

Youth to the rescue!

What kind of democracy do young people in Africa, Asia and Europe want?



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Tuesday, 8 November 2022
11.30–13.00
Room 1 – Palais de l'Europe

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#FutureOfDemocracy #CoE_WFD

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About us

- Debating Europe and Debating Africa – part of Friends of Europe and the Africa-Europe Foundation
- Our mission: regenerate democracy and promote a new kind of leadership
 - 3,000+ leaders involved
 - 200,000+ citizens' comments/questions
 - 280,000+ social media following

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About the project

- 150 young people aged 18-35 from Africa, Asia, and Europe
- African participants - Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, Malawi, Ghana, and Cameroon
- European participants - Italy, Germany, France Spain, Greece, Portugal, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, UK, Netherlands, Czechia, and Ireland
- Asian participants - India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan

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African participants

- Pessimistic about the state of their democracies
 - Corruption and distrust in politicians
 - Institutions seen to be getting weaker
- Context is key
 - Kenya and Ghana stood out as examples of relatively happy, prosperous democracies
 - Some openly wondered whether they'd be better off without democracy at all
 - Rwandans felt democracy was less important than stability

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Asian participants

- Broadly satisfied with their democracies, especially in Japan and South Korea, although several felt their country didn't fit into definition of the word
- Singapore often quoted as example of curtailed democracy where people were happy
 - Sparked much reflection on the true value of democracy
- Positive about institutions but very critical of those in power
- Corruption seen as a systemic risk

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European participants

- Little optimism that democracy would fare well in the next few years
- Top concerns
 - Social media driving polarisation
 - Fuelling populism
- Deeper concerns about the foundations of democracy from participants in Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary and Poland

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Ten Key Ideas from Our 150 Participants

1

Involve young people in decision-making

Young people feel detached and excluded

2

Boost transparency to tackle corruption

Particularly among Asian and African participants, corruption is seen as ingrained

3

Politicians must compromise and cooperate

Polarisation is putting democracy in peril

4

Break out of political bubbles and echo chambers

Politicians need new ways to engage with their electorate

5

Civil rights and freedoms must be protected

Legal protections like free speech must be upheld more forcefully

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Ten Key Ideas from Our 150 Participants

6

**Democratic institutions
need political support**

Attacks on the
foundations of
democracy must stop

7

**Listen to voices
on the margins**

Marginalised groups should
be better represented

8

**Greater investment
in civic education**

Young people need to
understand the power
of the vote

9

**Adopt new ways to
participate**

Democracies need to
innovate to survive

10

**Nobody is
above the law**

Leaders must
abide by the law

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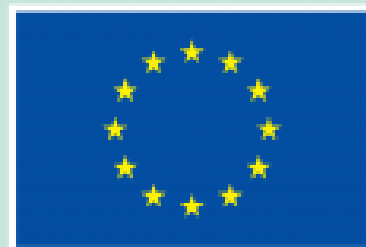
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