

Voting Matters: Igniting Change in the EU elections

Luisa Broli



Overview



Youth participation
in European elections



The educational kit
for the 2024 European
elections



Teaching strategies to
boost active European
citizenship



The power of social
media channels in
reaching out to first-
time voters



Youth participation
in European
elections



The educational kit
for the 2024 European
elections



Teaching strategies to
boost active European
citizenship



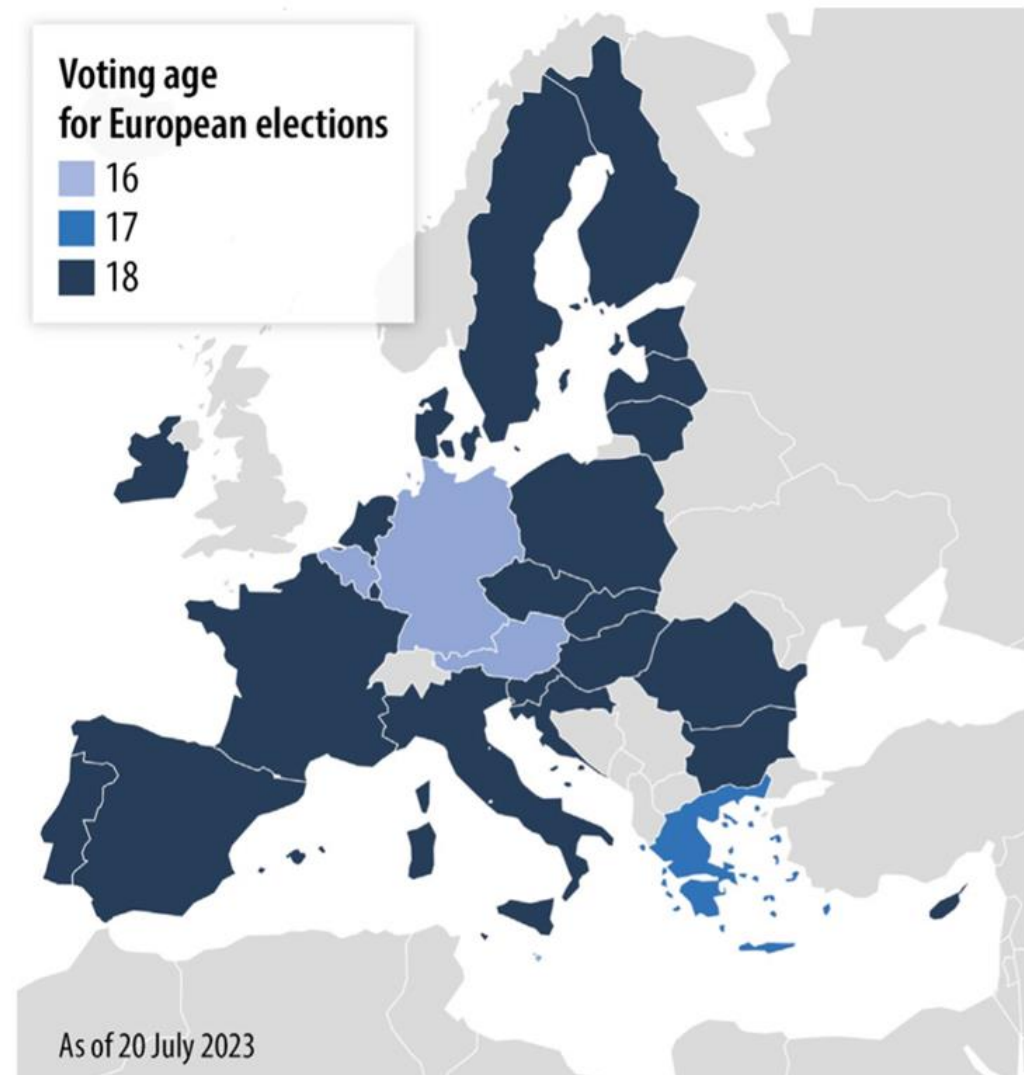
The power of social
media channels in
reaching out to first-
time voters

Voting age in the Member States

Under current EU law, EU Member States are free to set their **minimum national voting age** for European elections.

This age is set at **16** in Austria, Belgium, Germany and Malta, **17** in Greece, and **18** in the remaining Member States.

Figure 1 – Voting age in the Member States



Source: Compiled by EPRS, May 2023, updated August 2023.

Potential measures to increase youth participation in elections

Lowering the
voting age

Introducing
youth quotas

Providing for
online or postal
voting

Decreasing the
age to stand as
candidate

Promoting
civic education
in school
curricula

How can we boost civic participation among young people?



YOU can help
shape the Europe
you want!

GET READY!

The countdown to
the 2024 European
elections has
begun

Make your voice
heard



VOTE

The next European
elections will take
place
6–9 June 2024.
Save the date!

Why vote?
Because you can choose who takes
decisions on important issues that
concern you – like climate change,
jobs and the protection of your rights
and freedoms.

Care about democracy? Join
together.eu/



Youth participation
in European elections



The educational kit
for the 2024 European
elections



Teaching strategies
to boost active
European
citizenship



The power of social
media channels in
reaching out to first-
time voters

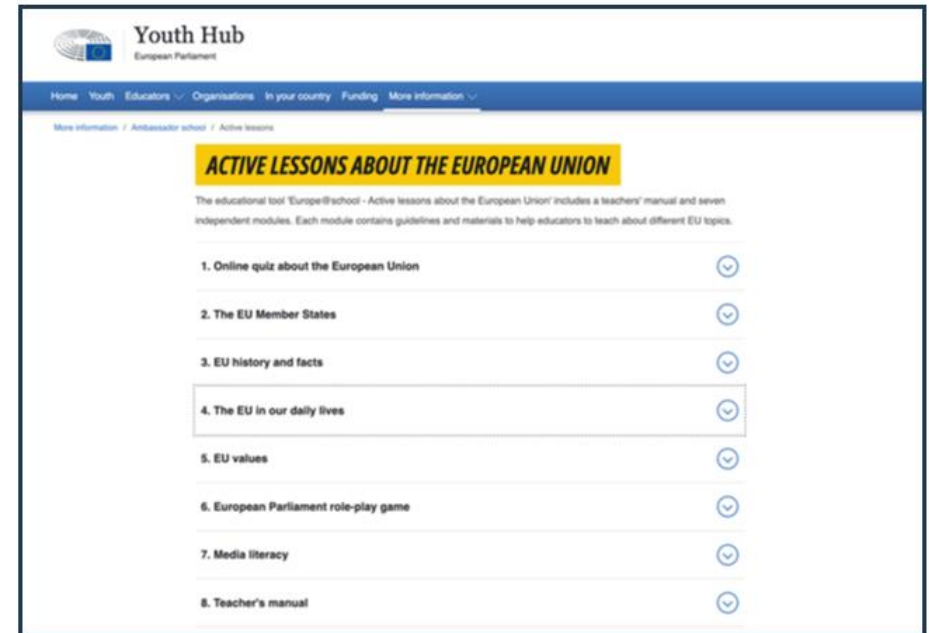
Teaching strategies

- Raising **European** awareness through the **European Union Learning Corner** site and the **Youth Hub**
- Promoting **classroom discussions** about current critical issues and the key policy domains within the European Union
- Organizing **debates** about the future of the European Union
- Creating **infographics** and **posters** about the European Union
- Involving students in the learning journey through the use of **game-based learning techniques**

The European Union Learning Corner



The Youth Hub



Classroom discussions about current critical issues in the EU



Ten issues to
watch in 2024



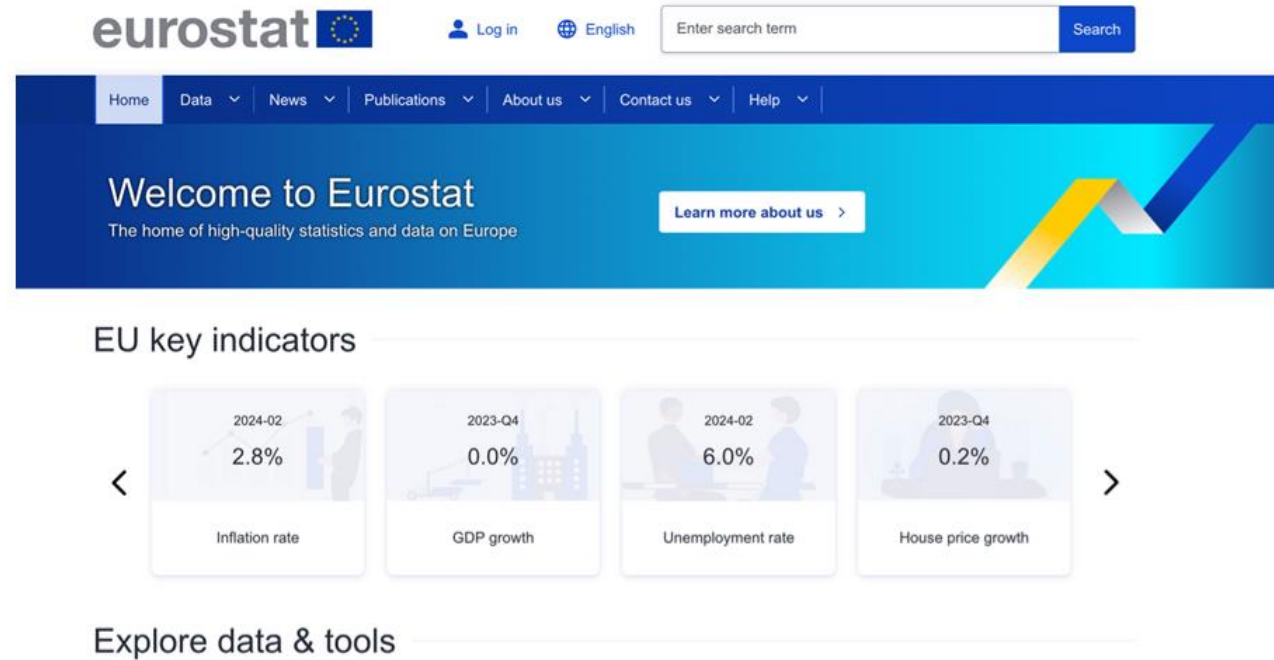
Debates about the future of the European Union

[Home](#)[About](#)[Organisation](#)[Championships](#)[Resources](#)[Calendar](#)

WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

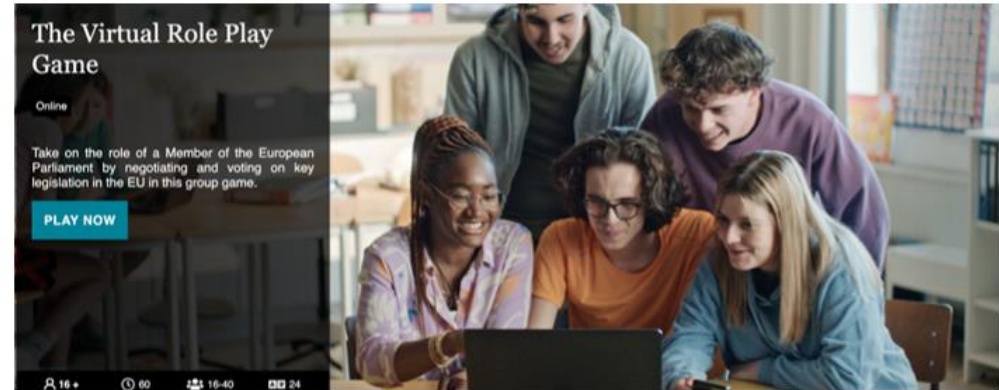


Creation of infographics about the EU



Creation of
posters on the
topic:
“What Europe
does for me”







Youth participation
in European elections



The educational kit
for the 2024
European elections



Teaching strategies to
boost active European
citizenship



The power of social
media channels in
reaching out to first-
time voters



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT	3
STRUCTURE	3
INTERACTION IS KEY	3
MODULE 1 WHY VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024?	5
MODULE 2 DISINFORMATION	9
MODULE 3 HOW DOES THE EU IMPACT MY LIFE?	13
MODULE 4 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?	17
MODULE 5 BECOMING AN ACTIVE EUROPEAN CITIZEN	21
MODULE 6 YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE ACTION	25

MODULE 1 WHY VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024?



The European elections will take place between 6 and 9 June 2024¹. These elections happen every 5 years since 1979. They are the largest transnational democratic exercise worldwide, the only example of citizens from 27 different countries electing together their representatives for one common Parliament.

Voting is always important, be it at local, national or European level. It is an excellent opportunity for citizens to have their say on topics they care about. European elections are not a referendum on the EU; they function in the same way as national elections, being a contest between different viewpoints and proposals – and the more people vote, the more different viewpoints will also be represented in the coming European Parliament, to make sure that Parliament's debates reflect all opinions out there in our European societies.

Like with national elections, European elections are important for two main reasons:

- ▶ **The decisions of the European Parliament have a direct and real impact on everybody's lives** (see Module 3 – *How does the EU impact my life?*). And all these decisions start with a vote. Those who do not vote, one could say, live by someone else's decisions – and, yes, in someone else's democracy.
- ▶ **Democracy must never be taken for granted.** Building it has been a collective achievement, keeping it strong remains a collective responsibility in which everyone has a role. Democracy should also never be taken as completed. It always can be improved. And the more people vote, the stronger our democracy becomes.

The future of the European project depends on young people, their willingness to embrace a European identity and their active engagement in the European political process (see Module 5 – *Becoming an active European citizen*).

The act of voting as a form of political engagement is vital, and the reasons why it is important to vote are worth discussing with young people.

Young people might say they **want** to vote because:

- ▶ **They want to stand for democracy:** Democracy starts with the people: they kick things off by voting in the European elections, and the decisions made there affect their lives. If people don't participate, they don't get to shape the future; but beyond that, European Parliamentary democracy loses its strength, and its values lose meaning. The European Parliament constantly pushes to improve democratic rights and ensure the respect of EU values, such as peace, freedom, rule of law, the rights of minorities or gender equality.
- ▶ **EU laws have a direct impact on their daily life:** The European Parliament adopts laws that affect directly 447 million people in the EU (gender balance, climate, single market, etc. – see Module 3 – *How does the EU impact my life?*). The vote of young people will decide which Members of the European Parliament will represent them in preparing new laws and will influence the election of the European Commission. These decisions will shape young people's daily life and that of many others.
- ▶ **They want to tackle the global challenges** that surround them (climate change, public health, economy and jobs, security and peace, etc.) and that no EU country can tackle successfully on its own. They want to use their vote to set the direction the EU should take on these challenges.

Young people might say they **do not want** to vote because:

- ▶ **They don't know for whom to vote.** Encourage them to find it out by reading the manifestos and programs of the political parties on the Internet, talking to their loved ones, or go to the website elections.europa.eu to find out more about the European Parliament's political groups and what they stand for.
- ▶ **They think politics is dirty and do not want to get involved.** Explain that politics is not only an election campaign and fighting politicians. It is also a debate about climate change, sustainable economy, energy sources, the future of work, minimum salaries, and which policies the EU budget will support.
- ▶ **They find participating in elections is burdensome.** Point out that voting is just a few minutes of their life, which on average lasts 80 years!
- ▶ **They are not interested in politics.** Ask if they are interested in the future of their loved ones, their own and of the planet? If so, they are in fact interested in politics.
- ▶ **They do not believe their vote counts.** Challenge them! Every vote matters in every election – local government, parliamentary or presidential. In recent elections such as the referendum on Brexit, or the US presidential elections, the difference between the options/candidates was only 2–4 percentage points. Just take the case of Brexit: significantly fewer young people voted in this referendum compared to the older generations, and the option to leave the EU won, to the dismay of young people – so every vote can make a difference.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ▶ When was the first time you voted and why? When will be your next voting opportunity? How would you encourage your friends to vote?
- ▶ In the past not everyone could vote: in Europe, women for example obtained their voting rights starting in 1906 up until 1974, and the voting age used to be 21, not 18, until the 1970s. Who can vote is a social convention that evolves over time. While the voting age was lowered to 17 in Greece for the upcoming European elections, 4 countries (Belgium, Germany, Malta, and Austria) lowered it to 16. Do you think it should be lowered in all EU Member States and why?
- ▶ When parts of the population are excluded from voting or where people cannot express their opinions freely, what is the impact on the society, notably in terms of rights and representation?
- ▶ What are the challenges that cannot be solved by an EU country on its own?

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ elections.europa.eu: The website of the European elections explains how elections work, notably with short videos of 1 minute, and provides all relevant information on how to vote. It gives a possibility to sign up to get voting reminders. It will also feature the results of the elections. (10 minutes)
- ▶ together.eu is a community of people who care about democracy and who want to give it real meaning as the next European elections approach. It connects people from across Europe to meet, share knowledge and learn new skills, all while encouraging others to vote in 2024. Sign up with your youngsters to get involved. (5-45 minutes)
- ▶ "Art in democracy" pedagogical toolkit: The Art in Democracy toolkit explores the topic of democracy and democratic values through the artwork of contemporary European artists. It proposes an adaptable module on aesthetic and experience-based learning. (15-60 minutes)



Access all the resources



QUIZ

1. When will the European elections take place?
 - a. 6-9 June 2024 (adapt to your country)
 - b. On 9 May as it is Europe day
 - c. in 2025 only
 - d. The date is not set yet
2. European elections happen every:
 - a. 5 years
 - b. 2 years
 - c. 7 years
 - d. 4 years
3. In a democracy,
 - a. people can freely express opinions
 - b. decisions are not taken by one person only
 - c. people can contest decisions they disagree with
 - d. all the above

MODULE 6 YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE ACTION



European Chateaugay Youth Prize

The purpose of the last module is to provide young people with **ideas of actions that they can take** to make a first step towards becoming an active citizens and create the change they want to see.

The ideas presented below are split in 5 sections, depending how much time young people want to dedicate to their actions: 5, 15, 30, 60 minutes or more.



Local EYES

In 5 minutes

- ▶ **Follow the European Parliament on their favourite social media.** The European Parliament is present in Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, Spotify, X and YouTube.
- ▶ **Retweet, share on their story, or like and comment on the posts of the European Parliament.** By sharing posts with their networks, young people will help their friends and networks see what the Parliament is up to and help them make an informed decision in the 2024 European elections.
- ▶ **Make a story/post about the 2024 European elections with a call to vote.** This could be simply about announcing that there will be elections, with the dates (6-9 June 2024) or focus on a particular area of interest, where the EU should (continue to) take action in the next five years.
- ▶ **Sign up on the elections website** to get voting reminders and ensure young people do not forget to use their vote.

- ▶ **Register on together.eu** and invite three people they know to do the same.
- ▶ **Hang out a European flag** in a visible spot!
- ▶ Ask the school to **[hang an elections poster](#)** on the billboards.



together

In 15 minutes

- ▶ Organise a **crash intervention** of students in another class. The purpose of this 15-minute intervention is to raise awareness of other students about the European elections and to provide them with 2-3 reasons to go to vote and/or encourage the friends and families to vote. While the intervention should be arranged in advance with the educator who will be interrupted that day, it is the surprise element that will make presentations more powerful!
- ▶ **Take on the online quizzes** of the European Parliament:
 - The educational tool 'Europe@school - Active lessons about the European Union' also includes an online quiz made of 12 questions (2020)
 - [How much do you know about the EU's single market?](#) (2022)
 - [How much do you know about human rights in the EU?](#) (2020)
- ▶ **Create a quiz** on their favourite online platform with questions on the EU and send it to their friends and families with the hashtag **#EUElections2024** to test their knowledge on the EU. The quiz should ideally end with a call to vote.



In 30 minutes

- **Browse once a week through the [news section of the European Parliament's website](#) to find out what the European Parliament has worked on that week.** Select one topic and deepen their knowledge on it. Explain it to a friend or a member of family.
- **Visit the website of the MEPs of your region** and find out what they have been active on over the last week. If they have a question on their activity, send them an email.



In an hour or more

- In case young people know civil society organisations, online influencers, or private organisations which would be able to help with the official 2024 European elections campaign, they could:
 - Reach out to them and see if they would be interested in contributing to the defence of the European democracy;
 - Invite them to sign up on [together.eu](#);
 - Contact the European Parliament at youth@europarl.europa.eu.
- If they are in Brussels, **visit the European Parliament's Info Hub**. This new facility has put a vast array of resources and interactive activities at disposal to stimulate the curiosity of visitors: from open-access research materials, to tailor-made

information sessions, topical talks and events, as well as a brand new 'Elections Experience Path' helping citizens to make an informed decision based on what Europe does for them.

- **Request an [online Youth Talk](#)** for the school to get the opportunity to learn more about the power, role, and activities of the European Parliament with a 60-minute online presentation and question and answer session adapted to the group's interests.



Visit the European Parliament

In a day or more

Visit the European Parliament. There are many offers for visitors available for free, some of them being open 7 days a week.

In Brussels and Strasbourg:

- **Visit the European Parliament buildings.** They can book individual or group visits on the website [VisitEP](#). The visit to the Hemicycle – the heart of European democracy – often leaves a strong impression on visitors! Booking a one-hour presentation and a Q&A session with a professional speaker on all the 24 official languages is a unique possibility for young people to get closer to the European decision-making process.
- **Visit the [Parlamentarium](#)**, an interactive and modern museum for all ages dedicated to European democracy. More than 2 million citizens have already visited it!

In Brussels and online:

- **Visit the [House of European History](#)**, located in Brussels that takes visitors on a journey through Europe's past. How did we get here? What did it all mean? Visitors from abroad can also experience the museum online and get a free [virtual tour](#).

Across the European Union:

- ▶ If they cannot come to Brussels or Strasbourg, they can visit instead the [Europa Experience](#) in the nearest EU capital. **Europa Experience** is a **multimedia space with** interactive tools that offer visitors a direct and fascinating insight into how the European Parliament works to tackle today's most important challenges.
- ▶ The **European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs)** in your country are working in close cooperation with the educators' community. They also run the **European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS)** programme which is designed for secondary schools.





Youth participation
in European elections



The educational kit
for the 2024 European
elections



Teaching strategies to
boost active European
citizenship



The power of social
media channels in
reaching out to
first-time voters



European Parliament

Our social media



JOIN THE CONVERSATION





Follow our Twitter accounts to get the **latest news** on the European Parliament. Listen to live conversations and debate through Twitter Spaces and engage by posting your questions.

Activate your **notifications** so you'll be the first to know what happens!

[Go to our central Twitter account](#)

[Go to the Twitteropolis](#)

> [See all country accounts](#)



We have audio too! We have curated playlists inspired by international days and significant events for the EU and we are working on including podcasts. Give them a listen and share them with your friends!

[Check our Spotify playlists](#)



Find out what is coming up at the next plenary sessions, the hottest topics of the past week or some of the European Parliament's biggest achievements.

Follow plenary debates and major events live as if you were in the room.

On our YouTube channel, you can also find everything you need to know about the functioning of the Parliament and the EU, the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Parliament's political groups and how the Parliament's work benefits your life.

[Go to our YouTube channel](#)

> [See all country accounts](#)



Follow us on Facebook to get updates about the European Parliament's activities and work. Connect to the **livestreams** of debates and discussions, watch **interviews with members** of the Parliament and relevant personalities, and **propose questions** to the moderators **in real time**.

Engage with the community in the comment sections and, if you have any questions, raise them with **Parlibot**, our messenger **chatbot**!

Join the "What Europe does for me" **Facebook group**, to be part of a community passionate about the EU. Check out our latest stories.

[Go to our Facebook page](#)

[What Europe does for me](#)

> [See all country accounts](#)



Keep up to date with Parliament's activities and priorities by following our Instagram account. Engage with our content by tapping and holding on to our stories to see Parliament from behind the scenes or explore a topic in more detail.

Take part in the **challenges** and follow our **livestreams** and **interviews**. If you want to have some fun, watch our **reels** channel and deep dive into a variety of topics with music and voice overs. Don't forget to **share** them with your friends!

[Go to our Instagram](#)

> [See all country accounts](#)



Find the photo albums of the European Parliament's plenary sessions, events, and more!

Most of the pictures have an Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs Creative Commons License.

[Go to our Flickr page](#)



Connect with the European Parliament on LinkedIn to keep up to date with discussions and decisions at the European Parliament.

Connect to the **livestreams** of debates and discussions, watch **interviews** with members of the Parliament and relevant personalities, and propose questions to the moderators **in real time**.

Join our LinkedIn group to network and discuss European politics with like-minded individuals!

[Go to our LinkedIn page](#)

Engaging students through Instagram post creation -1

Choose a topic: e.g. “Use your vote”



Engaging students through Instagram post creation -2

Invite your students to make a reel

Instagram Reels are short-form Instagram videos that can be up to 90 seconds long.

Users can record, edit, and clip videos and photos together, set them to music, and post to their feed.



Engaging students through Instagram post creation -3

Ask your students to add these **hashtags** in the caption or comments of their post:

#europeanelections2024

#useyourvote

#youtheu

If they have a public account, their post will be visible on the corresponding hastag page.



Thank you for your attention!