



Youth Voices Through Music

Young People, European Youth Goals
& Participation in Europe

Songs for Rights Youth Consultation Report 2026



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Legal Notice

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This report presents findings from the Songs for Rights Youth Consultation 2026 - Young People, Music & European Youth Goals, conducted between March and April 2026 among young people connected to the Songs for Rights network and partner organisations across Europe.

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Quotations from young people have been included in a way that protects the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

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1. Introduction

Young people today are facing many different challenges, including questions related to mental health, participation, inclusion, education, climate concerns and their future opportunities. At the same time, many young people express the need to be more involved in decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The Songs for Rights network believes that young people should not only be consulted, but actively involved in dialogue, creativity and social change. Through music, arts and non-formal education, the network works to create spaces where young people can express themselves, connect with others and engage with important social and political topics in an accessible and meaningful way.

This Youth Consultation was organised as part of the Songs for Rights initiative to better understand the priorities, experiences and perspectives of young people connected to our network across Europe. The consultation focused especially on young people's awareness of the European Youth Goals, the challenges they experience today, and the role that music and arts can play in supporting youth participation and civic engagement.

The findings of this consultation help us better understand what matters most to young people and how future activities can respond to their needs and interests. The results will contribute to the further development of the Songs for Rights 2026 Work Plan and support the design of activities related to participation, advocacy, learning and youth empowerment.

2. About the Youth Consultation

The Songs for Rights Youth Consultation was carried out as an online consultation to better understand the views, priorities and experiences of young people connected to the Songs for Rights network and partner organisations across Europe.

The consultation focused on young people between the ages of 16 and 30 and explored topics related to the European Youth Goals, youth participation, social challenges, and the role of music and arts in promoting engagement and active citizenship.

Young people connected to organisations from the Songs for Rights network, representing 26 organisations in 13 countries, were invited to participate in the consultation. The survey was anonymous and designed in a simple and accessible way to encourage honest reflections and participation. To make the consultation more inclusive, participants were able to complete the survey in their own language using browser translation functions.

The consultation was promoted during the months of **March and April 2026** through different communication channels of the Songs for Rights network. Network member organisations were invited to share the consultation with young people through direct outreach and email communication. In addition, the consultation was promoted through Songs for Rights social media channels, including **LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram**, to encourage wider visibility and participation among young people connected to the network.

EUROPEAN YOUTH GOALS
SONGS FOR RIGHTS THROUGH MUSIC

AVAILABLE IN ALL EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

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AVAILABLE IN ALL EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Participate in our European Youth Consultation!
Young People, Music & European Youth Goals

Youth Consultation – Young People, Music & European Youth Goals

B I U ↻ 🔍

This Youth Consultation is an annual online survey for young people aged 16–30 across Europe.

It aims to understand young people's priorities, challenges, and views related to the European Youth Goals, with a special focus on how music and the arts can promote youth participation and influence policies creatively.

Your answers will help shape the 2026 Work Plan, including future training activities, youth-led advocacy, communication actions, and dialogue with decision-makers.

The survey is anonymous and takes about 5 minutes.

The consultation included questions related to:

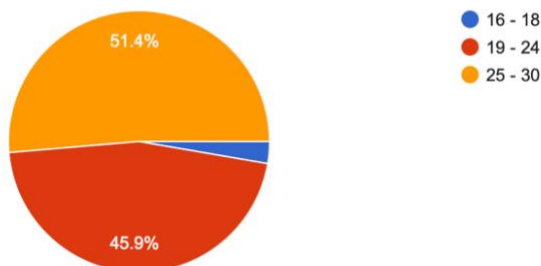
- awareness and understanding of the European Youth Goals;
- which youth priorities matter most to young people;
- perceptions on the role of music and arts in supporting youth participation;
- key social and personal challenges experienced by young people today;
- ways to strengthen youth engagement with policies and decision-making;
- interest in future activities connected to music, arts and youth participation.

The findings presented in this report provide useful insights into the experiences and priorities of young people connected to the Songs for Rights community. They also support the further development of activities within the Songs for Rights 2026 Work Plan, helping to ensure that future actions remain relevant, participatory and responsive to the needs and interests of young people.

3. Who Are the Young People We Reached?

This chapter gives a short overview of the young people who participated in the consultation. Responses were received from young people connected to different organisations and communities within the Songs for Rights network, reflecting different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

3.1 Age Profile



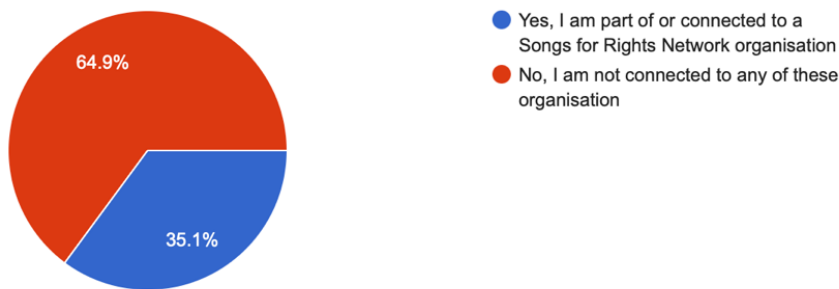
The consultation reached young people from different age groups between 16 and 30 years old. The participation of different age categories provides a broader understanding of youth perspectives, including both younger participants and young adults with different experiences, concerns and priorities.

3.2 Countries Represented

Young people participating in the consultation were based in different European countries connected to the Songs for Rights network. This geographical diversity helps provide different perspectives on youth realities, local challenges and opportunities across Europe.

The participation from different countries also reflects the international and collaborative nature of the Songs for Rights community and its partner organisations.

3.3 Connection to the Songs for Rights Network



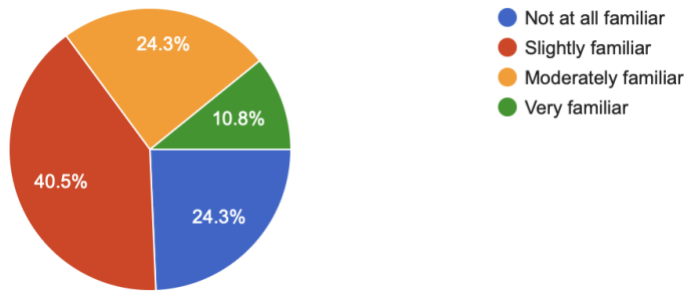
The consultation included young people connected to organisations within the Songs for Rights network, as well as young people who are not directly connected to member organisations. This combination allows for both internal perspectives from young people already involved in youth activities, as well as views from young people outside existing structures.

Together, these different perspectives help provide a broader picture of young people’s experiences, priorities and interests connected to participation, music and the European Youth Goals.

4. Awareness of European Youth Goals

An important part of the consultation was to better understand how familiar young people are with the **European Youth Goals** before participating in Songs for Rights related activities and discussions.





The responses show different levels of awareness and understanding of the European Youth Goals among young people. While some participants reported being familiar or very familiar with the goals, others indicated only limited knowledge or awareness.

This suggests that, although topics connected to youth participation, inclusion, wellbeing or sustainability are important for many young people, the European Youth Goals themselves are not always widely known or easily understood.

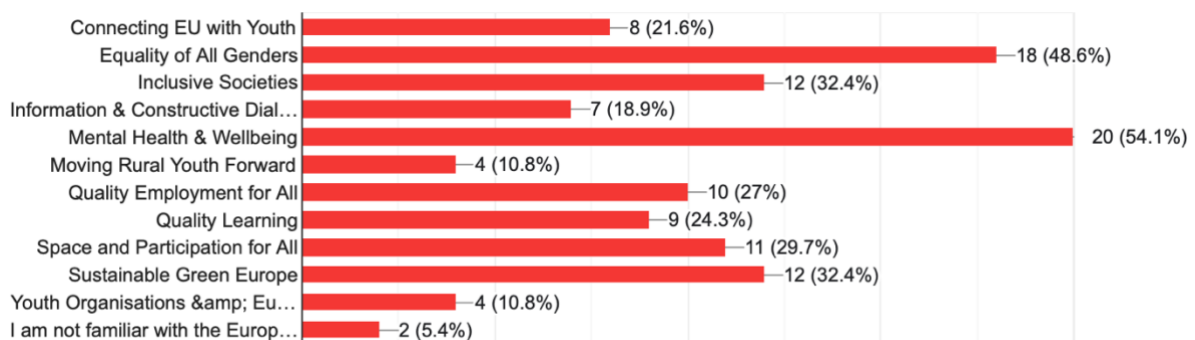
At the same time, the consultation shows a clear interest in topics connected to young people’s lives and future opportunities. This highlights the importance of making youth policies and European priorities more accessible, understandable and connected to everyday realities.

For Songs for Rights, this finding confirms the importance of continuing to use creative and youth-friendly approaches, including music, arts, storytelling and non-formal education, to help make European Youth Goals more visible and meaningful for young people.

Activities such as podcasts, online learning opportunities, advocacy actions and youth-led dialogue can help create stronger awareness and engagement around topics that matter to young people and their communities.

5. What Matters Most to Young People?

As part of the consultation, young people were invited to identify which **European Youth Goals** matter most to them and are most relevant to their lives and future.



The responses show that young people are concerned about several interconnected topics affecting their everyday life, wellbeing and future opportunities. Priorities identified in the consultation reflect a strong interest in areas such as participation, mental wellbeing, inclusion, education, equality and sustainable futures.

The findings suggest that young people are especially interested in issues that have a direct impact on their personal lives and communities. Topics related to feeling included, having opportunities for learning and development, being heard in society, and building a positive future appear as important concerns across different responses.

At the same time, the consultation shows that young people do not see these topics separately. Challenges related to wellbeing, participation, employment, inclusion and climate concerns are often connected and influence each other. This highlights the importance of approaches that are holistic and youth-centred.

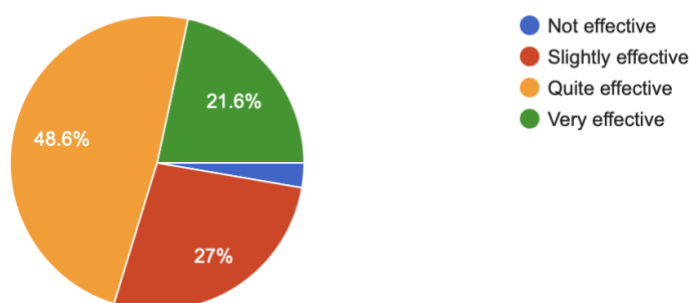
For Songs for Rights, these findings reinforce the importance of continuing activities that promote youth participation, inclusion, creativity, democratic engagement and wellbeing. They also underline the value of creating spaces where young people can exchange experiences, express themselves creatively and engage with social and policy issues in accessible and meaningful ways.

The priorities identified through this consultation will continue to inform the focus of Songs for Rights activities and contribute to ensuring that future actions respond to the real interests and concerns of young people across the network.

6. Music, Arts and Youth Participation

Music and arts are at the centre of the Songs for Rights approach. For this reason, the consultation also explored how young people see the role of creative methods in supporting participation, awareness and social engagement.

6.1 The Role of Music and Arts in Youth Participation



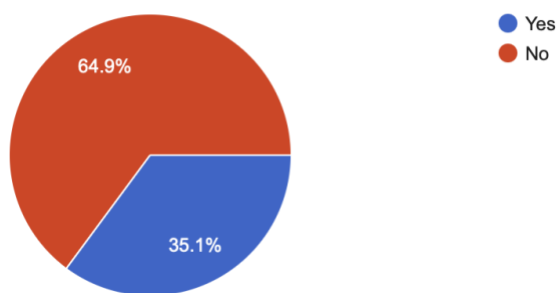
The consultation findings suggest that young people generally see **music and arts as an effective way to promote youth voices and increase awareness of social and youth-related topics**, including the European Youth Goals.

For many young people, creative methods appear to offer more accessible and engaging ways to participate, express opinions and connect with others. Music and arts can help create spaces where young people feel more comfortable to share experiences, discuss important issues and participate in activities that may otherwise feel difficult or distant.

The responses indicate that creative approaches are often seen not only as a form of expression, but also as a way to strengthen inclusion, participation and community building.

These findings confirm the relevance of continuing to use arts-based and non-formal education methods within Songs for Rights activities, especially when aiming to reach young people in meaningful and participatory ways.

6.2 Young People's Experiences with Arts-Based Activities



The consultation also explored whether young people had previous experiences with activities using music or arts to address social topics or youth-related issues.

Several young people shared examples of experiences such as concerts, awareness festivals, songwriting workshops, community music events, youth theatre, singing circles and Erasmus+ youth projects using music and creativity to promote participation and dialogue.

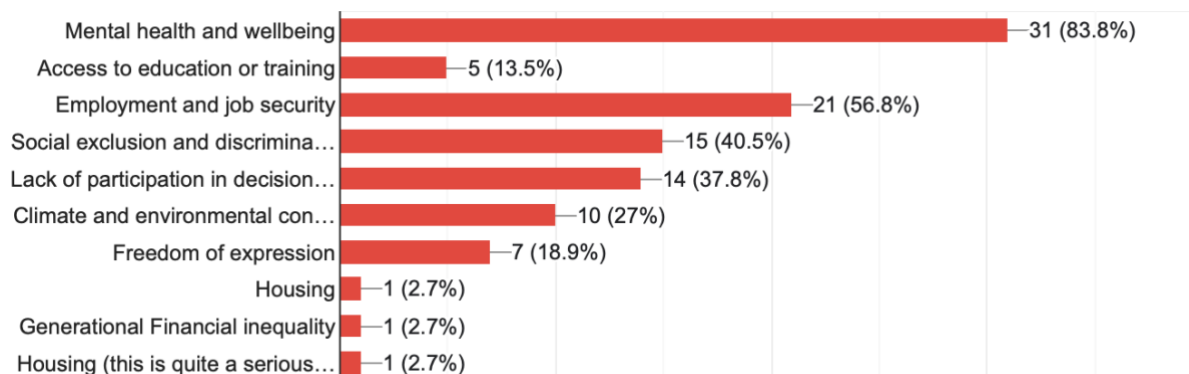
Some participants highlighted how music helped to create connections between people, encourage inclusion and provide opportunities to express ideas and emotions in a safe and open environment.

These experiences show that many young people already recognise the value of music and arts as tools for participation and social engagement. This provides important encouragement for continuing activities that combine creativity, youth participation and dialogue around European Youth Goals and wider social issues.



7. Challenges Young People Face Today

As part of the consultation, young people were invited to reflect on the main challenges affecting young people in their communities and countries today.



The consultation responses show that young people are facing a variety of interconnected challenges that affect their wellbeing, opportunities and participation in society.

Several themes appear strongly throughout the responses, including concerns related to **mental health and wellbeing, access to education and training, employment and job security, social exclusion and discrimination, participation in decision-making, and climate and environmental concerns.**

The findings suggest that many young people are looking not only for opportunities, but also for support, inclusion and spaces where they feel heard and represented. Challenges connected to uncertainty about the future, social pressures and access to opportunities continue to influence the everyday experiences of many young people.

At the same time, the consultation shows that young people are aware of wider social issues and want to play a more active role in shaping solutions. Questions connected to sustainability, equality, participation and freedom of expression appear closely connected to how young people imagine a positive future for themselves and their communities.

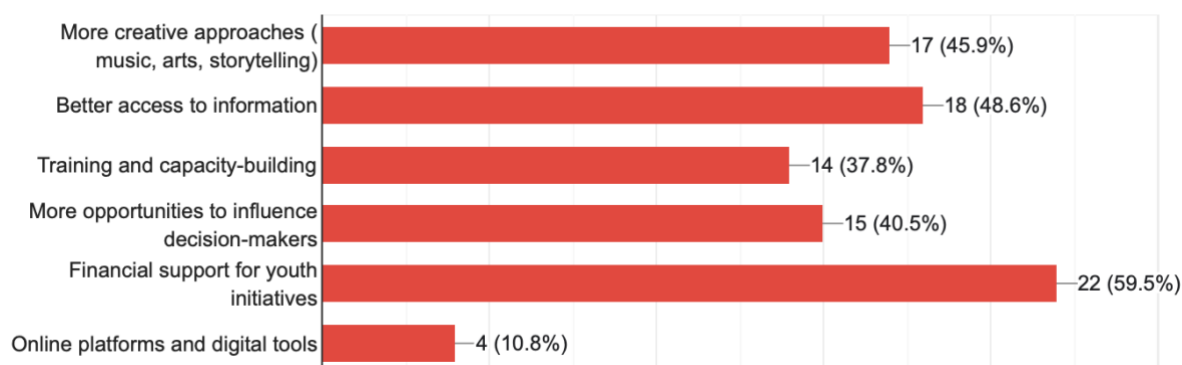
These findings reinforce the importance of creating activities and learning opportunities that support youth wellbeing, participation, inclusion and resilience. They also underline the value of creative and participatory approaches that allow young people to reflect on challenges, share experiences and engage in dialogue around issues that matter to them.

For Songs for Rights, this highlights the continued relevance of activities connected to youth participation, mental wellbeing, arts-based learning, advocacy and dialogue with decision-makers as part of the 2026 Work Plan.

8. How Young People Want to Engage More

An important aim of the consultation was to better understand what could help young people engage more actively with youth policies, participation opportunities and the **European Youth Goals**.

8.1 What Could Help Young People Engage More?

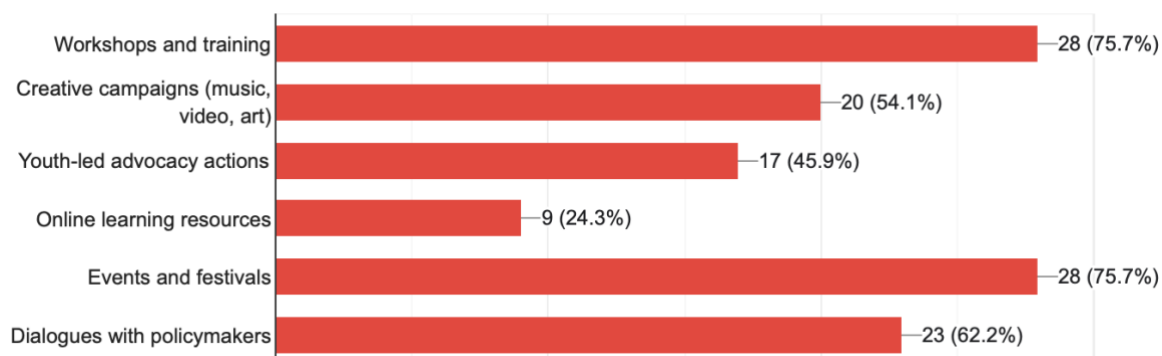


The consultation findings suggest that young people are interested in approaches that are practical, accessible and relevant to their everyday experiences.

Different forms of support were identified as important for encouraging stronger engagement, including **creative approaches such as music, arts and storytelling, better access to information, opportunities for learning and training, as well as more possibilities to influence decision-makers and policies.**

The responses suggest that young people are not only interested in receiving information, but also in being more actively involved in conversations and actions connected to issues that matter to them. This highlights the importance of participatory approaches that combine learning, creativity and meaningful dialogue.

8.2 Activities Young People Would Like to See More Of



Young people participating in the consultation also expressed interest in different kinds of future activities connected to participation, creativity and social engagement.

Among the preferred activities were **workshops and trainings, creative campaigns using music, video or arts, youth-led advocacy actions, online learning opportunities, events and opportunities for dialogue with policy makers.**

These findings show a strong interest in activities that are interactive, creative and based on participation. Young people appear interested in spaces where they can both learn and contribute, while also connecting with others and sharing their perspectives.

For Songs for Rights, these findings provide important encouragement to continue developing activities that combine creativity, learning and civic participation. The consultation particularly supports the relevance of activities such as trainings for youth workers, podcast and webinar series, creative advocacy campaigns, online learning opportunities, youth-led events and spaces for dialogue with decision-makers planned as part of the **2026 Work Plan.**

Overall, the consultation highlights that young people want opportunities not only to participate, but also to feel that their voices are listened to and can contribute to positive change.

9. Voices from Young People

An important part of the consultation was giving young people the opportunity to share, in their own words, what message they would like decision-makers to hear today.

The responses reflect concerns about participation, the future, inclusion, wellbeing and the feeling of being listened to. At the same time, many messages also show hope and a strong wish for young people to play a more active role in shaping society.

Below are some of the messages shared by young people through the consultation:

Participation and Being Heard

“Take us seriously and don't approach us with old methods – the time is changing.”

“Listen to what we have to say.”

“I think you should listen to us more.”

“Don't take us for granted.”

“We might be YOUNG but we're not stupid!”

Several young people expressed the feeling that youth voices are not always sufficiently heard in political and social decision-making. At the same time, there is a clear wish for more meaningful participation and stronger opportunities to contribute ideas and perspectives.

Young People and the Future

“We are here, and we should be the ones shaping the future, as we are the ones who are going to live it.”

“Think about all the young people that have to survive and live in this world after you are gone.”

“More future planning, it’s our lives they’re making policies for, which can make or break the current society.”

Many responses highlight concerns about future opportunities and the long-term impact of decisions being made today. Young people expressed a strong interest in being included in discussions affecting their future.

Participation, Community and Shared Responsibility

“Bottom-up decision making can be as efficient as top-down.”

“Try to involve more the youths with bottom-up initiatives.”

“Mainstream youth across all sectors.”

“We are all One – Mother Earth is our Home and we are her Hope as she is ours.”

The consultation responses suggest that many young people value participation, community action and collective responsibility. There is interest in more inclusive and collaborative approaches where young people can actively contribute to solutions.

Overall, the voices shared through the consultation highlight the importance of creating spaces where young people feel listened to, represented and able to contribute to meaningful change. They also reinforce the need for participation opportunities that are creative, accessible and connected to issues that matter to young people in their daily lives.

10. What These Findings Mean for Songs for Rights 2026

The findings of this consultation provide useful reflections for the continued development of the **Songs for Rights 2026 Work Plan**. While young people expressed different priorities and experiences, several common themes emerged which are closely connected to the aims of Songs for Rights and the activities planned for 2026.

Strengthening Awareness and Understanding of European Youth Goals

The consultation suggests that awareness of the **European Youth Goals** varies among young people. While some participants are already familiar with these priorities, others may benefit from more accessible and practical ways to engage with youth-related policies and European topics.

This highlights the importance of continuing activities that make these topics easier to understand and closer to young people’s everyday realities. Planned actions such as the **Music & EU Values Podcast Series, Songs for Change Webinar Series, European Youth Goals Advocacy Guide** and the **Songs for Rights Online Learning Platform** can help provide more accessible opportunities for learning, reflection and engagement.

Supporting Creative Participation and Expression

Young people participating in the consultation showed strong interest in creative forms of participation and highlighted the value of music, arts and storytelling in helping young people express themselves and connect with others.

This finding strongly supports the continued use of creative and arts-based approaches within Songs for Rights. Activities such as the **“My European Youth Goals” Advocacy Campaign, European Youth Goal Jingle Challenge, Songs for Change Toolkit**, and community-based learning activities offer opportunities for young people to participate in creative and meaningful ways.

Creating More Opportunities for Dialogue and Participation

The consultation also highlighted the importance of giving young people stronger opportunities to be heard and involved in decisions affecting their lives. Many responses reflected a wish for greater participation and more spaces for dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

For this reason, activities such as the **Youth Voices Forum, “Voices & Verses” Youth Policy Debate, Policy Jam Roundtable**, and advocacy initiatives involving policy stakeholders remain highly relevant. These activities create opportunities for dialogue, exchange of perspectives and youth participation in policy discussions connected to the European Youth Goals.

Supporting Wellbeing, Inclusion and Resilience

The consultation findings also highlighted concerns related to **mental health, wellbeing, inclusion, social exclusion and uncertainty about the future**. These topics continue to be important priorities for many young people.

This reinforces the importance of activities that support emotional wellbeing, resilience and inclusive participation. Planned initiatives such as the **RORE Arts & Mental Health Training**, the **Climate Resilience INSIDEOUT Project**, and youth worker trainings connected to wellbeing and participation can contribute to addressing these challenges through creative and supportive learning environments.

Continuing to Build Youth-Centred Activities

Overall, the consultation confirms the importance of continuing to design activities that are **participatory, creative and youth-centred**. Young people expressed interest in

opportunities that combine learning, expression, community engagement and dialogue in ways that feel relevant to their experiences and realities.

For Songs for Rights, these findings provide useful encouragement that the planned 2026 activities are aligned with many of the priorities and interests expressed by young people connected to the network. At the same time, the consultation also provides valuable insights for continuously adapting activities to remain relevant, inclusive and meaningful for young people across different contexts.

11. Conclusion

The Songs for Rights Youth Consultation offered valuable insights into the experiences, priorities and perspectives of young people connected to the network across Europe.

The findings show that young people care strongly about issues affecting their everyday lives and future, including participation, mental wellbeing, education, inclusion, equality and sustainability. At the same time, the consultation also highlights a strong wish among young people to be listened to more and to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their communities and future.

The consultation further confirms the important role that **music, arts and creative approaches** can play in supporting participation, expression and dialogue. Many young people highlighted the value of creative spaces where they can exchange ideas, express concerns and engage with important social topics in more accessible and meaningful ways.

For Songs for Rights, these findings provide important encouragement to continue developing activities that are youth-centred, creative and participatory. The consultation confirms the relevance of continuing to invest in learning opportunities, advocacy, dialogue and creative methods that help young people connect with the **European Youth Goals** and wider social issues.

At the same time, the consultation also reminds us of the importance of continuously listening to young people and adapting activities to respond to changing realities, needs and interests. Strengthening youth voices and participation remains essential for building more inclusive, democratic and sustainable communities across Europe.

ANNEX 1 – Youth Consultation Questionnaire

Songs for Rights Youth Consultation 2026

Young People, Music & European Youth Goals

This annex presents the questionnaire used for the Songs for Rights Youth Consultation 2026, conducted between March and April 2026 among young people connected to the Songs for Rights network and partner organisations across Europe.

The consultation explored young people’s priorities, challenges and perspectives related to the European Youth Goals, with a specific focus on the role of music, arts and creative participation in strengthening youth engagement and civic participation.

The survey was anonymous and designed to be simple, accessible and youth-friendly.

Introduction Text Used in the Survey

Youth Consultation – Young People, Music & European Youth Goals

This Youth Consultation is an annual online survey for young people aged 16–30 across Europe. It aims to understand young people’s priorities, challenges and views related to the European Youth Goals, with a special focus on how music and the arts can promote youth participation and influence policies creatively.

Your answers help shape the Songs for Rights 2026 Work Plan, including future training activities, youth-led advocacy, communication actions and dialogue with decision-makers.

The survey is anonymous and takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Section 1 – About You

Q1 – Age

(Select one)

16–18

19–24

25–30

Q2 – Country of Residence

(Dropdown list)

Q3 – Are you connected to any of the below listed member organisations?

(Select one)

Yes, I am part of or connected to a Songs for Rights Network organisation

No, I am not connected to any of these organisations

Songs for Rights Network Members:

PluralArts (DE), Right Now (DE), HEJMO (DE), Articolo 12 (IT), YEPP Italia (IT), Jonathan Cooperativa Sociale (IT), Hopeland (GR), Roes Cooperativa (GR), Childrens Rights Network (GR), Cecropia Hub (GR), The Playground Residence (NL), Het Wilde Westen (NL), Association for a Better Life (SK), EDYN (SK), Associação Inspira! (PT), DYPALL (PT), Globelink (BE), Culture Centre “Ribnjak” (HR), Sirius (HR), Zelena Akcija (HR), Acción por la Musica (ES), LOGO Jugendmanagement (AT), YEPP Kristinestad (FI), EnvironMental (BG), YPAR (IR)



Section 2 – Awareness & Understanding of European Youth Goals

Q4 – Before this survey, how familiar were you with the European Youth Goals?

(Select one)

- Not at all familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Very familiar

Q5 – Which European Youth Goals matter most to you?

(Select up to 3)

- Connecting EU with Youth
- Equality of All Genders
- Inclusive Societies
- Information & Constructive Dialogue
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Moving Rural Youth Forward
- Quality Employment for All
- Quality Learning
- Space and Participation for All
- Sustainable Green Europe
- Youth Organisations & European Programmes
- I am not familiar with the European Youth Goals

Section 3 – Music, Arts & Youth Participation

Q6 – In your opinion, how effective are music and the arts in promoting youth voices and European Youth Goals?

(Select one)

- Not effective
- Slightly effective
- Quite effective
- Very effective

Q7 – Have you ever taken part in activities that use music or arts to address social or youth-related issues?

(Select one)

- Yes
- No

Q7a – If yes, what kind of activity?

(Optional – short answer)

Section 4 – Challenges & Needs

Q8 – What are the main challenges young people face today in your community or country?

(Select up to 3)

- Mental health and wellbeing

Access to education or training
Employment and job security
Social exclusion and discrimination
Lack of participation in decision-making
Climate and environmental concerns
Freedom of expression
Other: _____

Q9 – What would help young people engage more with youth policies and European Youth Goals?

(Select up to 2)

More creative approaches (music, arts, storytelling)
Better access to information
Training and capacity-building
More opportunities to influence decision-makers
Financial support for youth initiatives
Online platforms and digital tools

Section 5 – Looking Forward

Q10 – How interested would you be in future activities that combine youth participation, music/arts and policy influence?

(Select one)

Not interested
Somewhat interested
Very interested

Q11 – What kinds of activities would you like to see more of?

(Select all that apply)

Workshops and training
Creative campaigns (music, video, art)
Youth-led advocacy actions
Online learning resources
Events and festivals
Dialogues with policymakers

Q12 – In one sentence, what is one message you would like decision-makers to hear from young people today?

(Optional – short answer)