

EUROPEAN LIBERAL YOUTH

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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TOOLKIT



EUROPEAN LIBERAL YOUTH - LYMEC

The **European Liberal Youth - LYMEC** is a pan-European youth organisation established in 1976, seeking to promote liberal values throughout Europe and the EU. It is the official youth organisation of the **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe** (the ALDE Party) and the **Renew Europe group** in the European Parliament.

One of the most central values of LYMEC is **respect for equality and human rights**. Everyone should have the same opportunities to participate in society and shape their lives. LYMEC wants to work for an **open and inclusive community** where people can feel safe to be themselves and develop as individuals no matter gender, age, background, disability, beliefs, religion, ethnicity or personal attributes. LYMEC stands up against all forms of discrimination, hate crime, racism and exclusion, and envisions an open society where all lives are respected.

THE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK (ACP-YPN)

Established in 2014, **ACP YPN** provides a platform for young people to play an active role in national, regional and international policy-making processes (in line with Article 26, ACP-EU Partnership Agreement). In October 2018, ACP Young Professionals Network launched **Black History Month EU** to bring Black History Month to Brussels and the EU institutions.

The network works to uplift and support young professionals from ACP and EU backgrounds. They aim to ensure that **all young professionals can benefit from equality of opportunity** by promoting and facilitating the integration of the perspectives of ACP and EU youth in several dialogues such as trade, employment, education, agriculture and environment. Furthermore, their activities and advocacy ensure "responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels" to provide solutions for youth and institutions in our societies (SDG 16+).

ACP YPN landmark activities include the **bi-annual Youth Forum at the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly** - a permanent Forum for youth to exchange with ACP and EU Members of Parliament; leading the first delegation of **ACP youth ambassadors** to the European Youth Event; hosting professionals networking events and training sessions; organising Ambassador Roundtables; launching Black History Month EU - a series of cultural, social, professional, training and networking events with public and private sector stakeholders.

PURPOSE OF THE D&I TOOLKIT

The **Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Toolkit** is an easily-digested booklet for political youth organisations, providing **concrete tips on strengthening diversity, inclusion and participation within organisations**. The Toolkit is mainly based on the participants' inputs and needs discussed during a Study Session on diversity, inclusion and meaningful participation. It will also include chapters on leadership, self-analysis and policies needed to strengthen organisational diversity and participation.

The **Study Session "Speak Up and Lead: making space for diversity and participation in political youth organisations"** was organised by the European Liberal Youth (LYMEC) and the African Caribbean and Pacific Young Professionals Network (ACP YPN) in cooperation with the **Youth Department of the Council of Europe**. It took place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from the 22nd to the 26th of November 2021.

At the end of the session, the participants are equipped with knowledge of diversity and its various forms of manifestation within the political process. Further, the participants were able to **develop a diversity and inclusion framework and strategy** for their own respective political and youth affiliations/ parties/organisations.

DEFINITIONS

During the five-day study session, both speakers and participants had time to discuss diversity from various angles and perspectives. The main topic was **diversity and participation in political youth organisations** while focusing on **inclusion and meaningful participation**. Other relevant topics were the difference between being excluded, included and empowered and how youth should be included to impact decision-making. Participants discussed what diversity and inclusion mean, how they can be measured and what can be done to strengthen them.

Let's discover the outcomes through some definitions.



Diversity can be defined as **the presence of differences within a given setting**. It doesn't refer to one person but rather to a **group of unique people** from different backgrounds, encompassing protected characteristics (differences) such as age, gender, abilities, religion, nationality, ethnicity and much more. When there is a lack of diversity, it means that the group is homogeneous in one or more of these areas.

Building a diverse system (in organisations, politics or society) **takes time**. To develop that kind of system, we need to reconfigure our mindset, norms, and attitudes.

When it comes to diversity and education, learning about the variety of cultures is vital to understanding diversity and initiating change: this should become a mandatory part of the learning schedule to create awareness from an early age. It is also essential to have a historical understanding to recognise and strengthen diversity through the years: we have wounds from previous generations we are unaware of. **Recognising what happened in the past** (such as by identifying sources of injustice and inequality) is essential to master diversity today.

Furthermore, there must be **firmness and courage to speak up** against injustice or inequalities. To do so, there should be platforms that allow people to be heard when they notice unfairness around them. Those privileged or in a position of power need to be responsible for strengthening diversity. As one of the participants of the Study Session noted in the evaluation form, *"If (youth) political parties do not prioritise diversity and inclusion, then they are destined to fail both in terms of electoral performance and in terms of membership"*.

Another relevant point is how diversity manifests within the political processes. The following categories (**Governance, Election, Activism and Democracy**) explain diversity within the political context. It is interesting to understand the practical tools used in political contexts to emphasise diversity and its gaps.

GOVERNANCE DIVERSITY

could be enhanced by creating an **Advisory Council** that considers various groups to advise government leaders on decisions. In addition, different governmental bodies, such as the Police, need to consider diversity to ensure that people feel safe in their communities.

ELECTION DIVERSITY

is enhanced and encouraged through **electorate voting**, where society is sensitised to vote for 50% of women. Thus, 50% of candidates should also be women, which is different today.

ACTIVISM DIVERSITY

should be encouraged by **tutor programmes for young people** to create a safe space for people to express themselves. In addition, creating programmes that target strengthening the capacity of young people running for political office is key.

DEMOCRACY DIVERSITY

can be strengthened by **structural programmes** that ensure participation schemes for minorities and low voting groups. These programmes could include discussions in schools, as well as more financing for youth centres and organisations.





INCLUSION

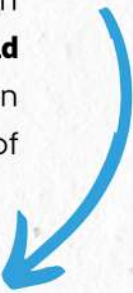
In the words of Verna Myers, *"Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance"*. Inclusion means that **everyone should feel comfortable bringing their full selves to work without fear of discrimination**. Everyone has something that makes them unique!

Diversity and inclusion are often described as two sides of the same coin. *"Where inclusion of everyone ensures that all young people can take part, the focus on Diversity ensures that everybody can take part on their terms, recognizing the value of differences in norms, beliefs, attitudes and life experience"*.

EQUALITY



Equality is addressed as a founding value of any democracy. If you look up its definition in a dictionary, equality is defined as **the state of equal rights, status and opportunities**. In social policy, equality is the right of different groups to enjoy the benefits of similar social status and receive equal treatment without fear of discrimination. The idea of equality is seen as **equal opportunities but also as respect for differences**. As regards education, equality means providing every student with the same learning experience. Equity, however, means overcoming discrimination against specific groups of people in that same context. Therefore, **education should promote equal treatment and gender equality**, and everyone should be heard, seen and treated equally. Consequently, we should strive to create an atmosphere of justice, security and acceptance.



INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality helps us analyse and understand **what makes us who we are**, wonder how people interpret us and see how we interpret ourselves. Intersectionality helps us understand how aspects of identities are interconnected and gradient. During the discussions, the participants emphasised that diversity and inclusion **will only be strengthened when people are seen as multifaceted in their social identities** - in other words when intersectionality is taken into account. While intersectionality is a way of understanding how and why every individual's view of the world is different, inclusion takes into account everyone all the time - not some people, some of the time.



MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Meaningful participation means **engaging a diverse group of stakeholders who are representative of the communities that policies and programs will impact**, not only in consultative roles to provide input but also to co-plan or lead program development efforts, have access to data and resources to make informed decisions, have decision-making authority, and participate in the analysis of data and program impact efforts.

Those in positions of power **need to include young people**, but young people also need to be active and speak up. However, platforms must be created to enable young people to speak their minds. To develop meaningful participation (especially in politics and decision-making), there is a crucial need for better communication between the youth and those in positions of power.

SELF-ANALYSIS



In psychology, self-analysis is considered **the inner process that people consciously carry out on themselves**, enabling them to get in touch with their inner selves through introspective observation. Self-analysis is the **constant, active self-awareness process**: it helps us become more aware of unconscious motivations and all that is important to our psyche.

For long-term professional and personal success, self-assessment is essential to determine the progress made and to lay the foundations for better prospects.



LEADERSHIP

The term 'leadership' comes from the English 'to lead', as in **guiding a group of people or members of a team who pursue common goals and objectives**. A team leader is, by definition, someone who coordinates the group they are part of to solve a problem, develop a project or achieve a goal. A leader must ensure everyone's attention is focused on the end result and equally committed.

THE DIVERSITY SURVEY

To quote what one of the study session participants mentioned in the evaluation form, *"the topic of diversity is large enough to cover a month of content and exercises"*. The **Diversity survey** is a question list that an organisation should ask themselves to check if they are equipped to deal with diversity and inclusivity. This survey is about **understanding different information activities for diversity and inclusion**, the policy and organisation behind these values and creating a conducive and cohesive environment for exploration and inclusivity.

The exercise will make you **identify and reflect on strengths, weaknesses, identity, and procedures** regarding diversity in your organisation.

Professional development and professionalism of the organisation

Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to deliver
an inclusive youth service

	YES	PARTLY	NO
Staff and volunteers have received training about working with young people with a diverse background or identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff and volunteers model inclusive language when speaking to clients about relationships and sexuality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff and volunteers demonstrate a commitment to meeting the needs of members and participants with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff and volunteers demonstrate a commitment to meeting the needs of members and participants with financial challenges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff and volunteers know how to respond to a young person who is experiencing harassment or unequal treatment and demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff and volunteers have an accurate understanding of issues for young people with a diverse background or identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Public image

How we present our service to our community

	YES	PARTLY	NO
Our service publicly communicates information about its diversity goals as one of its priority areas and our service displays e.g. diversity awareness posters and information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our promotional materials names young people of diversity and indicates that they are safe and welcome in the service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our service regularly makes available to me information about how diverse our members and leadership team are	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our service displays information about diversity youth support services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Program planning and delivery

Our programs are designed and delivered to include the various needs and identities of young people of a diverse background or identity

	YES	PARTLY	NO
Staff and volunteers actively challenge anti-diversity attitudes and racial, ethnic, and gender-based jokes are not tolerated in this organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We provide informal education to young people about diversity issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We provide an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs and I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our service marks diversity days of significance (e.g. LGBT Pride each June, International Day Against Homophobia each May, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination each March)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Participation

We make sure we include the voices of young people of diversity at all levels of our youth service

YES **PARTLY** **NO**

Our service actively promotes a message of safety and respect for people of diverse background and identity

☐☐☐

We consult with young people of a diverse background or identity, their parents and organisations about the specific needs and issues for young people of diversity in relation to accessing and participating in youth work

☐☐☐

Our service consults with young people of diversity and actively involves them in decision making and the development of the organisation

☐☐☐

Policies and procedures

We have a written commitment to deliver an equal and inclusive service

YES **PARTLY** **NO**

Our service has policies and procedures in place to deal with racist/homophobic/transphobic/sexist bullying and harassment

☐☐☐

Our service has an equality policy that names young people of diverse background and identity

☐☐☐

LEADERSHIP

If you are looking for a definition of leadership, you will soon realise that the answer to the question is challenging. For instance, its definition is perhaps not the most crucial aspect of what's behind the term 'leadership'. To fully understand leadership, you need to look inwards and **find out the strengths, attitudes and behaviours** through which a true leader interacts, communicates and influences others.

When we talk about leaders, **what makes us define people as such?** Is it their personality, their behaviour, their actions or their success? Leadership is an organisational requirement and one of the most effective forms of social control, as it involves interpersonal influence, guiding people and taking on roles of responsibility. However, according to many different studies on leadership, it does not have a distinct meaning, but it can change according to how the 'influence process' is recognised.

During the Study Session in Strasbourg, the participants had the opportunity to participate in a fruitful **leadership workshop**. For the first part of the analysis, the participants gathered in groups to **ponder a leader's top characteristics, abilities and beliefs**. During the discussions, a list of factors was made. Some outtakes from the list were: leaders are role models, diplomatic and fair. Furthermore, in the context of diversity, they are inclusive, democratic, diplomatic and emotionally intelligent. The inclusiveness feature was brought up frequently, as a leader should be able to integrate all people and groups in activities, organisations and political processes, especially those who are disadvantaged, have suffered discrimination or are living with disabilities.

Leaders can advocate, adapt and communicate. A leader needs to be able to take action and be accountable for creating a better environment. Leaders can also delegate, where delegation is the ability to empower others to achieve a collective set of goals for a progressive future. Leaders believe in respect, tolerance, empathic understanding and deep listening. An empathetic leader shows interest in their team members' lives, their thoughts and feelings, and the challenges they may be facing.

After listening to and evaluating them, this leader will think of ways of helping them fulfil their needs to create a dynamic that works for them within the team. A leader must believe in deep listening because there needs to be a suspension of judgement and a willingness to receive new information – whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

LEADERS ARE, CAN, & THINK

Just like any other skill, even leadership can be trained.

The following activity will help you **foster reflection, self-awareness, and critical thinking about leadership**. This exercise comprises two sections: in the first one, you can find an assessment worksheet to fill out, which will help you define your current leadership competencies.

In each column of the following table, **please list what you believe are the leaders' top characteristics** ('leaders are'), **qualities** ('leaders can'), and **beliefs** ('leaders think').

LEADERS ARE... (TOP CHARATERISTICS)	LEADERS CAN... (TOP ABILITIES)	LEADERS THINK... (TOP BELIEFS)
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.



Once your table is complete, you're encouraged to **respond to four questions for each category.** This exercise will help you rate yourself in that category, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and suggest one thing you could do to improve in that area.

BASED ON YOUR TOP CHARACTERISTICS OF A LEADER, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1) Does each of the characteristics you listed describe you as a leader? Why or why not?

2) How would you rate yourself according to your top leadership characteristics that you listed?

3) Which one of the characteristics best describes you and which one least describes you?

4) What is one thing you need to do to improve in this area?



BASED ON YOUR TOP ABILITIES OF A LEADER, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

5) Does each of the abilities you listed describe you as a leader? Why or why not?

6) How would you rate yourself according to your top leadership abilities that you listed?

7) Which one of the abilities best describes you and which one least describes you?

8) What is one thing you need to do to improve in this area?

BASED ON YOUR TOP BELIEFS OF A LEADER, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

9) Does each of the beliefs you listed describe you as a leader? Why or why not?

10) How would you rate yourself according to your top leadership beliefs that you listed?

11) Which one of the beliefs best describes you and which one least describes you?

12) What is one thing you need to do to improve in this area?

LYMEC EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PLAN

At LYMEC, one of the most central values is **respect for diversity, equality and human rights**. LYMEC believes everyone should have the same opportunities to participate in society and strives daily for an open and inclusive environment where people can feel safe to be themselves regardless of their age, background, disability, religion, ethnicity or personal features.

Given that, the European Liberal Youth adheres to standards of equality and diversity as laid out in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy of the European Commission.

That is why on November 9, 2019, the first **LYMEC Equality and Diversity Plan was adopted at the 2019 Autumn Congress in London**, United Kingdom, thus being the first pan-European political youth organisation to do so. Since then, LYMEC has been focusing even more on strengthening equality and diversity within the organisation.

Moreover, in June 2020, LYMEC organised an online activity in cooperation with the Council of Europe, focusing on diversifying youth organisations' communication. With over 100 registrations received and positive feedback about the importance of the topic, the event was a great success.

Based on the interest in this event, it was clear that the topic was of great importance to our members and possibly to other young people in Europe and beyond. Therefore, the decision came to continue from what was learned and discussed in 2020 and build on that for the 2021 Study Session in Strasbourg. LYMEC decided to focus this study session on taking concrete steps to strengthen diversity and participation in political youth organisations.

The LYMEC Equality and Diversity Plan applies to all aspects and activities of the European Liberal Youth: organisation, staff, communication, recruitment and event management. **The plan comprises two chapters:** I) The European Liberal Youth as an employer and II) The European Liberal Youth as a platform for equal participation.

It is first and foremost intended to **outline equal conditions for all employees in the working place**, no matter gender or gender expression, religion or belief, disability or impairments of any kind, appearance or other personal attributes. **An equal working area** guarantees equal opportunities to let people carry out their assigned tasks, develop skills, acquire equal compensation and receive equal terms.

The European Liberal Youth strives to **implement equal opportunities on all levels of the organisation and in all types of activities**. All the staff of the European Liberal Youth must be aware of the content of the equality and diversity plan and strive to implement the actions the plan indicates or clearly outlines. The Bureau is responsible for implementation by setting examples and shaping the organisation's culture. As leaders and forepersons in the organisation, the President and Secretary General carry a specific responsibility for following up on its implementation.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The European Liberal Youth is a working place where all employees know what discrimination and harassment mean. Furthermore, **the staff and Bureau do their utmost to counter the existence of such treatment**. Therefore, an open and self-analytic culture is essential for finding ways to detect, process and react to discrimination and harassment.

Regular personal development and evaluation talks with the President or the Secretary General and the staff members as forepersons of the staff is a first step towards establishing such a culture.

A second step towards an open and self-analytic culture is the **designation of two support Ombudspersons**, who the staff can turn to (individually or collectively) to report on cases of perceived harassment. Claims of harassment don't only concern sexual harassment but also other forms of discriminating treatment or bullying in the working place. The two ombudspersons are appointed by the Committee of Discipline and Arbitrage and the Internal Auditors.

The ombudsperson can also be addressed by participants of LYMEC events, meetings or working groups to report on cases of perceived harassment. In this case, the named ombudspersons are to be (Congress) chairs, event facilitators or persons from the Bureau or the Internal Auditors.

In both cases, the ombudspersons contact the Bureau to report and pass on to a discussion on how to process the issue – unless Bureau Member(s) are a part of the harassment case. The person(s) in question is excluded from the initial discussion. Suppose the issue raised is a **breach of the Code of Conduct**. In that case, the case is presented to the LYMEC Committee for Discipline and Arbitrage upon a decision from the Bureau, which then offers a solution or a legal interpretation for best practices. The ombudspersons must act on reported cases as quickly as possible to avoid escalating an uncomfortable conversation development.