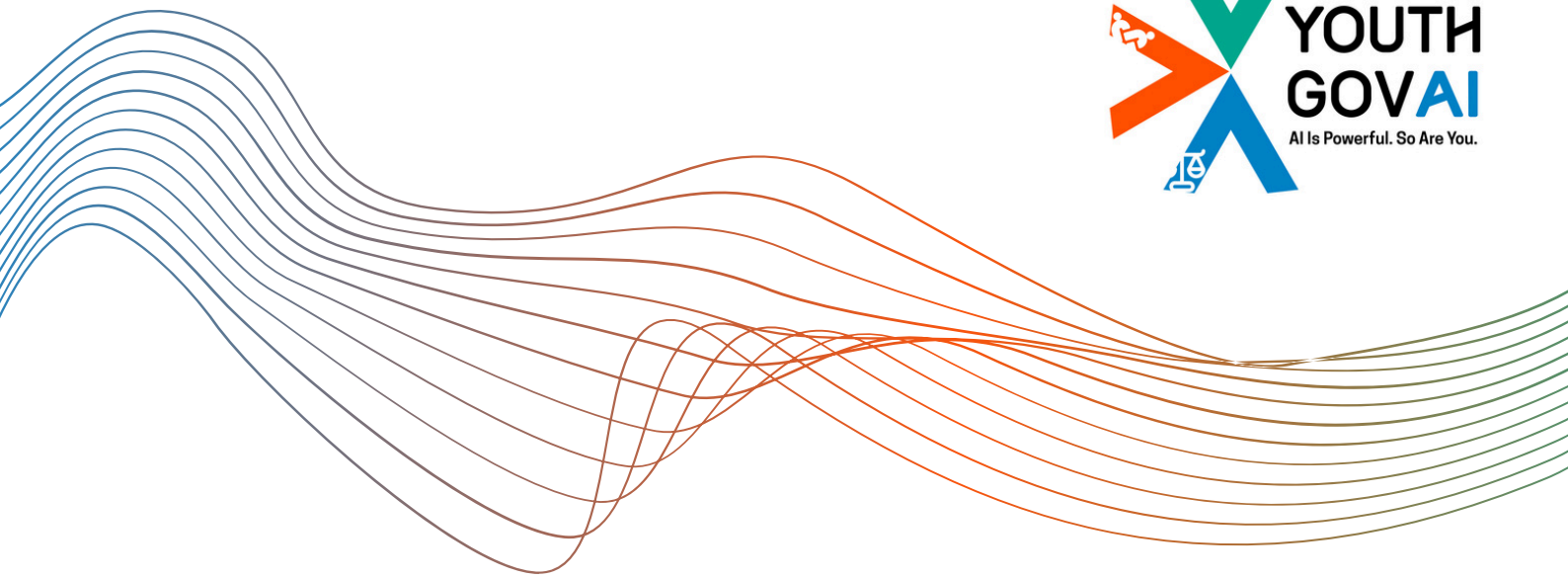




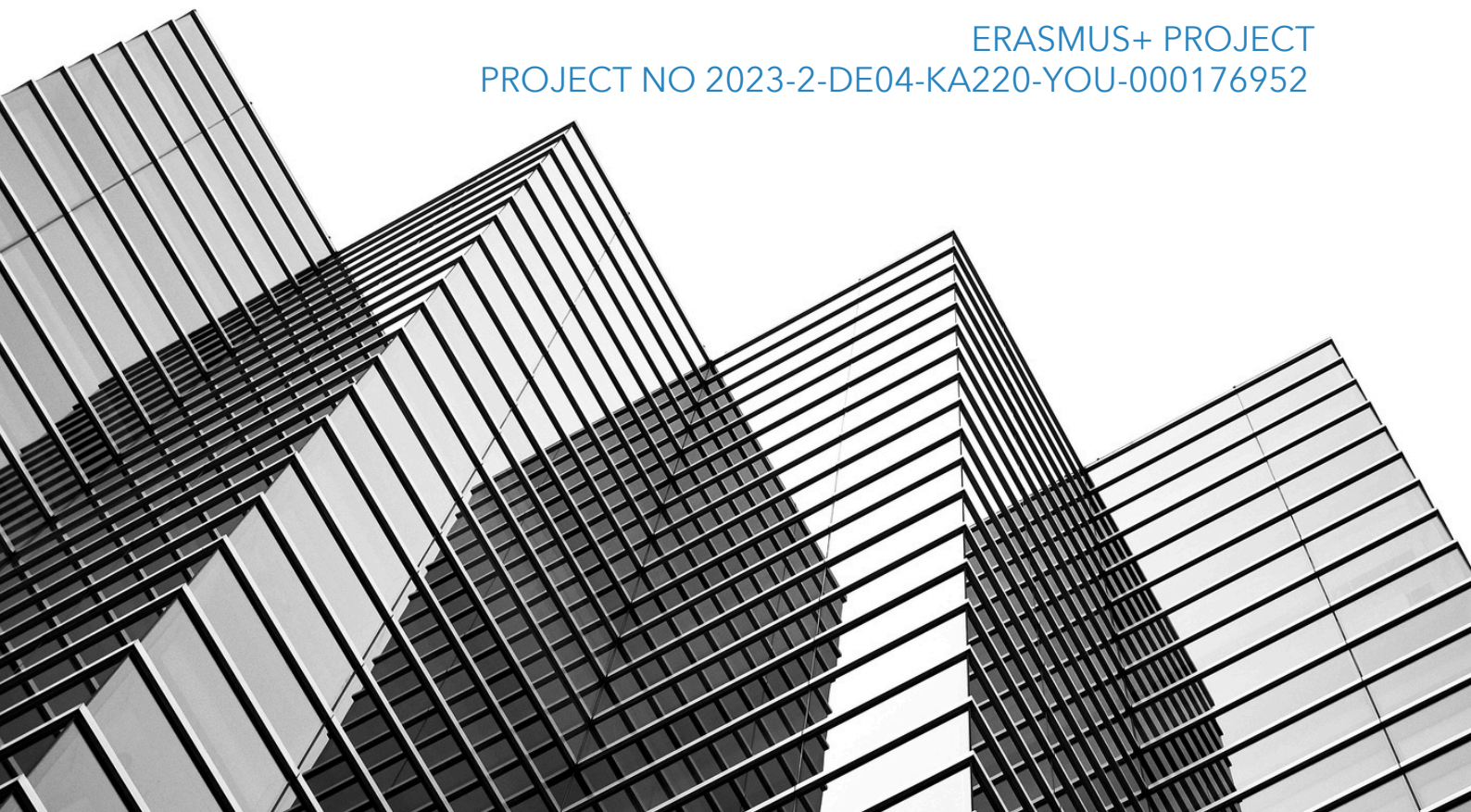
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# Shaping AI

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES,  
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS,  
AND POLICY TRENDS IN  
EUROPE

ERASMUS+ PROJECT  
PROJECT NO 2023-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000176952



## **Shaping AI: Youth Perspectives, Stakeholder Insights, and Policy Trends in Europe**

### **White Paper**

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## Executive Summary

This Whitepaper has been created within the ERASMUS+ project YouthGovAI. The initiative, developed through the collaboration of five project partners—EuroSoc#DIGITAL (Germany), ALFA Liguria (Italy), Genc STEM (Türkiye), the National Centre for Scientific Research “Demokritos” (Greece), and Fundacja inCREA (Poland)—stems from the shared recognition of the profound impact that AI technologies are exerting across all sectors of society and from the consequent urgency to equip the younger generations with the necessary tools to critically understand, evaluate, and influence such transformations.

The YouthGovAI European White Paper offers an overview of the intersection between AI Governance and youth participation across Europe and serves as a knowledge tool and a strategic resource for policymakers, teachers/educators, youth workers, and young people. Its overarching objective is to map the current regulatory frameworks, capture youth perspectives on AI, and identify structural and pedagogical pathways for involving young Europeans more meaningfully in decisions about the digital future they will inherit.

The White Paper emerges from a growing recognition that the rapid advancement of AI technologies—ranging from generative language models to algorithmic decision-making systems—is not only reshaping industries and institutions, but also deeply influencing the daily lives, opportunities, and rights of young people. Despite their high levels of exposure to AI, youth are rarely included as active stakeholders in conversations about how these technologies should be designed, deployed, and regulated. This democratic gap, the whitepaper argues, not only undermines the legitimacy of AI governance but also impairs its effectiveness, as it excludes the very group that stands to be most impacted in the long term.

The White Paper combines regulatory and policy analysis, stakeholder mapping, quantitative survey data, and qualitative insights from national and transnational focus groups and co-creation sessions. The analysis begins with a detailed overview of existing European and national AI regulations, including the recently adopted EU Artificial Intelligence Act (2024), the 2019 Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, the 2020 White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021–2027. These frameworks collectively signal the EU’s

commitment to balancing innovation with ethical oversight, yet the report notes that they often lack mechanisms for integrating youth input in substantive ways.

Alongside this policy review, the document presents a comparative synthesis of national white papers produced by the project's partner countries—Germany, Italy, Türkiye, Greece, and Poland. These national insights reveal a highly uneven landscape, where some countries have taken proactive steps toward AI governance while others are still grappling with fragmented or siloed approaches. In all cases, however, there is a shared absence of structured, systemic engagement with youth as contributors to AI governance debates. This common omission underscores the urgency of enabling youth to influence digital policies.

Central to the White Paper are two complementary data collection processes: a quantitative transnational survey and a series of focus groups and co-creation workshops gathering qualitative data. The online survey, implemented across the five participating countries, gathered the responses of over 800 young people and explored their familiarity with AI, use of AI in education and daily life, self-perceived competence, trust in AI systems, and ability to identify misinformation. Key findings indicate that while youth display high levels of exposure and basic recognition of AI technologies—such as ChatGPT, recommendation algorithms, and digital assistants—this familiarity is not matched by conceptual depth or critical understanding. Most respondents reported low confidence in their ability to explain how AI works or to verify the credibility of AI-generated information, highlighting a significant gap in AI literacy that transcends national borders. Moreover, participants expressed ambivalence about the trustworthiness of AI systems, voicing scepticism about whether such technologies truly operate in their interests. They also reported moderate to low confidence in identifying disinformation, despite their awareness of AI's role in shaping online content. These findings emphasize the need for educational initiatives that go beyond technical skill-building to include ethical reflection, civic empowerment, and media literacy. AI literacy, the report contends, must be reframed as a democratic competence—an essential component of youth education in the digital age.

The qualitative strand of the research, which includes national and international focus groups and co-creation sessions, deepens these insights by exploring the lived experiences of youth,

educators, AI experts and professionals working at the intersection of education, technology, and civic engagement. These discussions reveal widespread concern about institutional barriers to youth participation, lack of training among educators, and the limited availability of pedagogical tools capable of fostering critical engagement with AI. Participants advocated for interdisciplinary approaches, storytelling-based methods, and participatory policy platforms that empower young people to act not merely as users of technology but as co-designers of its future. Further key recommendations emerging from the focus groups and co-creation sessions include the systematic integration of AI literacy into school curricula; the creation of participatory mechanisms such as youth councils or advisory boards on AI; the development of inclusive, context-sensitive educational materials; and the reinforcement of stakeholder coalitions that bring together youth organizations, civil society, public institutions, and industry actors.

In conclusion, this White Paper identifies the exclusion of youth as a critical deficit in current AI governance and proposes actionable solutions. As Europe moves forward with ambitious plans to regulate AI and lead globally in ethical technological innovation, ensuring the inclusion of youth perspectives is not optional—it is imperative. The YouthGovAI initiative, through its findings and recommendations, affirms that young people are not only ready to engage in shaping the digital world but must be granted the opportunities, tools, and recognition to do so.

## Introduction

*“AI system” means a machine-based system that is designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy and that may exhibit adaptiveness after deployment, and that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environment.” (Art.3, EU Artificial Intelligence Act).*

The rapid evolution of AI is transforming nearly every sector of society, bringing both opportunities and challenges. As AI systems become more integrated into everyday life they impact fundamental rights, including privacy, non-discrimination, and access to opportunities



and raise concerns over algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability, and the potential misuse of AI. For young people, AI presents both opportunities and risks. It can enhance education, provide career pathways, and support civic engagement, yet it also raises concerns about digital surveillance, data privacy, and the influence of AI-driven content on youth perspectives and decision-making. It is therefore crucial to ensure that AI is governed in a way that aligns with European values of human dignity, fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. AI governance should foster ethical and responsible AI development that benefits all members of society, particularly young people, who will experience the most long-term effects of AI-driven transformations.

This European White Paper developed within the YouthGovAI project serves as a foundational document to frame and support the project's mission: empowering young people in their understanding of AI and strengthening their capacity to participate meaningfully in its governance. Conceived as a strategic and knowledge-based resource, the White Paper provides an overview of the current landscape of AI regulation in the EU as well as the partner countries, with particular attention to the implications for youth and youth participation.

The White Paper is rooted in a dual need. On the one hand, it responds to the rapid advancement and integration of AI technologies into everyday life and institutional systems across Europe. On the other, it addresses the often-overlooked perspectives of young people, who are simultaneously the most digitally immersed generation and one of the least represented in policy discussions concerning AI (Gasser 2024). Within this context, the document seeks to map the state of ongoing debates around AI regulation at European level, drawing from policy documents, regulatory frameworks, and evolving proposals that aim to ensure AI development aligns with fundamental rights, democratic values, and ethical standards.

An integral part of the White Paper is a stakeholder analysis, which outlines the ecosystem of actors involved in AI development, deployment, and governance. This includes governmental institutions, regulatory authorities, private sector companies, civil society organisations, academic and research bodies, and youth-focused entities. The analysis aims to highlight the roles, responsibilities, and potential influence of each actor, especially regarding their engagement with youth or their impact on young people's lives.

The document also includes a comparative overview of the state of AI regulation in the countries represented by the project partners. This comparative angle allows for an understanding of national specificities and regulatory approaches while identifying common challenges and opportunities across different contexts.

Finally, the White Paper presents the results of a representative quantitative survey conducted among young people in partner countries. The survey investigates their levels of AI awareness, understanding, and attitudes, with the goal of identifying knowledge gaps, widespread misconceptions, and areas of concern. These empirical findings will directly inform the pedagogical design of AI literacy courses for both youth workers and young people themselves, thus ensuring that future educational materials are grounded in real needs and knowledge levels.

## Importance of including youth perspectives on AI Governance

From the viewpoint of the project consortium the inclusion of youth perspectives in the discourse surrounding AI constitutes a fundamental democratic imperative that directly impacts the legitimacy, equity, and future sustainability of technological governance. In an era where digital technologies permeate every aspect of daily life, young people interact with algorithmic structures from an early age—through social media platforms, recommendation engines, educational technologies, health applications, and even through systems that influence their wellbeing online—thus acquiring unique, experience-based insights into both the empowering and the disempowering dimensions of AI.

As expressed by our experts in the Focus Groups, despite their profound entanglement with these technologies, the voices of young people remain underrepresented within the decision-making processes that determine how AI is developed, deployed, and regulated. Too often, regulatory frameworks are shaped predominantly by adult policymakers, corporate actors, and technical experts, with insufficient mechanisms for integrating the perspectives of those who are most deeply affected by the consequences of these choices. Engaging youth meaningfully in

conversations about AI regulation, therefore, is not a mere act of symbolic participation; it is a necessary step toward ensuring that digital societies evolve in ways that respect and promote the rights and needs of all citizens.

The perspectives of young people offer essential contributions to the governance of AI, particularly because they understand firsthand the ways in which AI can simultaneously open new avenues for learning and creativity while also posing serious risks to privacy, autonomy, and access to credible information. Their insights can thus expose blind spots in regulatory frameworks, offering an understanding of technological impacts that might otherwise be overlooked.

Moreover, the inclusion of youth in AI governance discussions contributes directly to the resilience of democratic institutions, as young participants develop an enhanced sense of civic responsibility and agency, understanding that their voices can and do influence complex societal challenges. Far from being passive recipients of technological change, young people can become proactive agents of innovation, advocacy, and accountability, helping to steer AI development towards ethical, rights-based, and socially beneficial directions.

Incorporating youth perspectives is also crucial from a foresight perspective, as decisions made today regarding AI regulation will shape the socio-technical landscapes that younger generations will inhabit. Whether in relation to labour market transformations, political participation, education, healthcare, or climate action, AI will increasingly mediate the opportunities and constraints that define individual and collective futures. To exclude young people from participating in decisions about AI is, therefore, to deny them a say in the configuration of the very world they will inherit.

Recognizing these imperatives, the YouthGovAI project is founded on the conviction that the meaningful participation of young people must begin with deliberate investment in education, critical dialogue, and capacity-building. AI literacy, understood not merely as technical knowledge but as an encompassing awareness of ethical, social, and political implications, is an essential precondition for enabling youth to engage substantively in governance processes. Through tailored educational initiatives, participatory workshops, and platforms for

deliberation, YouthGovAI seeks to bridge the prevailing gap between youth experiences and policymaking arenas, empowering young people with the competencies, confidence, and critical perspectives necessary to advocate for equitable, transparent, and human-centred AI governance.

In conclusion, the integration of youth perspectives into AI regulation and governance is a multidimensional imperative: it is a matter of democratic legitimacy, social justice, and pragmatic policy effectiveness. It responds to the ethical need to respect the rights of those most affected by technological change, leverages the experiential knowledge that young people uniquely possess, and strengthens the societal capacity to navigate an increasingly complex digital future. Challenges posed by AI cannot be met through top-down, expert-driven models alone, but require the active and informed participation of all sectors of society—especially those whose futures are most at stake. By educating, empowering, and involving youth today, we lay the groundwork for a more just, inclusive, and democratic governance of AI in the years to come.

## State of European and national AI Regulation

### Main EU Regulation and laws on AI

In the past years, the European Union has been working to establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for Artificial Intelligence. This is driven by the need to ensure AI development is safe, ethical, and aligned with fundamental European values, such as human rights and democratic principles. The EU's approach to AI regulation balances innovation with public safety and ethical considerations.

The following analyses the main European regulations on artificial intelligence in recent years, focusing on key legal frameworks aimed at ensuring ethical, safe, and innovative AI development.

## Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI (2019)

The *Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI* (Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission 2019) were released by the High-Level Expert Group on AI, established by the European Commission, on 8 April 2019. The aim of the guidelines is to provide a framework for designing AI systems that respect European values and rights. In particular, these ethical guidelines introduced the concept of "trustworthy Artificial Intelligence", which refers to the idea that AI should follow seven essential key requirements that AI systems must fulfil to be considered trustworthy:

**Human Agency and Oversight:** AI systems should enhance human capabilities, enabling informed decision-making and protecting fundamental rights. Simultaneously, effective oversight mechanisms must be in place, which can be implemented through approaches such as human-in-the-loop, human-on-the-loop, and human-in-command, which places human knowledge and experience at the core of machine learning processes.

**Technical Robustness and Safety:** AI systems must be robust and secure, prioritizing safety by including fallback plans in case of errors. They should also be accurate, reliable, and reproducible to minimize and prevent unintended harm effectively.

**Privacy and Data Governance:** AI must respect privacy and ensure data protection. Data governance mechanisms that consider the quality and integrity of the data while ensuring legitimate access must be implemented.

**Transparency:** AI systems should be understandable and explainable. Data, systems, and AI business models should be transparent, supported by traceability mechanisms to ensure accountability. Additionally, AI systems and their decisions should be explained in a way that is tailored to the stakeholders. Users must be aware that they are interacting with an AI system and should be informed about its capabilities and limitations.

**Diversity, non-Discrimination and Fairness:** AI systems must ensure fairness and avoid biases in decision-making, as they can lead to harmful outcomes, including the marginalization of vulnerable groups and the reinforcement of prejudice and discrimination. To promote



inclusivity, AI systems should be accessible to everyone, regardless of disabilities, and should involve relevant stakeholders throughout their entire lifecycle.

**Societal and environmental well-being:** AI systems should serve the well-being of all people, including future generations. To achieve this, they must be sustainable and environmentally friendly, considering their impact on the environment, other living beings, and society at large. Their social and societal implications must be thoroughly evaluated to ensure positive outcomes.

**Accountability:** There should be clear mechanisms for assigning responsibility for AI systems and their outcomes. This includes mechanisms for auditing, redress, and addressing negative impacts.

The recommendations of the AI High-Level Expert Group have significantly influenced the institutions of the European Union. These guidelines marked a significant step forward compared to the ethical principles previously adopted by many companies and governments.

### Artificial Intelligence White Paper (2020)

The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence: a European approach to excellence and trust (European Commission 2020), was an important precursor to the EU AI Act. It outlines the EU's vision for "human-centric" AI and focuses on two core pillars.

**Ecosystem of Excellence:** This set of actions aims to boost Europe's capacity for AI research, innovation, and deployment. The Commission proposed increasing annual investment in AI to at least €20 billion over the decade, strengthening research networks, fostering public-private partnerships, supporting SMEs, and ensuring access to quality data and computing resources. It also emphasises skills development and measures to attract and retain AI talent.

**Ecosystem of Trust:** This covers proposals for a regulatory framework ensuring AI is lawful, ethical, and robust. Central is a risk-based approach: "high-risk" AI systems—especially in health, transport, policing, or justice—would face strict requirements for data quality, transparency, human oversight, and robustness, while lower-risk uses would be subject to

lighter measures. The framework aims to safeguard fundamental rights, privacy, and security, and to prevent harmful or discriminatory uses.

Essentially, the White Paper sets out a balanced path for the future of AI in Europe, seeking to combine technological leadership with the highest standards of safety, ethics, and respect for fundamental rights. By fostering an ecosystem of excellence, it aims to mobilise resources, strengthen Europe's capacity to innovate, and ensure that AI contributes to economic growth, societal well-being, and sustainable development. At the same time, through an ecosystem of trust, it seeks to build public confidence, create legal certainty for businesses, and prevent misuse or harm, particularly in high-risk contexts. In doing so, the White Paper positions Europe as a global leader in the governance of AI, committed to ensuring that this transformative technology serves people, reflects shared values, and delivers benefits across the whole of society while mitigating potential risks.

### Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)

The European Commission's *Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027* (European Commission 2020) is a strategy designed to enhance the use of digital technologies in education and training across the EU. Its adoption responds to the growing importance of digital skills for the future of society and the workforce, aiming to train community (teachers, students), policy makers, academia and researchers on national, EU and international level to tackle the challenges posed by digitalization, giving them the necessary skills to navigate the digital world, including AI literacy.

The Digital Education Plan sets out two strategic priorities and fourteen actions to support them. Specifically:

#### **Priority 1: Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem**

- Action 1: Structured Dialogue with Member States on digital education and skills & Council recommendation on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training
- Action 2: Council Recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education

- Action 3: European Digital Education Content Framework
- Action 4: Connectivity and digital equipment for education and training
- Action 5: Digital transformation plans for education and training institutions
- Action 6: Ethical guidelines on the use of AI and data in teaching and learning for educators

## **Priority 2: Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation**

- Action 7: Common guidelines for teachers and educators to foster digital literacy and tackle disinformation through education and training
- Action 8: Updating the European Digital Competence Framework to include AI and data-related skills
- Action 9: European Digital Skills Certificate (EDSC)
- Action 10: Council recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training
- Action 11: Cross-national collection of data and an EU-level target on student digital skills
- Action 12: Digital Opportunity Traineeships
- Action 13: Women's participation in STEM
- European Digital Education Hub

The Plan also includes initiatives to enhance online learning platforms, the creation of high-quality digital educational content, and support for institutions in adopting innovative technologies. The European Commission has also promoted initiatives such as the European Digital Education Hub, a platform for sharing digital educational resources, and the European Education Area, which aims to promote a more integrated and cohesive educational system at the European level.

In summary, the Digital Education Action Plan aims to prepare the European education system for the challenges of digitalization, ensuring that digital technologies become an opportunity for all, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and helping to bridge the digital skills gap.

## Artificial Intelligence Act (2024)

On March 13, 2024, the European Parliament approved the *EU AI Act*, the world's first comprehensive law on Artificial Intelligence, which officially came into force on August 1, 2024. It consists of a regulation that aimed at creating a harmonized and unified regulatory framework for Artificial Intelligence across the entire European Union. The AI Act is based on the principle that Artificial Intelligence should be developed and used in a safe, ethical manner, and in compliance with fundamental rights and European values. For this reason, it includes a classification of AI systems based on their level of risk to safety and people's rights and establishes a set of requirements and obligations for the providers and users of such systems.

The purpose of the AI ACT as laid out in article 1 is to define

- (a) harmonised rules for the placing on the market, the putting into service, and the use of AI systems in the Union;
- (b) prohibitions of certain AI practices;
- (c) specific requirements for high-risk AI systems and obligations for operators of such systems;
- (d) harmonised transparency rules for certain AI systems;
- (e) harmonised rules for the placing on the market of general-purpose AI models;
- (f) rules on market monitoring, market surveillance, governance and enforcement;
- (g) measures to support innovation, with a particular focus on SMEs, including start-ups.

The approach of the regulation is risk-based: while it is true that AI can bring benefits to society and the economy, it is equally true that it may pose risks in terms of safety and rights. For this reason, the AI Act introduces a **risk-based regulatory approach** that classifies AI systems into four categories according to the level of risk they pose to health, safety, and fundamental rights (AI Act, Recital 27, p. 8).

**Minimal or no risk:** These AI systems have negligible impact on individuals' rights or safety and offer substantial freedom of choice and control. They are not subject to specific obligations under the AI Act, but must still comply with applicable laws such as data protection and consumer protection. Examples include AI-driven video games that adapt gameplay or create

dynamic virtual environments, as well as aesthetic tools like photo filters that modify images or lighting effects.

**Limited risk:** AI systems in this category can influence users' decisions or rights but to a lesser extent than high-risk systems. They are subject to **transparency obligations** requiring that users be informed they are interacting with AI or when content has been generated or manipulated by AI (AI Act, Art. 50, p. 82-83). Examples include chatbots, personalised recommendation tools, and deepfake generators, where clear labelling builds user awareness and supports informed decision-making.

**High risk:** These systems can have a significant impact on fundamental rights or safety and must comply with stringent requirements for data governance, documentation, human oversight, transparency, robustness, and accuracy (AI Act, Arts. 6, 8–15, p. 53–61). High-risk categories are listed in **Annex III** (AI Act, p. 127–129) and include uses in education and vocational training, employment, law enforcement, migration, critical infrastructure, and essential services. Such systems must undergo rigorous conformity assessments before being placed on the market.

**Unacceptable risk:** Prohibited AI practices under **Article 5** (AI Act, p. 51-53) include systems that manipulate human behaviour to circumvent free will, exploit vulnerabilities, or enable social scoring by public authorities. These practices are banned outright, with narrow exemptions for certain law enforcement uses of real-time remote biometric identification under strict conditions.

The AI Act also sets out proportionate **enforcement and penalty provisions** (AI Act, Arts. 99 – 102, p. 115 - 118). National supervisory authorities, in coordination through the European Artificial Intelligence Board (AI Act, Arts. 65 - 67; p. 95 - 98), can impose significant fines for non-compliance, scaled to the severity and nature of the infringement. Member States must also ensure that individuals whose rights are infringed have access to effective remedies and compensation mechanisms. This comprehensive framework, combining binding rules with innovation-friendly measures, reflects the EU's commitment to fostering trustworthy AI while safeguarding fundamental rights.



## Country-specific insights

This section presents country-specific findings derived from five national white papers produced by the project partners in Germany (Ptassek 2025), Greece (Katsamori, et al. 2025), Italy (Giovannetti and Russom 2025), Poland (Skrodzki and Wojszko 2025), and Türkiye (Göcen and Karadaş 2025) and contextualises them within the broader framework of European AI regulation and governance. While the European Union's overarching regulatory architecture—primarily shaped by the Artificial Intelligence Act—serves as a common reference point, each country has approached the challenges and opportunities of AI governance through distinct legislative, institutional, and cultural lenses. These national differences provide a rich comparative framework for understanding both convergences and divergences in AI governance and youth engagement across Europe.

### Germany

Germany demonstrates a robust commitment to aligning national strategies with the EU AI Act while also contending with structural complexities rooted in its federal system. The national adaptation of the AI Act is complemented by the German Standardization Roadmap for AI, which provides technical and ethical implementation guidelines. Enforcement mechanisms are expected to be led by the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA), yet fragmentation among regulatory bodies remains a challenge. Germany's political discourse reflects tension between innovation and regulation: while policymakers emphasize economic competitiveness, civil society actors advocate for stringent oversight, especially concerning general-purpose AI models. Public, private, and academic stakeholders are highly engaged. Major industrial actors caution against over-regulation that could hamper innovation, whereas NGOs and academic institutions stress human rights, transparency, and accountability. Youth inclusion is minimal in policymaking structures and, according to German survey results and expert opinions, AI literacy is insufficient among young people, despite high levels of exposure to AI in daily life. The German report underscores a techno-solutionist tendency in the discourse around AI and the urgent need for critical, participatory AI education.

## Italy

In Italy, AI governance remains at a relatively early stage, with strong alignment to the EU AI Act and GDPR but limited national legislation specifically addressing AI. The country has launched a National AI Strategy (2022–2024), but its implementation has been slow and uneven. Institutional fragmentation and under-resourced enforcement mechanisms hinder systemic regulation. AI in education is still peripheral, despite growing public discourse on its risks and benefits. Italy's stakeholder ecosystem is less structured compared to Germany, with limited coordinated input from private actors or civil society on AI-specific issues. The youth voice is similarly marginalised in digital policy debates. Survey findings indicate that young Italians use AI technologies frequently—especially in education and entertainment—but possess a low level of confidence in their critical understanding of AI tools and their implications. The focus groups reveal concern about surveillance, misinformation, and a lack of educational resources that promote ethical and civic reflection on AI. Participants demand training for educators and structured curricula to address the multidimensional nature of AI.

## Poland

Poland stands at a transitional point in its AI regulatory development. Although it has not yet enacted a comprehensive AI law, the country is actively engaged in aligning its national strategies with EU-level frameworks. Efforts are underway to implement AI-focused components within existing digitalisation programs, and Poland participates in EU consultations and standard-setting bodies. However, a centralised AI regulatory authority has yet to be established, leading to a fragmented and often reactive policy landscape. In the educational domain, Poland has begun to introduce AI-related topics in curricula, but there is a noticeable lack of structured implementation or teacher training. Stakeholder mapping reveals a growing awareness of the need for multi-sectoral cooperation, yet youth engagement mechanisms are still underdeveloped. Young respondents in Poland demonstrate moderate familiarity with AI, particularly in gaming and social media, but express limited trust in AI systems and low confidence in assessing their reliability. Focus group discussions emphasise the need for more inclusive education that integrates ethical reflection, as well as opportunities for youth to influence national digital strategies.

## Türkiye

Türkiye presents a rapidly evolving AI landscape shaped by recent legislative developments. Although a dedicated AI law has not yet been enacted, the *Artificial Intelligence Bill* submitted to the Grand National Assembly in 2024 signifies a major step toward comprehensive regulation. This move complements the *National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2021–2025)* and its updated Action Plan (2024–2025), which outline key priorities including regulation, education, and international cooperation. The country has already mandated AI-specific data protection practices under its Personal Data Protection Law and is aligning with global standards such as the EU AI Act and the Council of Europe’s AI Convention. In the educational sector, Türkiye shows significant progress: AI is integrated into formal curricula at secondary and university levels, and platforms such as MEBI are providing AI-driven personalised learning. Public-private collaborations and innovation hubs foster experimentation and application of AI tools in classrooms. Despite these efforts, ethical awareness and AI literacy among youth remain limited. Survey respondents show active use of AI but limited understanding of its implications. The national focus group discussions reveal support for AI in education but also call for clearer ethical guidelines and protections. Youth engagement in policymaking is currently minimal but is increasingly being acknowledged as a priority by public institutions.

## Greece

Greece has recently intensified its national approach to AI governance. In 2023, the country established the High-Level Advisory Committee on AI under the Prime Minister, leading to the 2024 publication of "*A Blueprint for Greece’s AI Transformation*," which defines core priorities including transparency, accountability, and public trust. Greece has committed to setting up a National Supervisory Authority for AI and is developing a national strategy in alignment with the EU AI Act. These actions reflect a proactive regulatory stance, though enforcement capacities are still developing. In terms of education, Greece exhibits notable momentum. The Institute of Educational Policy has launched AI-themed materials, teacher training on AI ethics, and pilot curricula aimed at digital literacy. Greece focus groups show that young people in Greece are highly familiar with AI, but their understanding is often superficial and shaped by

commercial exposure rather than critical reflection. Participants stressed the need for hybrid educational approaches that connect technical understanding with democratic competencies and civic values. The Greek report also underscores the role of grassroots civil society and advisory bodies, such as Homo Digitalis and UNICEF's Child & Youth Advisory Board, in advocating for ethical, youth-inclusive AI governance. Youth engagement in AI policy is not yet institutionalised, though promising models exist in the form of forums and youth consultations. As in other national contexts, Greece demonstrates that exposure to AI is high among youth, but structured participation and informed agency remain limited. This suggests a pan-European need to strengthen institutional mechanisms that embed youth voices within national digital strategies.

### Common Themes and Divergences

Across all five countries several recurring themes and structural challenges emerge, underscoring a pan-European disconnect between the rapid diffusion of AI technologies and the preparedness of policy, education, and participatory systems to govern them inclusively and ethically. Despite differing institutional architectures and policy maturity levels, each country confirms the widespread exclusion of youth from formal AI governance processes, the fragmented integration of AI in education, and a shared tension between innovation and regulation.

A first commonality is the marginalisation of young people in AI policy design. In all national contexts, young people are among the most digitally exposed populations, frequently engaging with AI in their daily lives—from search engines and social media to generative AI tools. Yet, this is rarely reflected in their role as active stakeholders. Greece mirrors the patterns identified in Germany, Italy, Poland, and Türkiye: although youth demonstrate high levels of familiarity with AI terminology and applications, their voices are absent from legislative debates and institutional consultations. Initiatives such as UNICEF Greece's Child & Youth Advisory Board provide models for youth inclusion, but these remain exceptions rather than systemic practices. Across countries, participatory mechanisms are either non-existent or underdeveloped, highlighting an urgent need to institutionalise youth engagement in digital governance.

The second recurring theme concerns the role of the EU AI Act as a regulatory anchor. In both EU and non-EU countries (such as Türkiye), the AI Act has triggered legislative action and served as a normative blueprint for domestic strategy. Germany leads in transposing the Act's provisions through the Standardization Roadmap and stakeholder dialogue platforms. Türkiye has gone beyond alignment, submitting a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence Bill that reflects the Act's risk-based framework. Greece is also advancing toward full alignment through its forthcoming national AI strategy and the planned establishment of a National High Level Advisory Committee in AI. Italy and Poland, by contrast, remain in earlier stages of implementation, slowed by administrative fragmentation and weaker inter-ministerial coordination. Still, in all five contexts, the AI Act is seen as a catalyst—mobilising public debate, guiding legal harmonisation, and providing a common vocabulary for rights-based AI governance.

Another shared tension lies between innovation and regulation. In every national context, private actors—especially large tech companies and start-ups—express concern about regulatory overreach potentially stifling experimentation and competitiveness. This is particularly salient in Germany and Türkiye, where industrial stakeholders have strong lobbying capacity and are directly engaged in policymaking discussions. In Greece, too, the private sector plays an influential role, though there is growing awareness among civil society actors about the need for protective frameworks grounded in human rights as promoted by European bodies such as the Council of Europe. Across all five countries, civil society consistently calls for more stringent ethical oversight, transparency, and accountability in the development and deployment of AI systems. This dichotomy reveals the need for balanced, participatory governance models that mediate between economic innovation and societal safeguarding.

In the realm of education, all five countries are attempting—albeit unevenly—to introduce AI literacy into formal learning. However, key challenges persist: the lack of cohesive national curricula, insufficient training for teachers/educators, and the absence of interdisciplinary approaches that bridge technical knowledge with humanitarian knowledge and civic awareness. Germany and Türkiye demonstrate the most systemic progress, thanks to

decentralised educational innovation and robust digital strategies, respectively. Greece emerges as a promising case, having launched textbook reforms and teacher training initiatives via the Institute of Educational Policy. Yet, as the Greek focus group underscored, most youth understand AI in commercial terms—through platforms like ChatGPT or Instagram algorithms—rather than as a socio-political issue. In Italy and Poland, meanwhile, educational responses are more fragmented and often left to local or voluntary initiatives. Across countries, young people consistently call for curricula that not only explain how AI works but also critically engage with its ethical, societal, and political implications.

Despite national differences in institutional readiness and governance culture, all five countries converge on the recognition that youth participation and educational reform are indispensable pillars of ethical AI governance. The core message: effective, just, and democratic governance of artificial intelligence in Europe requires a paradigm shift—one that places young people not at the margins, but at the centre of digital transformation. This shift must include the co-design of educational content, formal mechanisms for youth policy input, and sustained cross-sectoral collaboration among public institutions, schools, universities, industry, and civil society.

Ultimately, what differentiates the five countries is not the recognition of these needs, but the extent to which they have developed the institutional pathways to address them. Greece's recent reforms reflect momentum toward alignment and inclusion, while Germany offers mature stakeholder ecosystems that can support youth-focused reform if appropriately leveraged. Türkiye showcases strong central planning and integration, yet it must expand participatory channels. Italy and Poland signal intent but require structural investments and policy coherence to move from aspiration to implementation. Together, these national portraits articulate a European imperative: that youth must be recognised not only as digital natives, but as political actors and democratic agents in shaping the future of artificial intelligence.

Across all national contexts, a common thread emerges: the rapid evolution of AI technologies has outpaced the development of comprehensive legal and ethical frameworks. While some countries have made significant strides in drafting national AI strategies or participating in the implementation of the EU AI Act, others remain at an earlier stage, with fragmented or sector-



specific approaches. Youth engagement in policy-making processes also varies widely, ranging from structured consultations and youth councils to more informal or ad hoc initiatives.

Despite these differences, all national white papers underscore a shared concern: the lack of systematic inclusion of youth perspectives in the governance of AI. Moreover, they highlight a widespread need for AI literacy among both young people and youth workers, as well as greater institutional awareness of the societal impacts of AI technologies.

## Analysis of European and national Stakeholders

### Identification and Categorization of Key Stakeholders at the European Level

In the realm of AI governance, particularly concerning the empowerment of youth and their active participation, several European organizations and institutions play pivotal roles. Engaging these stakeholders — from policymaking bodies and civil society organizations to technology companies, youth-led initiatives, and international institutions — is essential to ensure that young individuals are adequately represented in AI policy discussions and development. By systematically mapping these actors, the YouthGovAI project aims to create targeted pathways for advocacy, partnership, and participation.

Policymaking institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Economic and Social Committee, are at the forefront of shaping regulatory frameworks and setting normative standards for AI across Europe. Engaging with these bodies can enable young people to contribute directly to legislative and policy design, ensuring that emerging rules safeguard their rights and foster inclusive digital futures.

Civil society organizations bring a crucial advocacy perspective, working to defend fundamental rights, promote democratic values, and build bridges between institutions and the communities they serve. Organizations like the 5Rights Foundation and the European AI & Society Fund for example not only advocate for ethical and human-centred AI, but also possess expertise in mobilizing public opinion and influencing policymakers. Partnering with such organizations

can amplify youth voices and channel them into broader societal conversations about AI governance.

Meanwhile, technology companies and industry alliances, such as Intel's AI for Youth program and the European Tech Alliance, are key actors in the development of AI technologies. Their role is critical because they operate at the cutting edge of innovation and have substantial influence over which technological solutions reach the market. Collaborating with these entities ensures that youth are equipped with the necessary technical literacy and empowered to participate in conversations about ethical design, accountability, and innovation.

Furthermore, youth-specific organizations, including European Horizons and AI Youth Lab, offer already-established platforms dedicated to youth engagement in policy and technological domains. Strengthening collaboration with these groups allows for the co-creation of initiatives that directly empower young people, fostering leadership, peer-learning, and advocacy skills specifically tailored to AI governance.

Finally, international organizations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO operate at the intersection of human rights, education, and technology. Their transnational reach and normative influence provide opportunities to embed youth-centered approaches into global AI governance debates, aligning European efforts with wider international standards and frameworks. At the same time, international organizations such as UNICEF are trying to establish a framework for the use of tech solutions in various sectors, such as education, for example, UNICEF's Global Learning Innovation Hub developed EdTech for Good Framework (UNICEF 2025), a comprehensive tool to identify and evaluate high-quality EdTech solutions that improve learning outcomes for children worldwide.

The following sections detail the key institutions, organizations, and networks whose collaboration will be critical to achieving a more youth-inclusive AI governance landscape across Europe.

## Policy-Making Institutions

**European Commission (EC):** As the executive branch of the European Union, the EC is responsible for proposing legislation and implementing decisions. The recently established

European AI Office within the EC serves as the central hub for AI expertise across member states, playing a crucial role in implementing the AI Act, especially concerning general-purpose AI. Incorporating youth perspectives into the EC's AI policies can ensure that the regulations and initiatives reflect the interests and concerns of younger generations shaping Europe's digital future.

The EC shapes regulatory frameworks, including the new AI Act. YouthGovAI could engage the EC to advocate for specific mechanisms ensuring youth participation in AI consultations, working groups, and future legislative initiatives. The EC could, in turn, provide YouthGovAI with access to policymaking processes, invite youth representatives to consultations, and disseminate YouthGovAI outputs through its official channels.

**European Parliament:** The European Parliament, representing EU citizens, has significant influence over AI legislation. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have advocated for ethical AI governance and the protection of citizens' rights. Engaging with the EP can facilitate the inclusion of youth voices in legislative debates, ensuring that policies are attuned to the needs and aspirations of young people. The EP influences and debates all major EU policies, including digital regulations. By building alliances with interested MEPs, YouthGovAI could organize youth hearings or contribute to parliamentary reports related to AI and youth rights. In return, MEPs could use YouthGovAI insights to strengthen arguments for more inclusive and ethically grounded AI legislation.

**European Economic and Social Committee (EESC):** As an advisory body representing civil society, the EESC has adopted opinions on integrating AI in public services and emphasizes the importance of ethical AI governance. Collaborating with the EESC can provide a platform for youth organizations to influence policy recommendations and advocate for youth-centric AI policies. The EESC provides opinions that influence EU policymaking. YouthGovAI could propose collaborative opinion papers or host joint events focused on youth and AI governance. The EESC could benefit from YouthGovAI's expertise in gathering youth perspectives, strengthening its role as a bridge between civil society and policymakers.

## Civil Society Organizations

**5Rights Foundation:** Dedicated to ensuring children's rights in the digital environment, 5Rights has been instrumental in advocating for age-appropriate design and protections for young individuals online. Their work has influenced significant legislative changes, such as the UK's Data Protection Act. Partnering with 5Rights can amplify efforts to safeguard youth interests in AI governance. YouthGovAI could partner with 5Rights to co-develop youth-led advocacy campaigns, ensuring AI is designed with age-appropriate and ethical safeguards. In turn, 5Rights could benefit from YouthGovAI's access to young voices and co-create new educational resources or research outputs.

**European AI & Society Fund:** Since its inception in 2020, this fund has supported over 40 organizations with over €8 million to shape AI to better serve society. Their grantees have emphasized fundamental rights and democratic freedoms in AI policymaking, making them a valuable ally in promoting youth engagement in AI discussions. This fund supports rights-based AI governance initiatives. YouthGovAI could collaborate with their grantees or even explore funding opportunities to scale activities like workshops and youth training sessions. In return, the Fund and its grantees would benefit from YouthGovAI's youth-focused methodologies and policy recommendations.

**European Youth Forum:** As the platform representing youth organizations across Europe, the Forum advocates for youth rights and participation in various policy areas. Engaging with them can facilitate the mainstreaming of youth perspectives in AI governance discussions. YouthGovAI could use the Forum's policy advocacy infrastructure to mainstream its key messages and reach broader audiences, including EU institutions. The Forum would gain from integrating youth-led AI governance proposals/activities more explicitly into its existing policy frameworks.

## Technology Companies

**Intel's AI for Youth Program:** This initiative empowers young individuals with AI technical and social skills inclusively. Collaborating with such programs can provide practical avenues for youth to engage with AI technologies and understand their implications. Engaging with Intel's

AI for Youth Program would provide YouthGovAI with access to a practical and well-established platform for building young people's technical and social skills related to AI. Through collaboration, YouthGovAI could integrate governance, ethical, and societal impact dimensions into existing training initiatives, offering young participants a more comprehensive understanding of AI and strengthening their capacity to engage meaningfully in AI policy discussions.

**European Tech Alliance (EUTA):** Representing leading tech companies from Europe, EUTA focuses on shaping EU tech policy. Engaging with EUTA can ensure that the industry's approach to AI development considers the perspectives and needs of young Europeans. Engaging with EUTA would allow YouthGovAI to connect directly with leading European technology companies that actively shape EU tech policy. Through collaboration, YouthGovAI could advocate for the integration of youth perspectives into industry discussions on AI development, promoting more inclusive, ethical, and socially responsible innovation that reflects the priorities of the younger generation.

## Youth Organizations

**European Horizons:** As a transatlantic think tank, European Horizons connects students and young professionals with experts to discuss the future of Europe and transatlantic relations. Their focus on policy work, including areas like AI and the digital sphere, makes them a strategic partner in promoting youth involvement in AI governance. Engaging with European Horizons would enable YouthGovAI to collaborate with a well-established network of students and young professionals actively involved in shaping European and transatlantic policy. By partnering, YouthGovAI could promote youth leadership in AI governance and ensure that young people's perspectives are integrated into broader discussions on the future of technology in Europe.

**Young European Federalists (JEF Europe):** JEF Europe is a pan-European, youth-led, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting European integration and democracy. With a network of national sections across the continent, JEF Europe engages young people in discussions and activities related to European politics, citizenship, and governance. Engaging JEF Europe would allow YouthGovAI to leverage a well-established network of young, politically

active Europeans committed to democratic participation and civic engagement. Through collaboration, YouthGovAI and JEF Europe could organize workshops, debates, and campaigns aimed at educating and empowering young people to take an active role in AI governance discussions

## International Organizations

**Council of Europe:** The CoE has been proactive in addressing AI's impact on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Their initiatives, such as the consultative meetings on AI's impact on young people's rights, highlight their commitment to integrating youth perspectives. Strengthening ties with the CoE can provide avenues for youth to participate in broader European AI governance discussions. Engaging with the Council of Europe would allow YouthGovAI to connect with a leading institution committed to safeguarding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in the context of AI. By collaborating, YouthGovAI could contribute youth perspectives to the CoE's ongoing initiatives on AI's societal impact.

**UNESCO:** Recognizing the significance of AI, UNESCO has organized forums to foster the responsible deployment of AI and ensure that the voices of youth are heard in these discussions. Engaging with UNESCO can elevate the discourse on youth participation in AI governance to a global platform and would enable YouthGovAI to contribute to global discussions on the ethical and responsible development of AI, while ensuring that youth voices are represented at the international level.

Incorporating these stakeholders into the YouthGovAI project can significantly enhance the dissemination and impact of its results. By fostering collaborations with these entities, the project can ensure that youth perspectives are not only acknowledged but actively integrated into AI governance frameworks.

To have a clearer idea of the standpoints of these stakeholders and to better strategize possible outreaches towards them, we will conduct a short stakeholder analysis. There are various approaches to conducting a stakeholder analysis, which can differ depending on the goal and scope. In many cases, however, stakeholder analysis focuses on two key elements: first, the interest that stakeholders have in a particular issue, and second, the amount and type of



resources they can mobilize to influence outcomes (Eden & Ackermann, 1998). Such analyses can be summarized in a power/interest matrix. This approach classifies stakeholders based on their power over a project and their interest in it.

By combining these two characteristics, four types of stakeholders can be identified:

- Stakeholders with high power and high interest should be closely involved;
- Stakeholders with high interest but low power should be kept informed;
- Stakeholders with high power but low interest should be kept satisfied;
- And those with low power and low interest only need to be informed.

The matrix then presents four quadrants:

- High Power / High Interest | Manage Closely (Priority Stakeholders)
- High Power / Low Interest | Keep Satisfied
- Low Power / High Interest | Keep Informed
- Low Power / Low Interest | Monitor

### **High Power / High Interest → *Manage Closely***

*(These could become core strategic partners — invest time and tailor engagement)*

- **European Commission (EC)**  
(High power over AI regulation, now more open to citizen and youth engagement through the AI Office)
- **European Parliament (EP)**  
(High influence on legislation, several MEPs champion youth and ethical tech issues)
- **European Youth Forum**  
(Very high interest in youth engagement and strong policy advocacy presence at EU level)

- **Council of Europe (CoE)**

(High normative influence on human rights and digital governance; already running youth consultations on AI)

**High Power / Low Interest → Keep Satisfied**

*(Important actors who could block or slow down progress if ignored, but are not naturally focused on youth in AI)*

- **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

(Important advisory role, but AI and youth issues are not their central mission)

- **European Tech Alliance (EUTA)**

(Powerful with tech influence, but industry groups may have lower natural interest in youth governance unless actively engaged)

- **UNESCO**

(Global normative power, but with many competing priorities beyond just youth and AI)

**Low Power / High Interest → Keep Informed**

*(Potential allies who can champion the cause but cannot by themselves change laws or industry standards)*

- **5Rights Foundation**

(Strong youth/rights advocacy, very aligned, but less institutional power)

- **European AI & Society Fund**

(Important funder/supporter ecosystem, very aligned, but not decision-makers)

- **European Horizons**

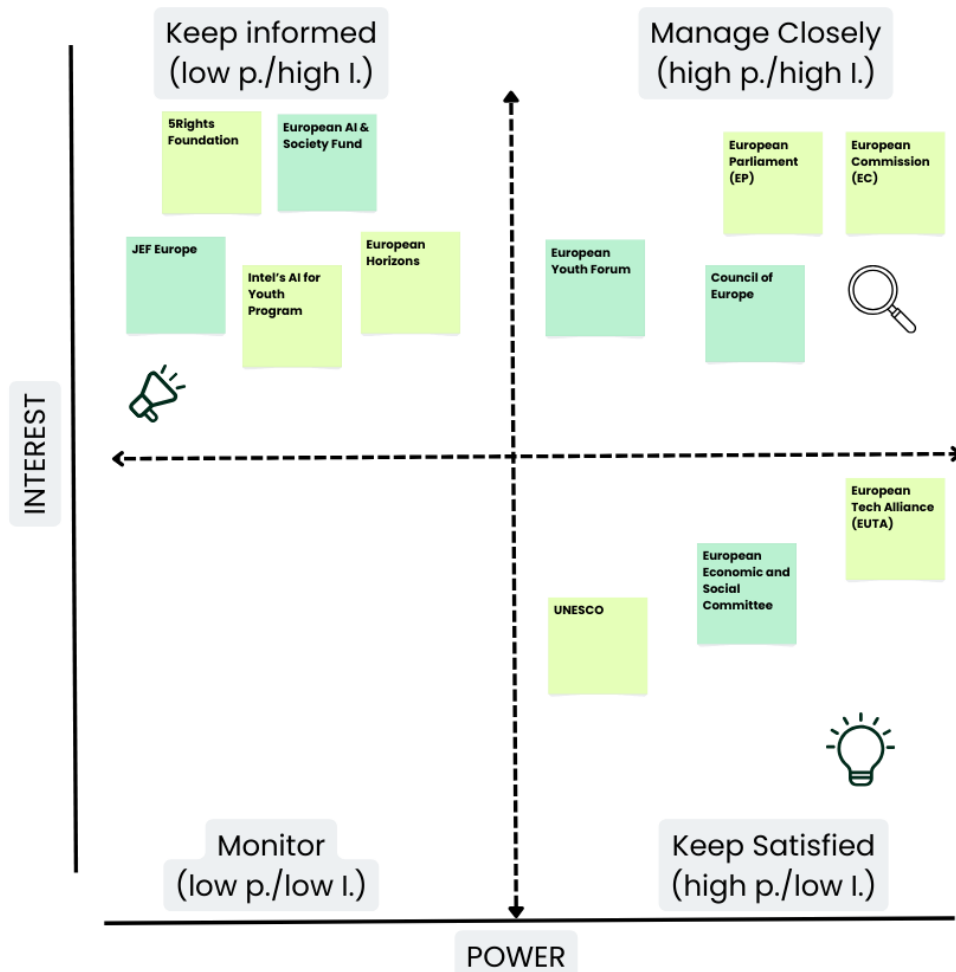
(Active youth think tank; excellent for collaboration, limited direct influence on EU policymaking)

- **Young European Federalists (JEF Europe)**  
(Great grassroots mobilizers, but limited institutional power over AI-specific decisions)
- **Intel's AI for Youth Program**  
(Important for education outreach, less direct governance influence)

**Low Power / Low Interest → *Monitor (Minimal Effort)***

*(Not strategically critical unless something changes)*

All the selected actors have at least one dimension (power or interest) that justifies strategic engagement (Fig. 1).



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Figure 1:EU Stakeholder Matrix

## Comparative Stakeholder Analysis

### Key Findings from Partner Countries

Each of the five national white papers provides a distinct yet interrelated view of the stakeholder ecosystems currently engaged in AI governance and youth education. These national contexts reveal different levels of maturity, coordination, and inclusion across public,

<sup>1</sup> National Stakeholder Matrices can be found in the national White Papers (<https://youthgovai.eu/results/>)

private, civil society, and educational actors, painting a diverse but insightful picture of the conditions under which AI policy and literacy are being developed.

In **Germany**, the stakeholder landscape (Fig. 2) is particularly well-articulated and institutionalised. The federal structure of the country has led to the development of multi-level governance mechanisms involving ministries at both federal and regional levels, such as the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and various Länder education authorities. Civil society organisations—especially those concerned with digital rights, like AlgorithmWatch and Gesellschaft für Informatik—play a vocal and organised role in advocating for human-centric AI governance. Academic institutions are actively engaged in interdisciplinary research and public policy dialogue. However, while the national ecosystem is rich and complex, youth organisations and student associations are underrepresented in formal AI consultations. Despite this, some participatory experiments, often spearheaded by civil society, attempt to include youth perspectives through workshops and public debates.

In **Italy**, the institutional framework is less consolidated. Although the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence has identified relevant sectors and actors, there is still a lack of inter-ministerial coordination and concrete implementation structures. Key national agencies such as AGID (Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale) and the Ministry for Enterprises and Made in Italy hold relevant competencies, yet their initiatives often proceed in silos. Civil society is only marginally involved in AI governance debates, and very few organisations explicitly deal with youth engagement in this field. The educational system shows a fragmented picture, with sporadic AI-related interventions driven mainly by universities or regional school networks rather than national strategy. The private sector's role is visible in terms of AI innovation, particularly among large tech companies, but dialogue with other stakeholders is limited.

**Poland's** stakeholder map highlights a digital governance landscape that is still in formation. Governmental efforts to integrate AI into national strategies are mainly channelled through the Ministry of Digital Affairs and the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, often without sustained collaboration with other departments or sectors. Academic research is active yet loosely connected to policymaking. Civil society actors are fewer and less vocal than in Germany or Türkiye, although some organisations focused on youth and education are beginning to raise

awareness about digital rights and AI ethics. The private sector, particularly in the gaming and IT industries, exhibits strong technical capabilities but shows limited concern for ethical regulation or educational outreach. Schools and teachers are only marginally engaged in discussions on AI, and there are few institutional channels for youth to express their views on digital transformation.

**Türkiye** presents a stakeholder configuration that is dynamic but still consolidating. The country's National AI Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan have assigned clear roles to national institutions such as the Digital Transformation Office and the Ministry of National Education. These bodies are responsible for aligning technological development with ethical and educational concerns. Public-private collaborations are a defining feature of the Turkish context: technology parks, innovation hubs, and EdTech companies work closely with state bodies to develop AI applications for education. However, civil society remains somewhat peripheral, particularly in terms of watchdog or advocacy functions. Youth organisations are rarely included in national consultations, although some municipalities and pilot programs have introduced participatory elements at the local level. Universities and technical institutes play a prominent role in both policy formulation and skills development.

**Greek** State appears to be moving towards adopting a national policy for leveraging the potential of AI in various sectors through the establishment of a High Level Advisory Committee on Artificial Intelligence under the Prime Minister and coordinated by the Special Secretariat of Foresight. The Committee's study led to the publication of the 'Blueprint for Greece's AI Transformation' describing the national strategy aimed at harnessing the enormous AI potential for the benefit of the Greece's economy and society with the participation of various stakeholders to safeguard against the risks posed by the unregulated use of AI players. Thus, the national strategy for AI opens dialogue for the participation of different stakeholders, including public and government bodies such as the Institute of Educational Policy and the Academy, representatives of civil society and youth organizations, as well as representatives of industry in order to ensure an ethical by design approach for the benefit of society.



## Common Themes and Differences across Countries

Despite their differing governance models and institutional maturity, the five national contexts reveal common trends and persistent gaps in stakeholder involvement, particularly in terms of youth participation and educational alignment.

First, all five countries reflect a clear imbalance in the visibility and influence of various stakeholder groups. Government ministries and agencies hold the most consistent presence, often acting as initiators or gatekeepers of AI policy. However, their coordination with other actors—particularly between ministries of education, digital affairs, and economic development—is often weak or non-existent with the possible exception of the Greek case. This siloed governance undermines the potential for holistic, youth-inclusive approaches to AI.

Second, the private sector plays a significant role in shaping the AI agenda in every country studied. In Germany and Türkiye, industry is a well-organised stakeholder group with strong lobbying capacity and active participation in policy dialogues. In Italy, Greece and Poland, the private sector is less centralised but still influential in innovation-driven contexts. However, across all five countries, private stakeholders tend to focus on innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness, often overlooking issues such as youth rights, educational equity, and long-term societal impact. Their engagement with schools, youth workers, or civil society actors remains limited, indicating the need for more inclusive cross-sectoral cooperation.

Third, civil society's presence varies widely. In Germany, advocacy organisations are well-established and participate in public consultations, often acting as counterweights to industrial interests. In Türkiye, while there is strong state-industry cooperation, civil society plays a less prominent role and struggles to be recognised as a legitimate actor in AI governance. Italy and Poland both reveal weaker civil society ecosystems in the AI space, with limited capacity for structured engagement or sustained advocacy. The same in Greece, although recently a debate and awareness campaign has been launched in this field. This fragmentation inhibits the development of inclusive and deliberative approaches to digital transformation.

Fourth, and most crucially for the YouthGovAI project, youth-specific stakeholders remain marginalised in all five contexts. Even in Germany, where multistakeholder governance is most

advanced, youth organisations are seldom involved in policy design or implementation. In Italy, Greece and Poland, there is no structured mechanism to include young people in discussions about AI or digital education. Türkiye has begun to pilot youth inclusion at the municipal level, but this remains an exception rather than a norm. Across the board, youth engagement is generally left to informal workshops, local experiments, or ad hoc consultations, with little institutional follow-through or impact.

Finally, differences also emerge in the role of academic and educational institutions. In Germany and Türkiye, universities often act as bridges between policy and practice, contributing both to research and public engagement. In Poland and Italy, academia plays a more isolated role, often confined to technical training or discipline-specific knowledge production. In Greece, the situation is somewhere in between, as efforts are being made to bring different stakeholders from academia and policy making together with the aim to benefit the national economy and society as a whole. Schools and educators, meanwhile, are frequently the least informed and least supported group across all countries. Without professional development, curricular guidance, or institutional support, educators struggle to act as effective intermediaries in translating AI policy into educational practice.

In sum, while national differences in institutional structures, policy cultures, and stakeholder mobilisation are evident, all five countries converge on a central concern: the governance of AI remains an elite-driven, top-down process in which youth are rarely recognised as meaningful actors.

**National Stakeholder Matrices** can be found in the National Whitepapers uploaded on the project's website: <https://youthgovai.eu/results/>

## Youth Perspectives on AI

### Quantitative survey amongst young people

Within YouthGovAI, an online survey (see Annex I) was implemented between March and May 2025 with the objective of assessing the level of knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of young people towards AI with a view to informing future educational activities and fostering more active youth participation in AI governance. The survey sought not only to map the extent to which young individuals are familiar with the concept and applications of AI but also to measure their self-perceived confidence in using AI technologies, both in everyday life and in educational contexts, to assess their ability to detect AI-generated misinformation, and to investigate prevalent misconceptions regarding the autonomy and trustworthiness of AI systems. Through a combination of closed and open-ended questions, participants were invited to express their views on the opportunities and risks associated with AI, offering valuable qualitative insights that complement the quantitative data collected. By integrating demographic information, the survey further enables a nuanced analysis of how factors such as age, gender, and educational background may influence young people's relationship with AI technologies. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and anonymous, and all data collected were processed exclusively for research and educational purposes within the scope of the YouthGovAI project, in compliance with relevant data protection regulations.

### Demographics of Participants

The demographic composition of the youth surveyed across the five participating countries offers an overview of the respondents' age, gender identity, and educational backgrounds, all of which bear relevance to the interpretation of their perspectives on AI. Despite variations in sample size and methodological outreach, some comparable patterns emerge, particularly in terms of age distribution and levels of educational attainment.

#### Greece

In Greece, the survey engaged 56 participants. The predominant age group was 21+ (29 respondents, 51.8%), followed by 19–21 years (15; 26.8%), 16–18 years (11; 19.6%), and a

minority aged 13–15 (1; 1.8%). The gender composition skewed significantly female, with 38 respondents (67.9%) identifying as women, 16 (28.6%) as men, and two participants (3.6%) identifying either as non-binary or preferring not to disclose. Educationally, the distribution was relatively balanced: 15 respondents (26.8%) held a Bachelor's degree, 15 (26.8%) had completed general upper secondary education, 13 (23.2%) reported a Master's degree, 9 (16.1%) were still attending school, 3 (5.4%) indicated other paths, and 1 (1.8%) reported vocational education and training.

### Germany

In Germany, the survey engaged 305 participants. The predominant age group was 16–18 years (197 respondents, 64.6%), followed by 13–15 years (44; 14.4%), 19–21 years (40; 13.1%), and a minority aged 21+ (24; 7.9%). The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with females accounting for 49.5% (151), males for 45.9% (140), while 2.0% (6) identified as non-binary and 2.6% (8) preferred not to disclose. Educationally, the majority were still attending school (242; 79.3%), with smaller shares reporting vocational training (28; 9.2%), general education (13; 4.3%), other paths (12; 3.9%), Master's (6; 2.0%), and Bachelor's degrees (4; 1.3%).

### Poland

In Poland, the survey involved 54 participants, with the majority in the 16–18 age range (31; 57.4%), followed by 19–21 (9; 16.7%), 13–15 (9; 16.7%), and a smaller group aged 21+ (5; 9.3%). Gender distribution skewed strongly male, with 40 respondents (74.1%) identifying as male, 13 (24.1%) as female, and one participant (1.9%) identifying as non-binary. Regarding education, most respondents were still in school or general secondary education (41; 75.9%), while 13 (24.1%) had reached higher levels of study or vocational training.

### Türkiye

In Türkiye, the survey engaged 127 participants, predominantly aged 21+ (100; 78.7%), with smaller shares in the 19–21 group (18; 14.2%), 16–18 (7; 5.5%), and 13–15 (2; 1.6%). The gender distribution was strongly female, with 111 participants (87.4%) identifying as women, 15 (11.8%) as men, and one (0.8%) preferring not to disclose. Educational attainment varied, with 51 respondents (40.2%) holding or pursuing a Bachelor's degree, 36 (28.3%) still

attending school, 36 (28.3%) reporting general secondary education, 2 (1.6%) holding a Master's, and 2 (1.6%) an Associate degree.

## Italy

In Italy, the survey included 281 participants, with a strong majority in the 16–18 age group (218; 77.6%), followed by 19–21 years (50; 17.8%) and a smaller group aged 21+ (13; 4.6%). The gender distribution leaned male, with 182 respondents (64.8%) identifying as male, 89 (31.7%) as female, and a combined 3.5% (10) identifying as non-binary, preferring not to disclose, or selecting an alternative option. Educationally, most respondents were still in school (252; 89.7%), while 13 (4.6%) had completed upper secondary education, 10 (3.6%) held a Master's degree, 3 (1.1%) a Bachelor's degree, and 3 (1.1%) indicated another path.

When comparing the demographic structures across the five participating countries, some clear differences emerge. Greece and Türkiye had a notably higher share of respondents over the age of 21, while Italy and Germany reached younger cohorts, particularly in the 16–18 age group, and Poland presented a more balanced age distribution across adolescents and young adults. Gender composition also varied substantially: whereas Türkiye and Greece showed a predominance of female respondents, Italy was markedly skewed towards male participants, and Germany offered the most balanced representation, while Poland revealed a strong male majority. Educational attainment further highlights heterogeneity: in Germany and Italy most participants were still enrolled in secondary school, in Poland the sample combined current students with secondary-level graduates, whereas in Greece and Türkiye many respondents already held or were pursuing higher education degrees.

It is important to acknowledge that the overall number of responses differed between countries, ranging from 54 in Poland to over 300 in Germany. This inevitably introduces asymmetries in the weight of the data, yet it also enriches the comparative analysis by providing insights into different stages of educational trajectories and distinct cultural or institutional patterns. Ultimately, the variety in sample size and composition does not diminish the value of the findings; rather, it illustrates the diversity of young people's backgrounds and perspectives on artificial intelligence across Europe.

## Comparative Analysis by Survey Item

### Familiarity with the Term “Artificial Intelligence”

Across all five countries, the survey data reveals a remarkably high level of familiarity with the term “Artificial Intelligence” among respondents. In Italy, 87.2% stated they could explain the term, a figure mirrored in Germany, where 89% indicated they were either “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with AI. In Greece, 75% claimed to both recognize and explain AI, with another 23.2% aware of the term but unable to fully grasp its meaning. In Türkiye, 82% reported familiarity with the term, although qualitative responses suggested that actual understanding varied. Poland presented the lowest, albeit still substantial, rate of full comprehension, with 71% understanding the term and the remainder aware but not confident in explaining it. This consistency across countries reflects the global pervasiveness of AI, although it is important to distinguish between superficial recognition and conceptual depth.

### Initial Associations with AI

When prompted with open-ended questions regarding what first comes to mind when thinking about AI, ChatGPT emerged as the most cited term in Italy, Germany, and Greece, with approximately one-third of Greek respondents and a substantial portion in Italy explicitly referencing it. In Türkiye, AI was primarily associated with automation, robots, and algorithms, with fewer mentions of specific tools. German youth were more likely to reference technical infrastructure or industry-level implications. This pattern shows a divide between experiential associations (ChatGPT, TikTok algorithms) and abstract or speculative imagery (robots, neural networks), suggesting that daily interaction with generative AI is shaping perceptions in countries with higher media and educational exposure.

### Self-Confidence in AI Knowledge

Italian respondents displayed moderate self-assessed confidence, with 39.1% indicating they felt “moderately confident,” 26.3% declaring themselves “confident” or “very confident,” and 34.5% reporting low or no confidence. In Greece, 42.9% of participants described their confidence as moderate, while the remaining respondents were almost equally divided between those who felt confident and those who admitted low confidence, revealing a rather polarized

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distribution. In Germany, only 13% of respondents identified as “very confident,” with the majority expressing average familiarity and relatively few positioning themselves at the extremes of certainty or uncertainty. In Poland, one-third of respondents (33.3%) reported being confident, 16.7% very confident, while 29.6% indicated moderate confidence; in contrast, 14.8% felt only slightly confident and 5.6% declared no confidence at all. Türkiye presented a similar distribution, with the largest share (40.2%) describing their confidence as moderate, followed by 29.9% who reported low confidence, 14.2% confident, 7.9% very confident, and an equal 7.9% expressing no confidence whatsoever.

Taken together, these findings depict a European youth cohort that is generally exposed to AI but remains hesitant in its technical and critical literacy, with most respondents clustering around moderate confidence and fewer identifying as highly knowledgeable. While country-specific variations are evident, the overall picture highlights a common need for deeper educational engagement on AI.

### Identifying AI Technologies

In Greece, 33.9% of respondents declared themselves “somewhat confident” and 32.1% “moderately confident” in identifying AI tools, while only 16.1% felt confident, 12.5% very confident, and 5.4% not confident at all. Germany presented a similar trend, with nearly half of respondents (46.2%) assessing themselves as moderately confident, 23.9% confident, 18.7% slightly confident, 7.5% very confident, and 3.6% entirely lacking confidence. In Italy, almost half (49.1%) described their confidence as moderate, 22.4% reported being confident, 15.7% slightly confident, 9.3% very confident, and 3.6% not confident. Poland’s distribution mirrored this general uncertainty, with 38.9% moderately confident, 22.2% confident, 14.8% very confident, 22.2% only slightly confident, and 1.9% not confident. Türkiye followed the same pattern: 40.9% moderate, 31.5% low confidence, 15.0% confident, 7.1% very confident, and 5.5% no confidence at all.

Overall, these results highlight a widespread discrepancy between the relatively high levels of declared familiarity with AI and the more uncertain ability to operationally distinguish AI-driven technologies from conventional software. The consistent concentration of respondents

in the “moderate” category across all countries suggests a surface-level awareness that has not yet translated into critical literacy. This emphasizes the need for targeted educational initiatives that move beyond recognition of high-profile examples and provide young people with tools to critically interpret and reliably identify AI systems.

### Daily Use of AI Technologies

AI use in daily life was highest in Germany, where over 40% of respondents reported using AI-based tools at least once daily, often integrated into digital platforms and applications. In Italy, 35.9% declared daily use, 36.7% reported using AI two to four times per week, while smaller groups engaged once a week (12.5%), less than once a week (9.3%), or never (5.7%). In Greece, 33.9% reported daily AI use, while a further 28.6% engaged several times per week. Türkiye showed comparable levels of engagement, with 24.4% using AI every day and 39.4% two to four times per week, complemented by smaller groups using it weekly (13.4%), less than once a week (19.7%), or never (3.1%). In Poland, 25.9% reported daily use, 46.3% two to four times per week, while the rest engaged less frequently (11.1% weekly, 11.1% less than once per week, and 5.6% never).

These figures confirm that while daily interaction with AI technologies is increasingly common, particularly in Germany and Italy, significant shares of young people across all countries rely on such tools several times per week rather than daily. This demonstrates not only the ubiquity of AI in the digital environments that young people use but also highlights an important opportunity: building greater awareness of embedded AI functionalities can help youth better recognize, critically interpret, and strategically harness these technologies in their everyday lives.

### AI Use in Education

A strong pattern emerged concerning the integration of AI in educational contexts, although with notable differences between countries. In Italy, 30.6% of respondents reported daily use of AI tools such as ChatGPT to support their studies, 34.2% used them two to four times per week, while smaller shares engaged once per week (13.5%), less than weekly (9.6%), or never (12.1%). A similar pattern appeared in Greece, where 25.0% reported daily use and 19.6% two

to four times per week, complemented by 17.9% weekly and 17.9% less than weekly users, whereas 19.6% indicated they never employed AI for study purposes. In Germany, 26.9% of respondents declared daily use of AI for academic tasks, 36.4% reported two to four times per week, 14.8% weekly, 12.5% less than weekly, and 9.5% never. Türkiye also showed a growing integration of AI into learning, with 21.3% using it daily, 33.9% two to four times per week, 19.7% weekly, 20.5% less than weekly, and only 4.7% never. In contrast, Poland did not include a specific survey question addressing educational use of AI, which may reflect either differences in survey design or the limited formal integration of AI into national educational frameworks.

Overall, the data demonstrate that although most young people across participating countries engage with AI at least weekly for educational purposes, the intensity of this use varies, with Italy, Germany, and Greece showing higher levels of integration, Türkiye reporting substantial though slightly lower levels, and Poland indicating a lack of systematic adoption. These patterns point both to the growing role of AI in supporting learning processes and to the need for clearer institutional strategies to ensure its responsible and equitable use within schools.

### **Trust in LLMs (Large Language Models)**

Confidence in the reliability of information generated by large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT was generally cautious across all countries. In Greece, 46.2% of respondents described themselves as moderately confident, 28.8% reported low confidence, 15.4% were confident, 1.9% very confident, and 7.7% expressed no confidence at all. Italy displayed similar restraint, with 44.8% moderately confident, 24.2% confident, 6.8% very confident, 17.1% slightly confident, and 7.1% not confident. In Germany, 45.2% reported moderate confidence, 32.8% confident, 5.2% very confident, 13.8% slightly confident, and 3.0% not confident. Poland revealed a more fragmented distribution, with 36.5% moderately confident, 28.8% slightly confident, 17.3% confident, 9.6% very confident, and 7.7% not confident. In Türkiye, 42.5% expressed moderate confidence, 26.8% confident, 4.7% very confident, 23.6% slightly confident, and 2.4% not confident.

These findings confirm that young people across Europe tend to approach LLM-generated outputs with caution. Although a small minority in each country expressed high trust, the vast

majority positioned themselves in the moderate or low-confidence categories. This suggests two possible interpretations: either youth are increasingly aware of the risks of misinformation and hallucinations in AI-generated content, or their limited technical understanding of such systems leads to uncertainty about their reliability. In both cases, the results highlight an important educational opportunity to strengthen critical literacy and equip young people with the skills needed to assess and validate AI-generated information.

### **Recognition of Disinformation and Fake News**

Confidence in identifying AI-generated misinformation was generally moderate, though with significant national differences. In Greece, 33.9% of respondents described themselves as moderately confident and 25.0% relatively confident, while 14.3% reported being confident and another 14.3% very confident; 12.5% admitted they were not confident at all. Italy showed a slightly more cautious stance: 38.8% reported moderate confidence, 23.8% felt confident, 8.5% very confident, while 21.0% were only slightly confident and 7.8% declared no confidence. In Germany, 42.3% were moderately confident, 20.7% confident, 3.3% very confident, but a sizeable 25.2% reported only slight confidence and 8.5% none. Poland revealed relatively higher assurance, with 44.4% confident, 13.0% very confident, 20.4% moderately confident, 18.5% slightly confident, and 3.7% not confident. Türkiye presented a mixed picture: 46.5% described their confidence as moderate, 27.6% low, 11.0% confident, 5.5% very confident, and 9.4% not confident at all.

These findings show that while many young people feel somewhat able to recognize AI-driven disinformation, only a minority express strong confidence in doing so. The clustering in the moderate and low-confidence categories suggests that although media literacy efforts have begun to influence perceptions, difficulties in discerning algorithmic manipulation from credible content remain widespread. This underlines the need for enhanced critical training, while also showing a promising base of awareness upon which future educational initiatives can build.

### **Perceptions of AI Autonomy and User Interests**

A striking cross-national insight concerns the divided perception of whether AI operates in the interests of its users and whether it can act autonomously beyond human control. In Greece, 44.6% believed it was “probably true” that AI acts in users’ interests, while 25.0% considered it “probably false,” 17.9% “not true,” 8.9% “false,” and only 3.6% stated it was “true.” When asked about autonomy, 39.3% judged it “probably true” that AI could act beyond human control, 21.4% “probably false,” 19.6% “true,” 14.3% “not true,” and 5.4% “false.” In Italy, 37.4% indicated “probably true,” 33.8% were uncertain, 15.3% “true,” while 7.5% answered “probably false” and 6.0% “false.” On autonomy, 34.2% were uncertain, 22.1% “probably true,” 19.9% “probably false,” 14.2% “false,” and 9.6% “true.” In Germany, 35.7% assessed “probably true” regarding user interests, 36.7% were uncertain, 12.5% “probably false,” 8.5% “true,” and 6.6% “false.” On autonomy, 25.6% were uncertain, 22.0% said “probably true,” 20.7% “probably false,” 18.7% “true,” and 13.1% “false.” In Türkiye, 35.4% judged “somewhat true” and 7.9% “true,” while 39.4% were uncertain, 9.4% “false,” and 7.9% “somewhat false.” Regarding autonomy, 30.7% reported “somewhat true,” 21.3% “true,” 33.1% were uncertain, while 7.9% said “false” and 7.1% “somewhat false.” In Poland, 33.3% responded “rather true” and another 33.3% were uncertain, 18.5% “true,” 9.3% “rather false,” and 5.6% “false.” On autonomy, 25.9% considered it “true,” 18.5% “rather true,” 16.7% “rather false,” 22.2% “false,” and 16.7% uncertain.

These findings highlight an ambivalent but critical stance among European youth: while significant shares across all countries believe AI might act in users’ interests, equally large or larger groups either disagree or remain uncertain. Similarly, concerns about AI’s autonomy and capacity to escape human control are widespread, particularly in Germany and Greece, where large proportions judged this possibility as likely or true. This cross-national ambivalence reflects both enthusiasm for innovation and fear of losing human agency, suggesting the emergence of a critical consciousness shaped by ethical debates on AI governance.

### Key Cross-Country Insights and Emerging Themes

The comparative analysis of YouthGovAI survey results across the five participating countries reveals both convergence and divergence in young people's attitudes, familiarity, and interaction with Artificial Intelligence.



A first and overarching finding relates to the **widespread familiarity with the term** “Artificial Intelligence” across the youth demographic in all five countries. In each national context, over 70% of respondents declared at least basic familiarity with AI, with figures as high as 87.2% in Italy and 89% in Germany. These results are aligned with European digital literacy benchmarks such as the Eurostat Digital Skills Indicator (2024), which suggests increasing digital fluency among individuals aged 16–24. However, it is crucial to note that this familiarity often remains superficial, as evidenced by the respondents’ inconsistent ability to recognize AI-driven technologies or to explain how AI systems function. While tools like ChatGPT and TikTok were frequently mentioned in open responses, a significant proportion of youth across Poland and Greece struggled to identify less visible AI infrastructures, such as algorithmic recommendation systems or automated language detection tools. This discrepancy suggests that conceptual AI literacy—understood as the capacity to critically understand, assess, and articulate the functions and implications of AI—is not coextensive with exposure.

Secondly, the analysis indicates that across all five countries, **AI tools are increasingly integrated into the educational routines and informal learning strategies** of young people. In Italy and Greece, over 50% of respondents reported using AI to support schoolwork, often citing generative AI platforms like ChatGPT for writing support, exam preparation, and idea generation. What is particularly interesting is not merely the frequency of AI use but the rationale: across all countries, AI is viewed as a time-saving and productivity-enhancing tool. Responses emphasized the utility of AI in overcoming learning barriers, managing time constraints, and accessing complex information efficiently. This trend suggests that, for young people, AI is increasingly embedded in personalized learning ecosystems, raising critical questions about educational equity, data ethics, and the need for inclusive digital pedagogy.

Another point of convergence lies in the **cautious trust placed in large language models** (LLMs). Across all countries, respondents expressed reservations about the reliability, transparency, and ethical implications of LLMs. In Italy and Greece, fewer than 20% reported high confidence in the accuracy of information provided by generative AI systems. German and Polish participants showed similar hesitations, often expressing fears about bias, misinformation, and manipulation. Interestingly, Türkiye recorded slightly higher confidence



levels, potentially influenced by state-endorsed AI platforms that may foster more trust in formal educational settings. These data points align with recent findings from the 2024 Eurobarometer on Digital and AI Trust (2024), which revealed that only 39% of European youth express confidence in automated systems making fair decisions. The YouthGovAI survey confirms this mistrust while also adding nuance: youth do not simply reject AI's cognitive capacities but remain aware of its fallibility, particularly in epistemic and moral domains. They see it as a tool rather than a neutral authority, underscoring the need for critical AI literacy to be central in school curricula.

Further, in almost every country, respondents were sharply **divided on whether AI operates in the best interests of its users**. In Greece, 51.7% said it did not; in Italy, a similar skepticism prevailed. German youth, known for high digital literacy and privacy awareness, were notably pessimistic, with many expressing fears about AI acting beyond human control. Such sentiments echo broader philosophical and regulatory discourses within Europe, particularly surrounding the European Union's AI Act, which emphasizes transparency, human oversight, and accountability. This widespread anxiety among youth—many of whom interact with AI daily—suggests a troubling paradox: while AI tools are seen as useful and even indispensable, they are also viewed as opaque and potentially unaccountable. This duality is particularly pronounced in responses from Germany and Poland, where youth described AI as simultaneously empowering and intrusive. These views reinforce the need for institutional frameworks that do not merely regulate AI at the point of design but empower users—especially youth—to understand, challenge, and influence its deployment in real-life scenarios.

The topic of **misinformation and fake news detection** provided further insights into national differences and educational needs. While all five countries reported moderate confidence in recognizing AI-generated disinformation, only a minority in each country declared high confidence. In Türkiye respondents expressed higher confidence levels, although qualitative responses still indicate a lack of depth in assessing content provenance. In contrast, respondents in Germany and Italy were more sceptical, expressing concern about the “black box” nature of algorithmic media and the absence of clear accountability structures. Greece and Poland revealed a similar tension, with students displaying awareness of manipulative content

but not always possessing the tools to systematically detect or challenge it. This suggests that media literacy should be seen as an essential component of AI education, particularly given the proliferation of generative AI tools capable of fabricating highly plausible but misleading information.

Perhaps the most revealing cross-country pattern pertains to the symbolic and emotional associations that youth project onto AI. In open-ended responses from all five countries, youth overwhelmingly described AI as a **"tool for productivity," a "shortcut," or a "partner in learning."** Far fewer saw it as a transformative or disruptive force in a philosophical sense. While some respondents in Germany and Italy invoked concepts such as human autonomy, ethical responsibility, or future society, the dominant tone was pragmatic. **AI is seen less as a new epistemological frontier and more as a utility**—something that makes life easier, saves time, and enables multitasking. This orientation carries both promise and risk. On one hand, it underscores the capacity of youth to integrate complex technologies into their daily lives with minimal disruption; on the other hand, it suggests a lack of critical distance, which may inhibit broader reflections on the impacts of AI.

Notably absent in nearly all responses was reference to formal AI regulation, policy frameworks, or civic participation in technology governance. Except for a few references to ethical guidelines in Italy and institutional trust in Türkiye, **youth across Europe seem largely unaware of their potential role as stakeholders in shaping the AI future.** This may be symptomatic of broader systemic exclusions: youth are rarely included in digital governance processes, and public debates around AI tend to prioritize industry, academia, or regulators.

Taken together, these insights offer a **complex portrait of European youth at the intersection of digital fluency and civic disengagement.** They are curious, pragmatic, and often enthusiastic about AI, yet also cautious, critical, and eager for guidance. This suggests that any attempt to develop an inclusive, trustworthy, and socially grounded AI ecosystem in Europe must begin not only with technical safeguards or legal compliance but with education, participation, and meaningful dialogue.

## Conclusions

The YouthGovAI comparative survey across Greece, Italy, Germany, Poland, and Türkiye provides a nuanced and compelling portrait of European youth at the threshold of an artificial intelligence-infused future. While national contexts inevitably shape educational access, digital infrastructure, and cultural attitudes, the survey reveals a strikingly consistent core: young people across all five countries are deeply embedded in a digital environment where AI is omnipresent, though often poorly understood. This consistency—manifested in both optimism and ambivalence—highlights the universal nature of the challenges AI poses, as well as the shared aspirations and anxieties of youth as they navigate the terrain of emerging technologies.

A key finding that transcends national boundaries is the high degree of familiarity with AI terminology, counterbalanced by a persistent lack of conceptual clarity. This dichotomy points to a widespread digital-experiential engagement, driven by the accessibility of tools such as ChatGPT, TikTok algorithms, and AI-supported study platforms, but also to a structural educational gap that limits deeper understanding. This gap is particularly visible in the respondents' reported difficulties in identifying AI technologies or evaluating the trustworthiness of AI-generated outputs. These findings align with broader European trends noted in the Digital Education Action Plan (European Commission 2021), which calls for the integration of digital and AI competence in formal education systems. What emerges from the YouthGovAI survey is not just a call for better information, but for critical, participatory, and ethically grounded education.

Another essential insight is the widespread ambivalence toward AI's autonomy and its ethical alignment with user interests. While youth appreciate the convenience and productivity gains enabled by AI, they simultaneously voice concern about its opacity, potential to propagate misinformation, and capacity to elude human oversight. These findings underscore a critical tension between user empowerment and structural exclusion, wherein youth are major AI users but largely excluded from its governance.

In light of these findings, the YouthGovAI project affirms the necessity of reimagining AI literacy not as a technical addendum but as a democratic right. Efforts to regulate, educate, and govern

AI must place youth at the center, not only as subjects of policy but as co-creators of the digital futures they will inherit. The challenge, and the opportunity lay in transforming this digitally immersed generation into an ethically informed, critically empowered, and democratically engaged force in the shaping of AI in Europe.

## Findings of EU and national Focus Groups and Co-creation Sessions

The YouthGovAI project initiated a comprehensive qualitative research process through a series of national and European focus groups aimed at exploring youth participation in Artificial Intelligence Governance. These sessions aimed to surface the structural, pedagogical, and epistemological barriers that inhibit youth from participating meaningfully in AI-related discourse, decision-making, and policy formation. In addition to identifying challenges, the focus groups were tasked with generating insights and proposals to inform the design of the projects educational interventions and participatory mechanisms on its learning platform. Below is some information about the structure and participants profiles, as well as the key insights.

### Settings and methodology

Nine focus group sessions were conducted: Three online sessions in Germany and one online session in Greece, four in physical locations across Italy, Türkiye, Greece and Poland, and one also convened online, involving a European cohort of participants from various European countries. The diversity of formats and geographies was a deliberate choice to capture the heterogeneity of perspectives across formal education systems, informal learning environments, and varied cultural contexts.

The Focus Groups brought together youth and professionals in the field of education and social science, teachers/educators from formal and non-formal education, policy makers and experts in the field of technology and AI. In total 88 participants (14 for the online European FG; 20 for the Italian FG; 17 for the three German FG; 13 for the Greek FG; 7 for the Polish FG; 16 for the

Turkish FG) were involved in the period from March to May 2025. A call for participation has been prepared and sent to the partner countries networks, explaining the objectives of the focus groups as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. The methodology followed a semi-structured model (See Annex II) that allowed for open dialogue, thematic consistency, and the emergence of grounded, experiential knowledge. These conversations explored a wide spectrum of topics including the extent of AI knowledge among youth, the pedagogical tools currently available to educators, the civic and ethical implications of AI, and the limitations and possibilities for youth inclusion in governance mechanisms.

The European focus group, held online through Microsoft Teams, brought together a transdisciplinary group of actors—ranging from digital education experts and AI ethicists to youth workers, public administrators, and educational consultants. These individuals shared insights drawn from their respective national contexts and engaged in comparative analysis of trends, barriers, and potential leverage points for cross-border collaboration.

At the core of all sessions was a shared foundational question: *How can we transition from a model where young people are merely passive users of algorithmic systems, to one in which they are active participants in shaping the rules, values, and trajectories of those systems?* This question anchored the conversations and enabled a high degree of critical engagement. Participants were encouraged not only to articulate their own positions, but also to reflect on the broader socio-political and economic forces that shape technological development and governance in their respective countries.

## Profiles and Contributions of the Participants

A defining strength of the YouthGovAI focus groups was the inclusion of a wide range of professional profiles, reflecting the sectors that intersect with youth development, education, and technology governance.

In the **German focus groups**, participants brought together expertise in law, education, digital public policy, Artificial Intelligence, environmental governance, and education. Their professional backgrounds spanned from large-scale sustainability initiatives to data protection, algorithmic ethics, and public sector modernization. This group placed a strong emphasis on

the need to demystify AI, stressing that meaningful participation from youth does not require deep technical proficiency, but rather a clear, accessible, and ethically grounded understanding of the technologies that increasingly govern public and private life. Their discussions highlighted how young people could contribute substantively to debates about algorithmic fairness, environmental sustainability, and responsible innovation—if provided with entry points that respected their civic potential rather than emphasizing technological barriers.

The **Italian focus groups** were composed predominantly of educators, non-formal trainers, engineers, and professionals active in creative pedagogies. Their contributions underscored the importance of integrating artistic and expressive methodologies into AI literacy programs, especially for learners who do not naturally gravitate toward scientific or technical content. Participants advocated for interdisciplinary models that foreground the ethical and social implications of AI, and which respect the emotional and narrative dimensions of learning. Their direct engagement with youth in schools, community centers, and vocational training environments made them especially attuned to the educational gaps and motivational challenges that AI often presents. In this regard, participants suggested formats—such as storytelling, visual arts, and scenario-based role plays—that could lower entry barriers and promote agency among disengaged or underserved youth.

The **Polish group** included secondary school students enrolled in IT vocational programs, alongside teachers specializing in computer science, cybersecurity, and programming. This dual perspective—the user experience of digitally immersed youth and the instructional perspective of technology educators—generated insights into both the enthusiasm and the limitations characterizing current AI-related education. While students demonstrated familiarity with AI-driven platforms, they lacked critical awareness of how such systems function, who controls them, or what values they encode. Teachers reported the absence of ethical or civic dimensions in current curricula and stressed the need for professional development opportunities that would allow them to teach AI not only as a technical subject but as a societal force. This group contributed concrete proposals for practical tools, such as gamified learning environments, interactive case studies, and school-wide debates, that could enhance critical thinking and digital citizenship.



The **Turkish focus group** brought together high school and university students, along with youth leaders and researchers from STEM-oriented academic settings. The participants reflected on the disparity between their high levels of interaction with AI technologies and their limited involvement in decision-making processes. Structural factors such as the absence of youth-specific platforms, insufficient institutional support, and the lack of mentorship in navigating AI policy environments were repeatedly emphasized. The group also identified cultural barriers, including fear of speaking out and limited recognition of youth contributions, as key obstacles to participation. However, their aspirations to engage in civic processes and their awareness of AI's implications for employment, education, and personal freedom revealed a strong latent capacity for policy involvement—one that could be harnessed through tailored engagement frameworks, youth councils, and local consultation initiatives.

In **Greece**, the session was composed of university students in the field of education and social science and educational professionals representing a range of disciplines including primary and secondary instruction, non-formal education, special education, and language teaching. Many had already begun experimenting with the integration of AI tools into classroom practice, despite a general lack of formal training or curricular guidance. Their experiences highlighted the pedagogical dilemmas and ethical tensions that AI introduces into education: how to preserve critical thinking in the face of algorithmic assistance, how to balance creativity with automation, and how to ensure that AI-enhanced tools serve inclusion rather than deepen educational divides. Their recommendations focused on the development of blended teaching strategies, systemic teacher training programs, and participatory mechanisms that place both educators and students at the center of AI policy dialogue.

Finally, the **European** online focus group featured a multidisciplinary cohort spanning youth work, civic education, AI ethics, public policy, digital innovation, and environmental analysis. These participants engaged in cross-national reflection on the common barriers facing youth across Europe and proposed coordinated strategies for advancing youth inclusion in AI governance. Their input stressed the urgency of transcending isolated national efforts by building a trans-European framework for AI literacy and participation—one that promotes shared values such as equity, democratic oversight, and sustainability.

Together, the contributions from these varied professional communities provide critical insight into the systemic, educational, and cultural conditions that shape youth engagement with AI—and, more importantly, into the tools, narratives, and policy mechanisms that can foster their empowerment as active and informed participants in digital governance.

### Main Takeaways from the Focus Groups for the Project

The common findings point to a multidimensional challenge: **while Artificial Intelligence has become a defining force in the lives of young people, their ability to engage critically with its development and governance remains severely constrained** by structural, educational, and epistemic barriers. These limitations affect not only youth, but also the professionals—educators, trainers, social workers, and facilitators—who are expected to prepare them for life in a society increasingly mediated by algorithmic decision-making.

A foundational insight across all national contexts was the recognition of a striking **disconnect between the widespread use of AI technologies by young people and their understanding of the systems behind them**. Youth regularly engage with AI-powered platforms—social media algorithms, voice assistants, recommendation engines, chatbots—but do so in a largely uncritical manner. This habitual engagement is rarely accompanied by knowledge of how these systems function, what data they rely on, or how their decisions are made. The underlying logic of machine learning, the presence of algorithmic bias, and the ethical and civic implications of AI are generally absent from young people’s minds. The result is a generation that is digitally immersed but civically disempowered.

Compounding this issue is the **lack of preparedness and institutional support for educators and youth workers** in both formal and non-formal settings. They described AI as a topic that lies beyond their disciplinary training and professional comfort zones. This perception is reinforced by curricular frameworks that treat AI either as a peripheral topic—relegated to computer science or technical education—or as a future-facing abstraction disconnected from civic life. Even where interest is present, opportunities for professional development are scarce, materials are often overly technical or English-language exclusive, and pedagogical approaches

are not adapted to diverse learning needs. As a result, AI remains a subject that many educators hesitate to introduce, fearing that they lack the competence or authority to do so effectively.

A third major takeaway involves the **invisibility of AI governance** within existing educational and civic structures. Despite its profound implications for rights, access, and opportunity, AI is seldom treated as a subject of political or ethical inquiry in schools or youth programs. Youth are rarely invited to participate in consultations or deliberations about digital policy, and when they are, their contributions are often framed as symbolic rather than substantive. This absence of participatory mechanisms reinforces a sense of exclusion and alienation from the institutions shaping technological futures. Focus group participants across multiple countries stressed the need for including youth voice in digital governance—through youth councils, advisory boards, participatory budgeting processes, and curricular innovations that integrate AI literacy into broader frameworks of democratic education.

Importantly, the focus groups revealed that the **barriers to participation are not solely technical or informational, but also deeply cultural, socio-economical, pedagogical and emotional**. Youth from marginalized or underserved communities—whether due to socioeconomic status, migration background, disability, or geographic location—face compounded obstacles. The assumption that digital natives automatically possess critical digital skills was roundly rejected. Access to smartphones or online platforms does not translate into an ability to decode complex algorithmic systems or challenge unjust data practices. Without targeted support, these youth are likely to remain excluded from both the benefits and the governance of emerging technologies. In focus groups' discussions, participants drew attention to the intersecting roles of digital illiteracy, under-resourced schools, and limited parental knowledge, especially in rural or economically precarious settings, as compounding the exclusion of entire communities from the AI discourse.

The focus groups also shed light on the **pedagogical gaps** that inhibit effective engagement. Traditional educational approaches tend to frame AI in abstract or overly scientific terms, reinforcing the notion that it is a domain reserved for experts. This model alienates learners who struggle with formal instruction or who lack confidence in STEM subjects. Participants proposed alternative methodologies rooted in storytelling, games, simulations, visual arts, and

collaborative inquiry as more effective vehicles for engaging diverse groups of young people. These methods not only facilitate comprehension but also validate the emotional, psycho-social, and cultural dimensions of learning—dimensions that are essential to fostering meaningful and sustainable interest in AI-related topics.

A further insight centered on the **potential for participatory design and co-creation** as tools for empowerment. Youth should not be positioned merely as recipients of AI education, but as active co-designers of the tools, curricula, and policies that shape their learning. Several sessions emphasized the value of involving youth in the development of AI literacy content through community-based workshops, hackathons and campaigns, school projects, and transnational exchanges. This approach was seen not only as a way to enhance relevance and accessibility but also as a strategy for building agency, fostering peer learning, and embedding democratic values into the heart of digital education. In most of the involved countries, this concept resonated particularly strongly: both young participants and educators proposed structured processes in which young people could not only co-create content but also evaluate its impact and suggest revisions, ensuring continuous feedback loops and dynamic ownership.

Lastly, participants consistently articulated the belief that **AI literacy must be reframed as a civic right**, not as an optional or specialized field, and we must ensure the dimension of human rights in an increasingly digital era. The ability to understand and question algorithmic systems is a prerequisite for democratic participation in the digital age. Just as literacy and numeracy were once deemed essential for citizenship, so too must AI literacy be regarded as a core competency of twenty-first-century democratic life. Greek contributors, for example, reiterated this point by calling for the creation of an “AI Bill of Rights” for youth, developed in collaboration with educators and policymakers, and grounded in the principles of equity, transparency, and active citizenship.

Yet, despite these shared challenges, the focus groups also revealed **important national differences** in how AI is perceived, framed, and contested, depending on local educational cultures, political environments, and institutional histories. In **Germany**, the discussion was characterized by a high level of conceptual sophistication, with participants engaging critically with topics such as algorithmic accountability, techno-solutionism, and environmental justice.

The conversation extended beyond education to include broader questions of global inequality, digital labor, and the ecological cost of AI development. In this setting, AI was not only a tool or a curricular topic, but also a symbol of deeper societal tensions between innovation and justice.

In contrast, the **Polish** focus group concentrated on the practical dimensions of AI integration in vocational education. The participants, mostly students and teachers from IT technical schools, focused on the absence of interdisciplinary content and the lack of curriculum design that could connect programming skills with ethical reasoning or civic responsibility. The session reflected the dual tension of high digital engagement on one hand, and a fragmented educational response on the other. Participants emphasized the need to reform curricula in ways that reflect the real-world impacts of AI and equip students with tools to navigate its implications in both the labor market and public life.

In **Italy**, there was a distinct emphasis on creative, expressive, and narrative approaches to AI education. The involvement of professionals working in community education and youth work led to a pedagogical vision of AI literacy that privileges emotional resonance, storytelling, and artistic experimentation. Participants highlighted how creative methodologies can render complex technological topics more approachable, particularly for youth who have been alienated by formal education. This insight is especially relevant for initiatives targeting NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training), marginalized youth, or those with limited STEM confidence.

Meanwhile, the **Greek** focus group revealed the tension between emerging grassroots experimentation and insufficient institutional infrastructure. Educators were clearly motivated and interested in integrating AI into their teaching practices but faced a lack of resources, training, and political commitment from educational authorities. The discussion emphasized the urgency of national-level action—particularly the role of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports in setting frameworks for AI integration—and stressed the need for inclusive design that reaches both urban centers and remote regions. Notably, Greek educators and students expressed strong support for interdisciplinary and civic-oriented approaches that link AI with democracy, human rights, and public participation.

In **Türkiye**, a dynamic educational ecosystem is emerging, where government-led initiatives and private sector actors are actively developing AI tools and platforms. However, youth engagement in governance remains weak, and participants emphasized that AI-related content is often limited to technical instruction without ethical or civic framing. Some expressed concern that education on AI tends to reinforce passive consumption rather than critical engagement. Teachers showed interest in expanding their methodological toolbox to better support student inquiry and reflection.

The **European** focus group synthesized and amplified many of these insights, offering a meta-perspective that affirmed the structural nature of youth exclusion from AI governance across Europe. Participants from different countries underscored the necessity of building transnational alliances and shared tools for youth inclusion. A strong recommendation emerged to develop a pan-European strategy that articulates minimum standards for youth participation in digital policy, curricular integration of AI ethics, and institutional responsibility for educator training.

In sum, the focus groups highlighted both the universal nature of the challenge—young people across Europe are systematically underprepared to engage with AI critically—and the context-specific dynamics that shape how those challenges are experienced and can be addressed. These findings point to the need for an AI literacy framework that is not only flexible and adaptive but explicitly committed to equity, co-design, and structural transformation.

## Conclusions

The YouthGovAI focus groups constitute a vivid and urgent testimony to the structural disconnect between the technological realities that shape young people's lives and the institutional mechanisms currently available for them to influence and govern those realities. Across all sessions the conversations confirmed that people perceive the impact of AI on their lives and interact with it, with a feeling that they do not have control over it, as they often fail to understand how all these AI systems work. The majority of the participants expressed concern, curiosity, and aspiration, but also frustration, disorientation, and a lack of systemic support.



What emerged most clearly from these dialogues is that **AI is not perceived as a neutral or purely technical advancement**, but rather as a socio-political phenomenon with profound implications for identity, autonomy, justice, and opportunity. Participants consistently emphasized that AI is already playing an invisible but consequential role in shaping access to education, public discourse, employment, and interpersonal relationships. Despite this, educational systems have yet to catch up, and policies that promote youth participation in AI governance remain exceptional, fragmented, or entirely absent.

The insights gathered point to the need for a **paradigm shift**. It is no longer sufficient to treat AI literacy as a subcomponent of digital competence or as a niche topic reserved for those pursuing technical careers. Instead, it must be understood—and institutionalized—as a civic necessity and competence: a shared knowledge domain that enables young people to decode, debate, and democratically shape the technological systems that affect their rights and futures. This requires coordinated action across multiple levels: from revising curricula and funding teacher/educator training, to creating participatory infrastructures that recognize young people as stakeholders in digital policy.

Equally important is the imperative to **recognize and address structural inequalities** that condition youth access to AI knowledge and governance. The findings revealed that marginalized and underserved communities are especially at risk of being excluded from the benefits and deliberations of technological change. Without intentional efforts to design inclusive, localized, and culturally responsive interventions, existing inequities will only deepen in the context of AI expansion.

Moreover, the project's commitment to co-creation and youth engagement must be understood not as a methodological preference, but as a normative stance. **Young people must be recognized not merely as subjects of technological impact, but as co-designers of digital futures.** Their insights, experiences, and creative intelligence are indispensable to building technologies that are transparent, equitable, explainable and accountable. As one participant so poignantly stated, “We will live in these systems—so we should have the right to shape them.”

The findings of the focus groups call for an education that is dialogic, inclusive, participatory, and attuned to the complexities of the digital age. They also demand policies that elevate youth participation and remind us that the future of AI is not predetermined—it is political, and it must be co-governed by those who will inherit it.

In conclusion, this report reaffirms that **youth participation in AI governance is not optional**. It is a democratic imperative, a matter of intergenerational justice, and a necessary condition for building ethical and inclusive technological societies.

## Co-Creation Sessions

The project's co-creation sessions marked a methodological and epistemological shift from diagnostic inquiry to participatory design where they drew upon the expertise, creativity, and knowledge of a wide array of educational, technical and social professionals. In parallel with the focus groups, these sessions provided spaces, where participants contributed to the development of educational content and frameworks for AI literacy among youth.

### Settings and methodology

Implemented across five national contexts—Italy, Germany, Türkiye, Poland, and Greece—the co-creation sessions involved participants with direct pedagogical and experiential expertise: youth workers, teachers/educators, trainers, digital facilitators, school guidance professionals, AI experts, policy makers and young people. Each session was designed to stimulate collaborative reflection on what constitutes “valuable” AI education, how such content should be structured, and which methods could ensure its accessibility and inclusivity. In addition to these topics attention was paid to variations in regional education ecosystems, local training policies, and cultural narratives concerning technology and youth's active citizenship. The discussion followed a semi-structured model (See Annex III) that allowed for open dialogue, and the emergence of grounded, experiential knowledge.

The environments in which the sessions were held ranged from community-based educational centres, technical schools, civic innovation hubs and formal institutional settings to online formats. In Italy, the sessions were hosted by Alfa Liguria and conducted within the context of

the regional guidance framework, leveraging the expertise of professionals working with disadvantaged youth. In Germany, three online co-creation sessions were held immediately after the focus groups which allowed to transfer insights directly into learning contents. In Poland and Türkiye, practitioners from the VET and non-formal education sectors engaged with local digitalisation challenges and provided culturally specific inputs on framing AI literacy in inclusive ways. In Greece, during the two co-creation sessions – one online and one onsite- both professionals and University students from socio-pedagogical department were involved.

### Profiles and Contributions of the Participants

In total 62 participants (13 for the Italian, 18 German, 7 Greek, 9 Polish and, 15 Turkish) were involved the period March to May 2025. A call for participation has been prepared and sent to the partner countries networks, explaining the objectives of the focus groups as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were carefully selected by national partners to reflect a diversity of perspectives, ensuring that the proposed educational materials would address both formal and non-formal learning contexts. While the professional profiles varied considerably across countries, a set of commonalities emerged in terms of pedagogical mission, socio-educational experience, and a shared commitment to inclusive youth empowerment through digital education.

In **Italy**, the co-creation process was strongly anchored in the ecosystem of career guidance and educational transition services coordinated by Alfa Liguria. Participants included school psychologists, guidance counsellors, community educators, and professionals working with at-risk and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth. Their contribution proved particularly significant in reframing AI education not merely as a technical skillset but as a vehicle for building self-awareness, narrative identity, and agency in future life planning. This approach opened space for a more holistic understanding of AI's social consequences and for the design of exercises that integrate affective and reflective dimensions into digital literacy curricula.

The **German** sessions unfolded in a three-part iterative sequence, each involving different constellations of professionals working across the AI sector, school education, non-formal education, human rights education, sustainability, digitalisation and governance. Notably,

German participants introduced a discourse of “intergenerational ethical co-responsibility” around AI, urging the development of materials that empower young people to view themselves not only as learners but as civic actors capable of influencing the normative structures embedded in algorithmic systems.

In **Türkiye**, the sessions engaged youth workers, trainers in public education centres, and educators active in the NGO sector. Their profiles were particularly attuned to the realities of working with youth from rural areas, displaced communities, or economically marginalised urban districts. Their input stressed the need to simplify language, diversify formats, and embed AI education within familiar and culturally resonant topics such as gaming, job search platforms, or online media consumption. They also flagged the importance of ensuring psychological safety and pedagogical scaffolding in any material that introduces critical concepts like surveillance, bias, or digital manipulation.

The **Polish** participants were rooted predominantly in the technical and vocational education domain, particularly with experience in secondary schools and local innovation hubs. While their orientation was more infrastructural and technical, their contributions underscored the importance of bridging the gap between advanced computing concepts and youth’s everyday digital encounters. They advocated for material that demystifies algorithmic processes without relying on coding or mathematics and emphasized hands-on problem-solving exercises that foster collaborative learning.

The **Greek** co-creation session reflected a growing awareness among teachers/educators of the urgency to bridge the gap between technological integration and democratic learning. Participants—primarily teachers and education professionals from various public institutions as well as university students—stressed the need for curriculum development that not only teaches AI functionality but embeds it within human rights education, media literacy, and civic engagement. They advocated for the use of relatable case studies, participatory activities, and socio-emotional learning techniques to render AI education relevant to Greek students, particularly those in remote or under-resourced areas. One critical theme that emerged was the tension between educators’ growing interest in innovation and the institutional inertia of the

national education system, which still lacks formal mandates or support for integrating AI themes across subjects.

Taken together, the co-creation sessions assembled a network of professionals who, while shaped by distinct institutional cultures and national educational systems, shared a commitment to designing youth-centred, inclusive, and socially grounded AI education. Their combined insights illuminated the necessity of designing learning experiences that are not only pedagogically sound but also culturally situated, emotionally engaging, and politically empowering.

### Key Educational Needs

The co-creation sessions revealed a nuanced and multidimensional landscape of educational needs, which extended far beyond the acquisition of technical knowledge. Across all five countries participants converged on the idea that AI literacy must equip young people not merely to use or understand technology, but to interrogate it—its origins, assumptions, and effects on social life. This conceptual shift—**from instrumental to critical digital literacy**—emerged as a core imperative for any educational material envisioned within the YouthGovAI framework. Notably, Greek participants framed AI literacy as a democratic necessity and emphasized its role in fostering civic consciousness.

One of the most recurrent needs highlighted was the **demystification of AI**. Youth, particularly those outside STEM-focused curricula, often associate AI with abstract, inaccessible, or overly futuristic imagery, disconnected from their everyday experience. Participants therefore stressed the necessity of creating educational resources that link AI systems to familiar digital environments such as social media platforms, streaming algorithms, job portals, or digital public services. These examples were seen as vital entry points for introducing key AI concepts in a relatable, non-intimidating manner. In Greece and Poland, the importance of anchoring learning in locally relevant and everyday digital tools was repeatedly emphasized.

Secondly, the sessions emphasized the urgent **need for materials that foster critical thinking and ethical awareness**. Participants across Germany, Italy, and Türkiye voiced concerns about the uncritical consumption of algorithmically curated content among youth, as well as the

potential for increased polarization, manipulation, and surveillance. Polish educators echoed this concern, particularly with respect to data exploitation in educational platforms. Greek participants highlighted the importance of ethical debates on AI as part of citizenship education, advocating for scenario-based learning that prompts youth to reflect on fairness, bias, and accountability in algorithmic processes.

A third need identified concerned interactivity and active engagement. Participants rejected one-directional, lecture-style approaches in favor of **participatory and experiential methods**. They called for educational materials that involve storytelling, case-based learning, role-play simulations, visual thinking strategies, and cooperative tasks that mirror real-life dilemmas. Such strategies were seen as more likely to support the development of personal positioning and ethical reflection, while also sustaining learners' attention and emotional investment.

The sessions also revealed a need to **address emotional responses to AI**. Youth often exhibit anxiety, scepticism, or passivity when confronted with discussions about technological change. Educators from Italy and Türkiye pointed to the importance of addressing these affective dimensions directly by incorporating moments of dialogue, creative expression, and emotional literacy into the curriculum. In Greece, teachers/educators noted that many youth express feelings of concern regarding technological change, reinforcing the need for pedagogical approaches that validate emotional complexity.

Lastly, participants articulated the need for **differentiated content that reflects the diversity of learners'** abilities, backgrounds, and educational tracks. This includes designing flexible modules that can be used in both high-resource and low-resource settings, materials that are accessible for learners with special educational needs, and pedagogical paths that respond to different motivational profiles. Participants from Poland and Türkiye further highlighted the importance of linguistic accessibility and translation into native languages or simplified vocabulary sets to ensure broad inclusion. Greek educators reinforced this citing as an example the creation of materials suitable for multilingual classrooms, particularly in migrant-dense schools.



In sum, the co-creation process revealed that the educational needs around AI literacy are not merely cognitive or informational, but profoundly ethical, emotional, and socio-political. This requires a new generation of learning materials that are flexible, inclusive, critical, and dialogic—capable of equipping young people with the tools to not only navigate but meaningfully shape the digital societies in which they live.

Specific suggestions and ideas for the learning contents of the project can be found in the respective national whitepapers.

### Barriers to AI Literacy for Youth and Teachers/Educators

While the co-creation sessions illuminated promising pathways for the development of AI literacy, they also surfaced a wide range of barriers that currently hinder the accessibility, effectiveness, and scalability of such educational efforts. These obstacles span infrastructural, pedagogical, institutional, and psychological dimensions—underscoring the systemic nature of the challenge.

One of the most frequently cited barriers was the **lack of preparedness among educators and youth workers**. Across all co-creation contexts, educators openly admitted to their own limited familiarity with AI-related concepts, tools, and implications. This lack of technical and conceptual grounding generates a cascading effect: if the adult facilitators of learning feel disoriented or insecure about AI, they are less likely to introduce the topic with confidence or depth. This is particularly true for those operating outside of STEM disciplines or digital innovation ecosystems, including professionals in social work, humanities, or non-formal education. In these sectors, training opportunities on AI are either non-existent or overly specialized, leading to a gap in the pedagogical translation of complex digital themes. Participants also voiced frustration with the absence of teacher training and national curricular guidance, calling for institutional accountability.

Another pervasive barrier lies in **structural educational inequalities**. As reported by participants from Germany, Türkiye and Poland, schools in under-resourced areas often lack the basic digital infrastructure required to meaningfully engage with AI-related topics. Internet instability, outdated hardware, and insufficient access to digital tools were all flagged as

material constraints that disproportionately affect already marginalized learners. These infrastructural deficits are compounded by rigid national curricula, which often leave little room for transversal or experimental learning on emerging technologies. Greek and Italian educators echoed these concerns, with particular emphasis on the bureaucratic rigidity of the school system and its slow responsiveness to digital change.

A further obstacle is the prevalence of **algorithmic invisibility** and its psychological corollary: passive normalization. Participants noted that most young people interact with AI daily—through TikTok feeds, Google searches, Spotify recommendations, or automated school platforms—without being aware that these are mediated by algorithmic systems. To address this, educators emphasized the importance of educational practices that make algorithms “visible” and graspable, through deconstruction, simulation, and participatory critique. German participants recommended real-world scenario work and reverse-engineering exercises.

Cultural and political contexts also emerged as influential factors. In some countries, the social **framing of AI remains either techno-utopian or fear-based**, leading to polarized attitudes that can undermine balanced pedagogical efforts.

Lastly, participants warned against the **risk of over-formalization**. If AI literacy becomes the exclusive domain of elite technical education or abstract policy discourse, it may alienate the very youth it seeks to engage. Hence, the material developed must be dialogical, grounded, and adaptable to informal and community-based learning spaces. Turkish and Greek contributors urged that AI education be delivered in formats compatible with youth cultures—social media, workshops, peer-led formats—and that informal education providers be included in national strategies.

These findings call for a holistic and multi-scalar approach to AI education, one that addresses pedagogical design, infrastructural support, institutional transformation, and cultural contextualization in equal measure.

## Pedagogical Strategies and Recommendations for Course Design

Building on the insights several pedagogical principles and strategic recommendations have emerged to guide the development of effective, inclusive, and engaging AI educational materials.

A key pedagogical recommendation voiced across sessions is the **adoption of experiential and participatory learning methods**. Educators and youth workers consistently advocated for formats that break away from linear, frontal instruction and instead engage learners in co-discovery processes. Simulations, case-based exercises, collaborative storytelling, ethical dilemmas, and role-play scenarios were frequently mentioned as effective modalities for deepening engagement. These strategies are particularly suitable for topics like algorithmic bias, data privacy, and decision-making systems, where technical abstraction can otherwise hinder comprehension. By situating AI concepts in lived experience and social contexts, such methods enable youth to internalize the relevance of the topic and to position themselves critically in relation to it.

The need for **modularity and adaptability** was also underlined. Participants from both formal and non-formal education sectors stressed that any AI literacy material must be designed to accommodate varying degrees of prior knowledge, digital access, and cognitive development. A modular structure—composed of short, self-contained learning units—would allow facilitators to select and adapt content depending on the learner group's profile, available time, and institutional constraints. This flexibility is crucial for reaching heterogeneous audiences, including those outside mainstream education or with limited academic engagement.

Furthermore, participants across all countries advocated for an **interdisciplinary approach**. AI literacy should not be isolated within ICT or STEM curricula but integrated with subjects like civics, ethics, media studies, and career guidance. This approach not only contextualizes AI in broader socio-political realities but also affirms that algorithmic systems are not value-neutral. In this sense, AI becomes a lens through which to examine power, inequality, and civic responsibility—thus linking digital literacy to democratic education.

Attention was also given to **inclusive language and design**. Materials must avoid technical jargon and use clear, culturally resonant language to ensure accessibility. This is especially important in multilingual or low-literacy contexts, as highlighted by Turkish and Polish participants. Additionally, resources should be developed with visual aids, infographics, and possibly gamified components to appeal to diverse learning styles and to maintain engagement, especially among younger or less confident learners.

Another crosscutting strategy involved the embedding of **emotional literacy**. Several educators emphasized the importance of validating and working with the emotional responses that AI-related content can provoke—fear, curiosity, skepticism, or resignation. Introducing reflective prompts, collective dialogue moments, and activities that link AI to personal values and experiences was seen as essential for fostering a sense of agency and emotional resilience in the face of technological change.

Finally, a number of participants urged the development of **youth-led components**. Materials should not only be designed for youth but, wherever possible, co-created with them—thus embodying the participatory ethos of the project. This includes opportunities for young people to contribute to case studies, propose real-world challenges, or create content aimed at their peers. Such approaches can amplify youth voice, increase authenticity, and foster peer-to-peer dynamics that reinforce learning.

### Conclusions: Towards a Participatory and Inclusive AI Literacy Framework

The co-creation sessions have underscored the urgent necessity of reimagining AI literacy as a participatory, inclusive, and culturally embedded pedagogical endeavor. AI has emerged in these sessions as a cross-cutting civic issue that shapes how young people access information, construct identities, engage with institutions, and envision their futures. Consequently, the educational materials developed under this project must reflect the profound complexity of this terrain—addressing not only cognitive understanding but also ethical awareness, emotional processing, and social positioning.

To realize this mission, the educational framework must embody certain structural principles. **It must be modular**, to allow for contextual adaptation and varying levels of entry. **It must be dialogic**, fostering collective reflection and peer engagement. **It must be intersectoral**, drawing on insights from formal education, youth work, civic activism, and technological innovation. And crucially, **it must be co-designed** with youth themselves—treating them not merely as recipients of instruction but as contributors to the knowledge ecology.

Moreover, the framework **must contend with the real-world barriers** that educators and youth workers continue to face. These include infrastructural disparities, curricular rigidity,

insufficient training opportunities, and socio-political resistance to critical digital pedagogy. Addressing these constraints requires not only thoughtful material design but also sustained investment in capacity-building, peer exchange, and policy advocacy.

## Key findings

The YouthGovAI project's multi-layered research across Germany, Italy, Türkiye, Poland, and Greece revealed a shared landscape of opportunities and systemic challenges, framed by national particularities but embedded within a common European policy trajectory. The project not only mapped national realities, but also situated them within broader debates on AI governance at the EU level, including the Digital Services Act, the AI Act, and strategic documents like the EU Youth Strategy and Digital Education Action Plan. These frameworks offer guiding principles and regulatory ambitions—but their effectiveness depends on the extent to which they are internalized and operationalized at the national and local levels.

Firstly, a key finding that transcends borders is the **disconnect between AI usage and comprehension** among youth. This gap reflects a pan-European trend where young people actively engage with AI-infused technologies yet lack the epistemic tools to critically assess their function, purpose, or societal impact. In all five countries, participants noted the ubiquity of platforms like YouTube, ChatGPT, TikTok, and recommendation engines—technologies governed by opaque algorithms. However, this exposure has not translated into understanding.

Secondly, the **systemic unpreparedness of educators and youth professionals** was evident across national contexts. Whether in rural Greek schools, under-resourced Turkish districts, Polish vocational institutes, or highly regulated German systems, participants reported that AI is absent from teacher training curricula and professional development programs. Despite the existence of EU-level initiatives like DigCompEdu (2025) and SELFIE for teachers (2025), there is a persistent gap in translating these into national training policies. This calls for European institutions to not only disseminate frameworks but incentivize their national uptake.

A third shared challenge relates to **structural inequalities in access to AI education**, which risk undermining the EU's ambition to ensure digital cohesion. While countries like Germany display relatively advanced infrastructures, participants reported that even there, disparities



persist—particularly for migrant and low-income youth. In Poland and Greece, regional and economic disparities were stark, with schools in rural or peripheral areas lacking stable internet, up-to-date hardware, or trained personnel. These inequalities illustrate that without targeted EU funding and cross-border cooperation, AI literacy risks becoming a vector of exclusion rather than inclusion.

Fourth, the **emotional and ethical stakes of AI education** emerged strongly. Youth and professionals across all countries emphasized the importance of integrating emotional literacy, narrative identity, and civic awareness into AI learning. This reflects a growing EU-level emphasis, seen in the European Digital Identity Framework and AI Act discussions, on ensuring that technologies are human-centric, rights-respecting, and value-driven. The YouthGovAI project confirms that these values must be translated pedagogically—not just through compliance mechanisms but through culturally responsive and emotionally attuned teaching practices.

Fifth, the **absence of youth in AI governance** is a pan-European democratic gap. While the European Parliament and Commission have increasingly called for multistakeholder approaches to digital policy, there are few operationalized structures for youth participation. The YouthGovAI focus groups revealed that youth involvement in AI decision-making is minimal and often symbolic. Whether in Italy's regional policy platforms or Türkiye's NGO networks, young people are rarely engaged as co-creators of policy. This dissonance between EU-level rhetoric and national-level implementation must be addressed through institutionalized pathways for youth deliberation and representation.

Lastly, the **co-creation sessions revealed a shared demand for inclusive, adaptive, and critical educational tools**. Professionals across the five countries articulated remarkably similar pedagogical principles: the need for localized examples, modular formats, non-technical language, and methods rooted in co-design and peer learning. These principles echo EU efforts to promote learner-centered, accessible digital education—but also demonstrate that bottom-up, practitioner-led innovation remains under-supported. Bridging the gap between grassroots experimentation and EU policy requires mechanisms for mutual translation, resource sharing, and horizontal learning among member states.



Taken together, these findings underscore that the YouthGovAI project does not merely speak to national issues, but to a European imperative: that AI governance must be democratic, inclusive and participatory, beginning with how we educate, involve, and empower our youngest citizens.

## Conclusions

In an era where Artificial Intelligence is rapidly reshaping Europe's political, economic, and cultural landscape, the question is not whether young people should be involved in shaping the future of AI—but how. The YouthGovAI project has demonstrated that while youth across Europe are immersed in AI-powered systems, they remain structurally excluded from shaping them. This exclusion, however, is not inevitable. It is the product of institutional inertia, policy fragmentation, and the persistence of hierarchical knowledge regimes that treat AI as the exclusive domain of technocrats.

To reverse this trajectory, **sustained youth engagement must become a cornerstone of the European digital transition.** This is not only a matter of fairness but of legitimacy. As the European Union finalizes the AI Act and promotes initiatives like the European Year of Youth (2025) and the Digital Compass 2030 (European Commission 2024), the voices of young people must be seen as foundational to the continent's technological future—not supplementary.

Such engagement requires several shifts:

1. **From consultation to co-creation** (Council of Europe 2025). Youth must be recognized as policy actors and actively participate in decision making processes. Across the five national contexts, young people and youth workers/educators provided insightful critiques and creative solutions. European institutions must build on this by embedding youth into governance structures: algorithmic audit boards, ethics councils, curriculum design bodies, and regulatory sandboxes.
2. **From digital skills to democratic literacy** (Tadimalla & Maher, 2024; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019). While digital competence remains essential, YouthGovAI has shown that what is most urgently needed is civic competences. Understanding AI as a socio-political

system—one that reflects choices about justice, inclusion, and inequality—must be a central component to the design of AI Literacy. This implies rethinking school curricula, teacher training, and youth work from a rights-based, participatory, and interdisciplinary perspective.

3. **From elite policy spaces to community-level empowerment** (Sokhansanj, 2025). AI policy is too often confined to European and international discussion of high policy level, although the effects of AI are felt as well in classrooms, job centers, immigration offices, and public services. YouthGovAI demonstrated that teachers/educators in rural and urban Greece, youth workers in southern Italy, and trainers in Polish VET institutions are all innovating with limited resources. Supporting these efforts through EU funds, peer exchange platforms, and cross-border alliances is vital.
4. **From youth inclusion as rhetoric to youth inclusion as rule** (European Commission, 2018). EU strategies often invoke the importance of “young people at the heart of change.” But without binding mechanisms, this remains aspirational. Youth engagement must be codified: in legislative frameworks, funding criteria, public procurement, and institutional mandates. The established European AI Office by the European Commission presents one such opportunity to structurally integrate youth expertise and participation.

In conclusion, AI governance in Europe must evolve into a **deeply democratic, intergenerational project**. Young people are not merely inheritors of future technologies—they are already shapers of present systems, through their usage, their critique, and their imagination. The YouthGovAI project provides compelling evidence that when equipped with the right tools, spaces, and recognition, youth can play a central role in ensuring that Europe’s AI trajectory is fair, transparent, and inclusive.

If Europe is to lead in human-centric, ethical AI development, it must begin by listening to its youngest citizens—not as passive end-users, but as democratic co-architects of our algorithmic societies. Only then can the European promise of “technological sovereignty” be realized in a way that is truly sovereign: anchored in the collective intelligence, creativity, and agency of all its people.

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# Annex I: Questionnaire Template

## YoutGovAI - Youth's knowledge & attitude about AI

Dear participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the following survey. This survey aims to assess young people's knowledge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as their experience with AI technologies, identify potential misconceptions and challenges.

The survey is implemented in the framework of the Erasmus+ project YouthGovAI (2023-2-DE04-KA220-YOU-000176952) that aims to empower young people and the youth sector to actively shape European AI governance. As AI continues to transform society, the project ensures that young voices are heard and contribute to discussions on AI's ethical, social, and political implications.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and your participation remains voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers — please answer honestly!

Your responses are anonymous and will be kept, evaluated and exploited only for research and educational reasons by the YouthGovAI partners for a period of five years.

More information about the YouthGovAI project can be found at: <https://www.eurosoc-digital.org/en/project/youthgovai-2>

For further information regarding the survey, please contact Holger Haberstock ([hhaberstock@eurosoc-digital.org](mailto:hhaberstock@eurosoc-digital.org)).

Thank you for your contribution to the project!

### Section 1: Demographics

1. Age \*

Options: 13-15, 16-18, 19-21, 21+

2. Gender \*

Options: Female, Male, Non-binary, Other, Prefer not to answer

3. What is your highest level of educational certification? \*

Options: I'm currently attending school, Vocational Education/Training, General Education (High School), Associate Degree, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Other (please specify)

### Section 2: Knowledge and Usage of AI

4. Are you familiar with the term 'artificial intelligence'? \*



Options: Yes, I've heard the term before and can explain what it is; Yes, I've heard the term before, but I don't know exactly what it is; Yes, I've heard the term before, but I know nothing about it; No, I've never heard of it

5. If you think about AI, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? \* (Open question)

6. How confident do you feel in your knowledge of AI and how it works? \*

Options: Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Confident, Very confident

7. Do you feel confident in identifying AI technologies? \*

Options: Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Very confident

8. How frequently do you use AI technologies in your everyday life? \*

Options: Daily, 2-4 times a week, Once a week, Less than once a week, Never

9. How frequently do you use AI tools to help with schoolwork or studying? \*

Options: Daily, 2-4 times a week, Once a week, Less than once a week, Never

10. If you use LLM like ChatGPT, how confident do you feel about the accuracy of the information it generates? \*

Options: Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Very confident

11. How confident do you feel to recognise AI-generated disinformation and/or fakes? \*

Options: Not at all confident, Slightly confident, Moderately confident, Very confident

### Section 3: Beliefs & Attitudes

12. AI always makes its decisions in the interests of its users. True or false? \*

Options: True, Rather true, Not true, Rather false, False

13. Artificial intelligence eludes human control and, in the worst case, can act against the will of its developers. True or false? \*

Options: True, Rather true, Not true, Rather false, False

14. In your opinion, what are the benefits of AI? \* (Open question)

15. In your opinion, what are the risks of AI? \* (Open question)

### Section 4: Final Notes

Thank you for your time! Your insights will help shape YouthGovAI's educational content.

16. Would you like to receive updates about YouthGovAI's educational resources on AI? \*

Options: Yes, No

17. If 'yes', please provide us with a valid e-mail address

18. Consent: By submitting this form, you consent to your personal data being processed in accordance with the EUI Data Protection Policy (President Decision No. 10/2019 of 18 February 2019).

Options: I give my consent, I do not give my consent

## Annex II: Focus Group Protocol

# Focus Group Outline

### Indicative example of introduction

#### Facilitator's Opening Remarks

Hello everyone, my name is [Name], and I am conducting this focus group on behalf of [Organization Name], a partner in the European project **YouthGovAI**. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion. Your insights are invaluable in helping us understand the barriers and opportunities for youth participation in AI governance.

#### About the YouthGovAI Project

The YouthGovAI project is a European initiative designed to empower young people and the youth sector to play an active role in shaping AI governance. As artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into our societies, its impact on young people is growing—yet their voices remain largely absent from AI policy discussions. The project aims to bridge this gap by increasing AI literacy, fostering youth engagement in decision-making, and strengthening the role of youth workers and educators in addressing AI-related challenges.

Through activities such as co-creation sessions, training programs, AI literacy courses, and focus groups, YouthGovAI seeks to:

- **Improve AI literacy among young people and youth workers.**
- **Increase youth representation in AI governance discussions.**
- **Enhance the capacity of educators and youth organizations to engage with AI topics.**
- **Raise public awareness of AI's societal impact, especially on young people.**
- **Create a more inclusive and diverse AI governance framework in Europe.**

One of the key activities of this project is conducting a series of focus groups at the national and European levels. These discussions will bring together young people, youth workers, educators, policymakers, AI experts, tech companies, and civil society representatives to identify barriers to youth participation in AI governance and explore potential solutions.

#### Purpose of This Focus Group

Today, we will discuss the following key topics:

- **Understanding the current state of youth participation in AI governance – What are the main challenges and opportunities?**
- **Identifying barriers that prevent young people from engaging in AI-related decision-making.**

- Exploring the role of different stakeholders (educators, policymakers, tech companies, civil society) in supporting youth engagement.
- Developing recommendations on how to make AI governance more inclusive and accessible for young people.

Your input will contribute to a final report that will be shared with stakeholders and policymakers across Europe, helping to shape future initiatives that prioritize youth involvement in AI governance.

### Logistics and Guidelines

- The discussion will last approximately 1 hour.
- Your participation is voluntary, and you are welcome to share as much or as little as you feel comfortable.
- We will be taking notes and recording this session for internal analysis only. The recordings will be deleted after analysis, and all responses will remain anonymous.
- If at any point something is unclear, please feel free to ask for clarification.

### Focus Group participants

| Name & surname                                                                                             | Role                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |

| General Impressions on Youth Participation in AI Governance                                                                         | Prompts                                                                                                                                                                          | Your notes |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p><b>Have you ever been involved in discussions, decisions, or projects related to AI governance? If so, in what capacity?</b></p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example: "I attended an online workshop about AI and ethics, where we discussed how social media platforms use AI to filter content."</p> |            |

|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                                                          | However, I didn't feel like my voice really mattered in decision-making."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |
| <b>How would you describe the level of youth engagement in AI-related policies and governance today?</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> "From what I've seen, young people are mostly consumers of AI-driven technology rather than decision-makers. We're rarely included in discussions about how AI impacts our education, job opportunities, or online experiences."                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| <b>What are some key reasons why young people might not participate in AI governance discussions?</b>    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> "AI policies are often written in complex legal or technical language, which makes them hard to understand."<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> "There are no clear channels for young people to contribute—tech companies and policymakers don't really ask for our opinions."                                                                    |                   |
| <b>What do you think are the main benefits of involving young people in AI governance?</b>               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> "Since young people are the biggest users of AI-driven tools like social media and chatbots, they should have a say in how these technologies are designed and regulated."<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> "If we involve young people in AI governance, we can ensure that AI systems are fair and don't discriminate against certain groups." |                   |
| <b>Barriers to Youth Participation in AI Governance</b>                                                  | <b>Prompts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Your notes</b> |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>What challenges do young people face in accessing AI-related discussions or decision-making spaces?</b></p>                                              | <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “Many of these discussions happen at high-level conferences that we can’t afford to attend.”</p> <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “There’s a lack of AI education in schools, so many young people don’t even realize how AI affects their lives or how they can engage with its governance.”</p>                   |  |
| <p><b>Do you think there are social, economic, or technological barriers preventing young people from engaging in AI governance? If so, what are they?</b></p> | <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “If you’re from a rural area or don’t have strong digital skills, it’s harder to participate in AI-related discussions.”</p> <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “AI companies and policymakers don’t always take youth concerns seriously because they see us as inexperienced.”</p>                                  |  |
| <p><b>How accessible is AI-related information for young people? Are there gaps in education and awareness?</b></p>                                            | <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “There’s a lot of technical AI research available, but it’s not written in a way that’s easy for young people to understand.”</p> <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “Schools focus on traditional subjects, but they don’t teach students about AI, even though it’s shaping our future jobs and opportunities.”</p> |  |
| <p><b>Do you think AI policies are communicated in a way that young people can understand and contribute to?</b></p>                                           | <p>✅ <b>Example:</b> “Not really. Most AI policies are full of legal jargon. It would be great if there were more youth-friendly summaries or explainer videos.”</p>                                                                                                                                                         |  |



| Role of Stakeholders in Supporting Youth Engagement                                                                                                | Prompts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Your notes |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| What role should policymakers play in ensuring youth participation in AI governance?                                                               | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Policymakers should set up youth councils that provide direct input on AI regulations and ethics.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “They could create simplified versions of AI policies and laws so that more young people can engage with them.”</p>                                                       |            |
| How can educators and youth organizations support young people in understanding and engaging with AI governance?                                   | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Schools could introduce AI literacy courses to help students understand how AI affects their rights and future careers.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Youth organizations could run workshops where young people learn how to analyze AI’s impact on social issues like privacy and job automation.”</p> |            |
| What responsibilities do AI experts, tech companies, and civil society organizations have in making AI governance more inclusive for young people? | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Tech companies should create feedback channels where young users can express concerns about AI-driven platforms.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “AI experts should collaborate with youth organizations to design training programs that help young people understand AI ethics.”</p>                      |            |
| Are there existing platforms, programs, or initiatives that effectively involve young people in AI discussions?                                    | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Some universities offer AI ethics competitions where students can propose AI policies.”</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “There are</p>                                                                                                                                                                       |            |

|                                                                                                               | online forums where young people can discuss AI issues, but they're not widely promoted."                                                                                                                                                                                                                |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Solutions and Recommendations                                                                                 | Prompts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Your notes |
| What strategies or policies could make AI governance more accessible and inclusive for young people?          | <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "Creating youth advisory boards within AI regulatory agencies could ensure young people's perspectives are included."</p> <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "AI policy documents should include youth-friendly summaries, like short videos or illustrated guides."</p>                          |            |
| How can AI education be improved to better prepare young people to engage in governance and decision-making?  | <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "AI should be taught in schools, not just as a technical subject but also as a social issue that impacts democracy, privacy, and human rights."</p> <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "Youth organizations could partner with AI experts to create workshops on ethical AI decision-making."</p> |            |
| What tools, platforms, or spaces would help young people participate more actively in AI-related discussions? | <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "A digital platform where young people can learn about AI policies and contribute their opinions in a simple way."</p> <p>✓ <b>Example:</b> "More AI-themed hackathons where young people work with policymakers to develop ethical AI solutions."</p>                              |            |
| What specific actions would you like to see from policymakers, educators, and tech companies to               | ✓ <b>Example:</b> "Policymakers should provide funding for youth-led AI research"                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |

|                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                     |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| support youth involvement in AI governance?                                                 | projects.”<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Example:</b> “Tech companies should include young representatives in AI ethics review panels.” |  |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                                                                           | <b>Your notes</b>                                                                                                                                   |  |
| Is there anything else you would like to add about youth participation in AI governance?    |                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| Do you have any final thoughts on how to improve inclusivity in AI-related decision-making? |                                                                                                                                                     |  |

## Results from the National Focus Groups (WP 4 – Stakeholder Engagement)

**Country:**

**Place:**

**Format:**

online/offline

**Implemented by:**

names of personnel, organization

### 1. Participants

*Name and function of participants, current role/profession, expertise they brought to the session*

### 2. Summary of the course of discussion

*e.g. current involvement of youth/ youth sector in AI governance, needs of educators and youth workers*

### 3. Quotes / Soundbites (with consent or anonymized)

*e.g. "AI must not become a black box that replaces democracy." – Participant, Policy*

### 4. Key take-aways and learnings for the project

*e.g. related to the contents for youth and youth workers, the outreach to young people etc.*



## Annex III: Co-creation Session Protocol

### Co-Creation Sessions Protocol

#### Indicative example of introduction

##### Facilitator's Opening Remarks

Hello everyone, my name is [Name], and I am conducting this co-creation session on behalf of [Organization Name], a partner in the European project **YouthGovAI**. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this session. Your insights and contributions are essential in helping us co-design AI literacy courses that will empower young people and youth workers to engage meaningfully in discussions about AI governance.

##### About the YouthGovAI Project

The YouthGovAI project is a European initiative designed to empower young people and the youth sector to play an active role in shaping AI governance. As AI increasingly influences various aspects of our lives, it is critical that young people—who are among the most affected by these technologies—are actively involved in discussions about AI policies, ethics, and governance. The project aims to bridge the existing gap by:

- **Enhancing AI literacy among youth and youth workers.**
- **Developing inclusive and high-quality educational resources to equip young people with the skills needed to engage in AI governance.**
- **Creating opportunities for meaningful youth participation in AI-related policy discussions.**
- **Fostering collaboration between stakeholders such as policymakers, AI experts, tech companies, and civil society representatives.**

##### Purpose of This Co-Creation Session

This session is part of a series of 10 co-creation sessions taking place across different European countries. The purpose is to co-develop the outlines and requirements for AI literacy courses that will be designed for youth and youth workers. These courses will provide the necessary skills and knowledge to enable both target groups to participate actively in discussions about AI governance.

Today, we will focus on:

- **Understanding the key learning needs for AI literacy among youth and youth workers.**
- **Identifying barriers and challenges that should be addressed in AI education.**



- **Co-creating recommendations and ideas for structuring engaging, accessible, and impactful AI literacy courses.**
- **Ensuring that multiple perspectives—including those of youth, educators, policymakers, AI experts, and civil society—are reflected in the course content.**

Your contributions today will help shape the final design of these courses and ensure that they are practical, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the target groups. The outcomes of these sessions will be compiled into a report and shared with all relevant stakeholders.

### Logistics and Guidelines

- **The session will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours.**
- **This is an interactive session—your participation is essential, and all perspectives are welcome.**
- **We encourage open discussion and creative thinking—there are no right or wrong answers.**
- **Notes will be taken, and the session may be recorded for internal reference only. Any recorded data will be anonymized.**
- **If you have any questions or need clarification at any point, please feel free to ask.**

Now, let's begin our discussion with our first question...

### Co-creation session participants

| Co-creation session participants                                                                           |                                                                                                            |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Name & surname                                                                                             | Role                                                                                                       |            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |            |
| Identifying Learning Needs and Gaps                                                                        | Prompts                                                                                                    | Your notes |
| In your opinion, what knowledge or skills do young people and youth workers currently have about AI?       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Example Response: "Many                                                |            |

|                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| What do you think are the biggest gaps in AI literacy among young people and youth workers?                                  | young people use AI-driven platforms like social media, but they don't fully understand how algorithms influence their behavior."<br><b>✓ Example Response:</b> "Youth workers may be aware of AI risks but lack practical knowledge on how to teach AI literacy to young people." |                   |
| What do you think young people and youth workers need to learn in order to engage meaningfully in AI governance discussions? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <b>Exploring Barriers to AI Literacy and Engagement</b>                                                                      | <b>Prompts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Your notes</b> |
| What challenges do young people face in accessing AI education?                                                              | <b>✓ Example Response:</b> "There is a lack of beginner-friendly AI education materials tailored for youth."                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| What obstacles exist for youth workers in integrating AI-related topics into their programs?                                 | <b>✓ Example Response:</b> "Not all youth workers have a strong technical background, so they may struggle to explain AI concepts effectively."                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| How can we make AI learning materials more accessible and engaging for diverse groups of young people?                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| <b>Designing an Effective AI Literacy Course</b>                                                                             | <b>Prompts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Your notes</b> |
| What are the most important topics that should be included in an AI literacy course for youth and youth workers?             | <b>✓ Example Response:</b> "The course should include real-world examples of AI applications that affect young people, such as facial recognition and recommendation algorithms."                                                                                                  |                   |
| How should the course be structured to be engaging and interactive?                                                          | <b>✓ Example Response:</b> "Gamification and hands-on"                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                   |

|                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                                                                | activities can make AI literacy more engaging for young learners."                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| What types of learning activities or tools (videos, case studies, gamification, etc.) would be most effective? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| <b>Involving Stakeholders and Ensuring Practical Impact</b>                                                    | <b>Prompts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Your notes</b> |
| How can policymakers, tech companies, and civil society organizations support AI literacy initiatives?         | <p>✓ <b>Example Response:</b> "Tech companies could provide open-source learning materials or AI ethics training for youth workers."</p> <p>✓ <b>Example Response:</b> "Youth-led AI advocacy groups could help ensure that AI courses reflect the real concerns of young people."</p>   |                   |
| What role should youth play in shaping AI literacy programs?                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| How can we ensure that the AI literacy courses remain relevant and sustainable as time passes?                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| <b>Refining and Finalizing Recommendations</b>                                                                 | <b>Prompts</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Your notes</b> |
| Based on today's discussion, what are the key takeaways for designing effective AI literacy courses?           | <p>✓ <b>Example Response:</b> "We should ensure the course is modular so that different groups can use the parts most relevant to them."</p> <p>✓ <b>Example Response:</b> "Having certification for youth workers who complete AI literacy training could encourage participation."</p> |                   |
| Are there any other important elements or considerations we haven't discussed yet?                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| What are your final recommendations for the structure and implementation of the AI literacy courses?           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |

| Conclusions                                | Your notes |  |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Do you have any final notes?               |            |  |
| Can you name your main takeout from today? |            |  |

## Results from the National Co-Creation Groups (WP 4 – Stakeholder Engagement)

**Country:**

**Place:**

**Format:**

online/offline

**Implemented by:**

names of personnel, organization

### 1. Participants

*Name and function of participants, current role/profession, expertise they brought to the session*

### 2. Summary of the course of discussion

*e.g. current involvement of youth/ youth sector in AI governance, needs of educators and youth workers*

### 3. Quotes / Soundbites (with consent or anonymized)

*e.g. "AI must not become a black box that replaces democracy." – Participant, Policy*

### 4. Key take-aways and learnings for the project

*e.g. related to the contents for youth and youth workers, the outreach to young people etc.*