for five months’ duration; and Traineeships with Members of the European Parliament.



EU Careers

The Irish Government launched ‘A Career for EU’, Ireland’s Strategy to increase Irish representation in the EU’s Institutions and Agencies. The new strategy aims to significantly increase the numbers of Irish officials in both permanent and temporary positions within the EU Institutions, to increase the number of Irish people applying for jobs in the EU institutions, while improving awareness of EU careers in Ireland across all sectors. It will also result in improved and targeted supports to Irish candidates who are preparing for an EU jobs competition.

“I was interested in doing my traineeship in the Commission, as I had studied EU law. I wanted to gain practical insights into the workings of the institutions. I got involved in the Blue Book traineeship by reaching out to former trainees and getting advice from them.”

Alison ended up working in the Cabinet of Commissioner Mairead McGuinness, “I got to explore different policy areas with different Cabinet members, including competition, trade, finance, environment and social. And all from the highest political level from an EU perspective.”

“Sometimes we were also able to follow the Commissioner to pre-recorded speeches or to press conferences. These moments were extra special as we got to meet other Commissioners and truly see all the action.”

Alison O’Riordan

For more on EU Jobs



For more on traineeships



The Green Agenda

One-third of the EU population is under 30. All over Europe, thousands of young people are campaigning for decision-makers to take action on climate change. The EU is listening and engaging with young people on this issue, which is critical to their future.

The **European Green Deal** sets out to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economy and aims to make Europe the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

As part of the Green Deal, the **European Climate Pact** is an EU-wide initiative inviting people of all ages, particularly young people, to participate in building a greener Europe. A key aim of the Pact is to provide opportunities for young people to collaborate and discuss climate issues.

Young people who are passionate about climate action and making change happen can become **European Climate Pact Ambassadors**. Young Climate Pact Ambassadors play an important role in informing, inspiring and supporting climate action in their communities and networks.

One young Irish Ambassador is **Jamie McElwain** from Co Monaghan. The 17-year-old activist says he has always had an interest in climate change, but he really became involved during the first wave of COVID-19.

How to become a Climate Pact Ambassador:

The EU welcomes applications from individuals who are leaders in local communities, networks, civil society organisations, and youth and student initiatives.



“I set up a local Fridays For Future (FFF) branch in Monaghan, a youth-led global climate movement. Now I give talks on sustainability and climate justice, and I am the Sustainability Officer-elect of the Irish Second-level Students’ Union.”

Jamie says it is time we see more young people campaigning for climate action. The generation who was ‘woken up’ with the rise of Greta Thunberg is now not only eligible to vote, but also eligible to run for election.

“The key to reducing the effects of climate change lies in young people’s hands. The sooner we get into political office, the sooner we can see the changes made. The EU’s 27 countries have pledged to uphold the European Green Deal, the European Climate Pact, the Youth climate pact challenge, and the Green Track campaign. That support from all member nations and friends of the EU is vital in fighting climate change as we need to partner together.”

But Jamie says he believes that things are changing on a small-scale basis, but not on a systemic level.

“Lobby the government and power holders to become more carbon and climate-neutral. Be the change you want to see!”



Jamie McElwain





Science and Innovation

The EU is empowering young people to nurture their science, technical and innovation skills through a number of initiatives and projects. Here's how:

EU Code Week

EU Code Week is a grassroots initiative run by volunteers and supported by the European Commission as part of its strategy for a Digital Single Market. It celebrates coding in Europe, encouraging young people to learn more about technology, and connecting communities.

Code week ambassadors coordinate the initiative in their countries. Irish Code Week Ambassador, **Pam O'Brien**, says, "With the integration of technology in almost every aspect of our lives, coding skills are

important for future education and employment."

Each year, the EU Code Week team introduces a new idea or event. In 2021, it was a hackathon which was run in six EU countries; Romania, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Latvia, and Ireland. In Ireland, the hackathons were run in collaboration with schools. The first round saw eight teams of students aged 15-16 from across Ireland participate. Five teams progressed to the national finals, with the team from Mount St. Michael Secondary School in Claremorris, Co. Mayo, emerging as the overall winners. Mount St. Michael represented Ireland in the EU hackathon finals in October 2021.

The brief for the Irish hackathon was 'How can you create a solution that integrates non-profit / voluntary organisations in local communities under one digital hub?'

During the competition, the teams were mentored and received workshops by industry and academic partners on design, innovation, accessibility, and pitching.

Schools at any level and teachers of all subjects are invited to participate in EU Code Week.

Mount St. Michael student, **Aoibheann Mangan**, says, "When we were given the theme for the hackathon, our team came up with lots of different ideas before we finally decided on our project, Synclink.

It helped develop my team-working skills. We were so happy when we found out we had won in Ireland and got through to the European final. While we did not win the European final, I still had such a great time entering because it was really enjoyable."



EU Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS)

The EU Contest for Young Scientists is an annual contest and exhibition of the finest work developed in many scientific fields, by the best young minds of different countries. The contest is an initiative of the European Commission under the Science and Society programme.

In 2021, the 2020 winners of Ireland's BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE),

Cormac Harris and **Alan O'Sullivan** from Co. Cork took home first prize at the EUCYS. Their project was a Statistical Investigation into the Prevalence of Gender Stereotyping in 5-7 year olds.

Cormac and Alan chose their project when they noticed that the majority of students choosing STEM subjects in school were boys and the majority of students choosing non-STEM subjects were girls.

"It was a great honour to win BTYSTE 2020," says Cormac. "And we were thrilled that our project was not only valued at a national level, but now at European level at EUCYS. It was an enriching and life-changing experience and something that we would recommend to all young students.

"Our research shows that gender stereotypes emerge in young children and are particularly evident in boys," says Alan. "Our findings are important as interventions to combat gender bias typically focused on girls. However, the results of our project recognise the need to focus on all children from a young age.

"The BTYSTE and EUCYS are such important platforms for young people to explore the possibilities of applying science to solve problems that affect their everyday lives."



Keep an eye out for Code Week activities

The EU aims to give young people more equal opportunities in education, and to equip them with the skills and knowledge to become active citizens.

The Model Council of the European Union

This annual schools debate competition is organised by the European Commission Representation in Ireland. It brings together teams of students from secondary schools to simulate a meeting of the Council of the EU. Each team represents an EU Member State. In 2022, the theme of the debate was 'migration', and the winning school was Ard Scoil Rís in Dublin.



eTwinning

eTwinning is an EU initiative providing a community for schools in Europe, and is funded by Erasmus+. Through eTwinning, teachers and students can develop digital literacy and ICT skills and students can learn about European cultures and languages by directly linking with young people across Europe.

Helen English, a language teacher at Maynooth Post-Primary School says, "The best part is the international link-up – collaborating with teachers in other countries, connecting up our students. That's definitely the direction education is going in."

European Parliament Ambassador School Programme

The European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS)



According to Model Council winning students Daniel Cassidy, Patrick O'Donovan, Luke Hedin and Joe Gifford, "Some of us had some previous experience in debating. It's hard to express how much of a new, challenging environment the Model Council setting was."

The students spent weeks researching their arguments and investigating their opponents, as well as consulting Barry Andrews, an MEP with extensive knowledge on migration.

"We learnt about migration, and how controversial and polarising certain issues can be. It is important to remember that behind every political discussion, there are real people and real-life consequences."

programme encourages young people to actively participate in the EU democratic process. By taking part in the programme, students in secondary and vocational schools across the EU learn about the role of the European Parliament, their rights as citizens, and get the chance to engage with their MEPs. The EPAS network comprises approx. 1,570 schools in 27 Member States and is managed by the European Parliament Liaison Offices in each country. In Ireland, 68 schools across the country took part in 2021-2022.

Layla Hannifin, age 16, a TY student at Mercy Mounthawk School, Co Kerry, says, "I became familiar with EPAS when I was in first year and was invited to attend a Mock Youth Parliament. This sparked my interest in politics and social activism."

"When I started TY, I chose this as my optional subject. I am glad that I did. It has shown me how accessible European politics can be for young people. Being part of the EPAS programme enabled me to feel connected to Europe and other young Europeans."

Register your school for e-Twinning



Multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of unity in diversity. The languages spoken throughout the EU's 27 member states are an essential part of Europe's cultural heritage. There are 24 official EU languages, including Irish.

September 26th is the **European Day of Languages (EDL)**. This annual event aims to raise awareness of the broad variety of languages in Europe and to encourage people of all ages to learn languages. Léargas manages this initiative in Ireland. They send schools educational materials and share information about resources developed by the European Centre for Modern Languages including games, booklets, and apps. They also run an annual competition for schools to promote language learning.

Learning different languages not only opens up career opportunities, but also allows people to understand other cultures and appreciate their own. Young people across Ireland have been involved in EU-sponsored language-related projects, including students at Beech Hill College in Monaghan. In 2021, Erasmus+ awarded the school €65,000 to organise an Erasmus+ School Exchange Partnership with a school in Lithuania.



Maeve O'Brien

"I really wanted to test my language skills by taking part," says Maeve. "The idea of lots of students all over Europe translating at the same time really appealed to me!"

"I found out I won on the morning of my Irish mocks. It gave me confidence in my language skills. I had the opportunity to go to Brussels for the awards ceremony in March with my teacher and my mother - it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I got to see around the EU buildings, meet with a translator who gave me an insight into her job. I also met all the other winners from the other EU countries."

"Learning about translation has made me consider it as a career. I love languages and want them to be a part of my future. I would love to travel and perhaps work in Europe. Knowing European languages means that there are now more possibilities open to me."

The aim was to celebrate culture, language, and heritage.

The European Commission promotes language learning through annual competitions.

The **Aistritheoirí Óga (Young Translators) Competition** is organised by the European Commission and the Irish Government. It is open to young people aged 15+ who can translate from a choice of six European languages, including English, into Irish. The competition takes place in the spring.

The European Commission's **Juvenes Translatores** competition takes place in February and is open to students aged 17+ from across the EU who can translate between any two of the 552 possible language combinations of the EU's 24 official languages.

There is one winner per country and in 2021, 18-year-old **Maeve O'Brien** from Loreto Secondary School in Letterkenny, who translated a piece from French to English, was named the overall winner.

European Day of Languages



Make your Voice Heard



During the 2022 European Year of Youth and beyond, the EU wants to support young people to make their voices heard on the issues that matter to them. Young people have called on the EU to amplify their voices and the EU has responded.

EU Youth Dialogue

The EU Youth Dialogue is all about communication between young people and decision makers to ensure that the opinion, views and needs of young people and youth organisations are taken into account when defining the EU's youth policies.

The EU Youth Dialogue is delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) through their Young Voices programme. They use their collective expertise to act on issues that impact young people. They also advocate and lobby on international and European youth policy, to ensure young people can add their voices to decisions that affect them. This creates opportunities for young people. It brings them into the policy-making process at a national and European level. The programme delivers presentations, and makes submissions to decision-makers. It also sends delegates to the EU Youth Conference, where young people's ideas are used to influence policy at European level. This gives them a place at the table.

One of the young people involved in the process, **Dean Murray**, said, *"It's shown me the channels in youth work where young people can influence policy and bigger decisions. Coming from a working-class area doesn't mean that you can't travel to different parts of Europe and have your voice heard as well."*

"I think it supports personal development and political education for young people and helps them to develop their critical awareness. They are able to look at something critically and see what works and doesn't work."

European Youth Parliament

The European Youth Parliament (EYP) is an EU-wide programme providing young people with spaces to develop and express opinions on current topics. It builds intercultural understanding and friendships across borders. 30,000 young people take part in more than 500 EYP events organised in 40 countries across Europe every year, contributing to a vibrant network of young change-makers.

The main events are the mock-parliament 'sessions'. The focus is to foster a greater understanding of European affairs and promote a constructive approach to reaching solutions to common problems.

"Young people make up a considerable cohort of the population of the EU. They have a right to be heard just as much as any other group in society does. It is important that young people are involved in the decision-making process, as it is they who will inherit the future that is shaped by such decisions. EYP offers an open platform for all ideas to be discussed and considered."

"Every young person should get involved with the European Youth Parliament. It is through these organisations that young people can begin to realise that they do have a voice and that they should be taken seriously."

Luke Cunningham, a 22-year old graduate from Cavan, is the outgoing president of the European Youth Parliament Ireland, having been involved in the organisation for the last 7 years.



Youth4Regions – programme for aspiring journalists

The EU not only has programmes to help amplify young people's voices, but it also celebrates those young people who are committed to reporting on those with no voice.

The Youth4Regions programme helps young journalists discover what the EU is doing in their region. It provides a chance to receive training on journalism and EU regional policy. It also offers mentorship from established journalists, and the chance to work side-by-side with renowned journalists during EU Regions' Week in October.

The Megalizzi – Niedzielski prize is awarded during EU Regions Week to aspiring journalists that show a strong attachment to the EU and its values.

Jack Ryan, 23, an Economics student at Trinity College Dublin, won the prize in 2021, along with Irene Barahona Fernández from Spain.



Jack Ryan

As part of his application for the Youth4regions programme, he travelled to Offaly to write a story about a community land trust funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Affordability is an obstacle to housing for many people, especially younger people. Jack wrote about how Ireland's high cost of housing has spurred policymakers to look at new models of housing.

The piece fostered an interest in housing policy that has remained with him to this day.

Jack says, "The Youth4Regions programme is an amazing opportunity. The programme will help you learn about European policy, hone your professional skills, and build professional networks (and friendships) across the continent. It gave me the confidence to call myself a journalist, and pursue this path."

"The award has pushed me to try and understand the complex issues that Europe will grapple with in the coming decades. I will be doing a Financial Journalism MA, and I have planned freelance projects across Europe. I am excited for my future career in journalism!"

European Youth Parliament





Key Contacts

For more information on EU opportunities for young people, scan the codes below

Youth Wiki

Europe's online encyclopaedia for national youth policies



EURES – European Employment Services



European Personnel Selection Office

Information on recruitment and open competitions in the EU institutions



European Commission Representation in Ireland

Annual events & competitions for schools



All information on EU opportunities for young people is available on the European Youth Portal www.europa.eu/youth



Getting in Touch with the EU

Online

Information on the European Union is available on the Europa website: www.europa.eu

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union:

• Freephone: 00800 67 89 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),

• Email via:

www.europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

In Person

Visit one of our Europe Direct Centres: www.europedirect.europa.eu



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Europe Direct Letterkenny (and Gweedore)

Oliver Plunkett Road Letterkenny, Co. Donegal F92 R273 eudirect@donegallibrary.ie

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Ballinasloe Library, Society Street Ballinasloe, Co. Galway H53 T320 Ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie

Europe Direct Waterford

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Europe Direct Sligo

Stephen Street Co. Sligo F91 X264 europedirect@sligococo.ie

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University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4

University of Limerick EDC
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