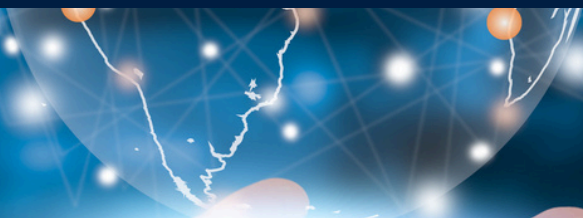




# MOVING DEMOCRACY ONLINE

The Hague  
24-28 September 2023



## SCENARIOS FOR CONNECTING YOUNGSTERS TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

A project implemented by  
**FOUNDATION NETHERLANDS-ROMANIA**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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# About

## MOVING DEMOCRACY ONLINE

“Moving Democracy Online” is an umbrella initiative which was launched by Foundation Netherlands - Romania in The Hague, in 2021. Under this generic title, we have been organising various projects aimed at providing a platform for young people to engage in dialogue with policy makers.

This helps improve civic participation but also digital skills, within the context of the continually growing process of digitalising democracy.

Through non-formal learning activities, participants are stimulated to express their points of view and share opinions with representatives of The Hague politics, policy makers and other experts.

Youth participation in dialogue in the digital age allows those responsible for youth policies at local and European levels to listen to the voice of young people, finding out their needs to take part in the democratic life and taking these into account.

The project encourages participants to learn about democracy through active engagement.

Getting in dialogue with various policy makers and receiving direct feedback on their opinions is gaining the interest of young people in the EU, allowing them to learn more about its democratic processes and form a critical opinion.

By launching this initiative, we have been aiming at promoting the active participation of young people in democratic life and fostering debate around the major issues affecting youth. By participating in these projects, youngsters have been equipped with various tools useful for stepping into the e-democracy process.

This has allowed them to develop new skills, competencies and knowledge to make their voice heard by exercising together creative tasks during the daily activities.

The **MOVING DEMOCRACY ONLINE** series has encouraged discussions between youngsters and decision-makers, showing the youth that their opinions are being taken into account and stimulating young people's involvement in the development of democratic societies.



# WHAT DID WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH THIS PROJECT?

By implementing this project, we wanted to create a new opportunity for young people to engage in dialogue with decision-makers and other experts, in order to learn about democracy and its digital challenges. Encouraging youth participation to dialogue in the digital age was one of the main objectives of the project.

During the project activities, participants discussed with various experts and top decision-makers, debating their involvement in the democratic process as active European citizens. As a result of the discussions and group activities, youngsters gradually created concrete scenarios on how to better connect youth with a democratic process keeping the pace with digital transformations, at the same time making their voice heard.



Their suggestions were presented at the Dutch Parliament to MP Thom van Campen (Member of the House of Representatives), constituting recommendations on improving online dialogue between young people and policy makers.

Another dimension the project touched upon was the cultural one. By organising the traditional cultural evenings, the activities fostered creativity and intercultural dialogue among the participants, raising awareness on European cultural diversity.

The project linked different cultures in Europe, underlining the importance of cooperation at a European level.

Participants developed digital skills. By accomplishing concrete tasks together, youngsters were challenged to be creative and to produce innovative outcomes based on their daily learning experiences.



By using digital platforms to engage youngsters in the democratic process, politicians can enable youth to have an important say in the decision-making. The project addressed this challenge, allowing young people to express their opinions and learn how they can communicate with those making decisions, by using digital technologies.

The project boosted innovation and recognition of the creative potential of the youth, stimulating them to develop recommendations for decision-makers.

While creating posters, participants collected information from all the countries taking part and translated it into concrete outcomes. Throughout the group work process, this led to less thinking in patterns and broke down prejudices they had about each other.

Throughout the project, participants converted the learning outcomes into concrete Scenarios which were put together in this Guide. Youngsters developed the Scenarios as a tool on how to stimulate youth participation in dialogue with decision-makers in the digital environment, connecting them to the European e-democracy building process. They worked together in multicultural groups, with each group creating 3 Scenarios. Along with the Scenarios, the Guide provides an overview of project activities and their results, such as conclusions from different sessions or outcomes of the final evaluation.



# THE SCENARIOS CREATED BY PARTICIPANTS



## GROUP 1

1. Create a website where people (over 18) can vote remotely in parliamentary elections

2. Create freedom of movement by selecting delegations of young people to go abroad and discuss with other young people, like we are doing in this project. Then meet them online to update them if their ideas were implemented

3. We want to change the way politicians reach their audience. We want to involve them into social media to make their contact with voters easier



1. Develop multiple platforms where young people can share their opinions, experiences and give feedback on the actions of the government

2. Create the voting app/website so people do not have to leave their house to vote in elections

3. Regularly prepare online campaigns targeting youth to promote participating in democratic process and ask young people to help developing these campaigns



Social media: create a social media account where the government posts about things they do with young people in the country

## SCENARIO 1

Website: create a website where young people who cannot legally vote yet can voice their opinions and the government takes that into account

01

02

03

## SCENARIO 3

Representation: have a youth representative in the government who is chosen by the young people and presents their ideas to the political leaders



# GROUP 4



1

## SOCIAL MEDIA

We would like to welcome you to our social media page. On Instagram, you can view our latest youth events and be notified of our new ones. You can also send us any questions and suggestions you would like, and our team will present it to the decision-makers. Speak your mind, because our youth is the future, your ideas are crucial.

2

## FAMOUS PEOPLE

Famous people are the voice to our community, mostly teens because they are the ones who make impact. We are representing each and every one, we will get your voice forwarded.

3

## MEMES

We are using political memes because they help increase engagement from young people in democracy





## GROUP 5

### IMPROVE DEMOCRACY

Create a platform on which to host online meetings with young people, during which they will present their ideas for improving democracy. Where they will be able to share their opinions and observations from the daily life of the community. These groups can also be international, from as many countries as possible, to reach as many people as possible

### LECTURES FROM POLITICIANS

Lectures of government officials can be given on the same platform. Through these lectures, politicians will be able to make young society aware of their rights and duties and talk to them about democracy - like we did during this project



### SHARING DECISIONS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Create a TikTok and Instagram account that reaches a lot of young people, especially for them, where to share your decision with them and ask for their opinions





## SOCIAL MEDIA

Create social media accounts to show your ideas about being an active teen contributing to the democracy



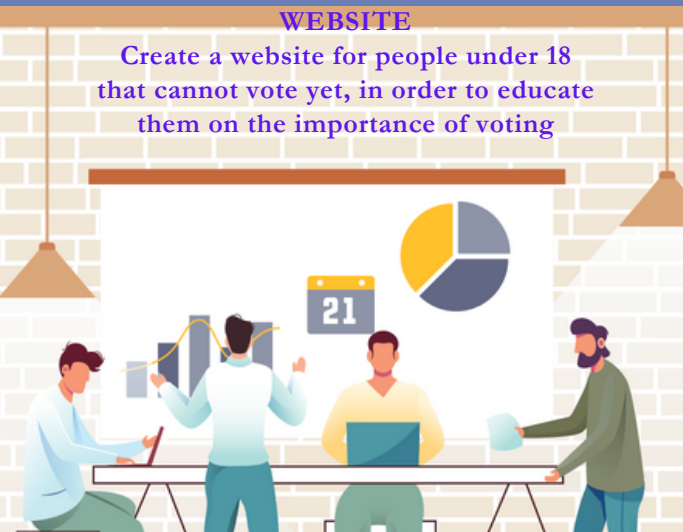
## INTERVIEWS

We think it is important to go to interviews to tell the world how knowing things about democracy can change the perspective about living



## WEBSITE

Create a website for people under 18 that cannot vote yet, in order to educate them on the importance of voting



## VIDEOS IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUTH

Create a website with videos, speaking about democracy in the language of youth

## AN APP ABOUT DEMOCRACY ONLINE

Create an app about democracy online, to help people take part in online voting. The app contains surveys about laws and allows people to share their opinions. For example what people think about a law on „No texting while driving“. You could offer them answers to choose from, such as:

- I agree
- only when stopped
- I do not agree

People who do not understand can call a number and get information about how the app works and ask questions. If they still do not understand how the app works, they can also watch a video on Moving Democracy Online and its benefits.

To encourage people to use the app, they can get a discount on special shoppings in the stores, by showing their account in the app.



## ONLINE MEETINGS WITH PROFESSORS

Organizing online meetings with professors who explain to young people what democracy is



# RETHINKING DEMOCRACY THROUGH CREATIVITY

Participants started working on their Scenarios in a creative manner. Divided in multicultural groups, their task was to rethink democracy at a digital level, through a creativity session. Each working group received big cardboards of different colours, pens, old magazines and newspapers, colours, scotch and glue. Each team created a poster representing the vision of the group on how to Move Democracy Online.





# PRESENTING A VISION THROUGH A CREATIVE OUTCOME

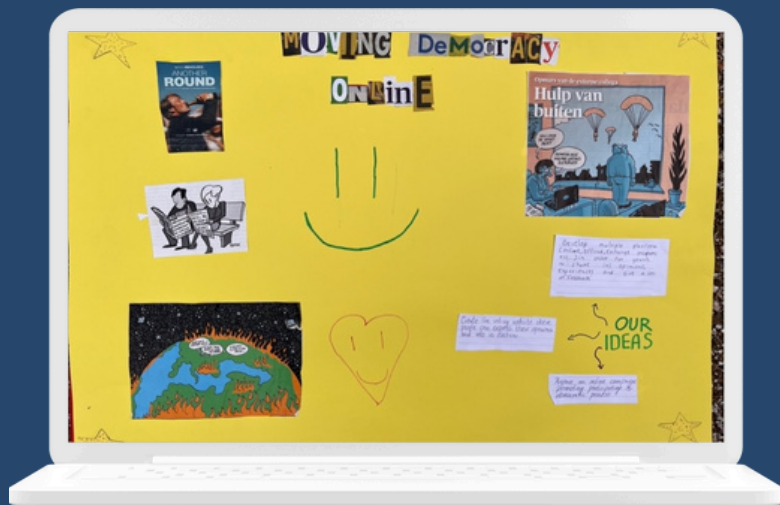
By producing colourful posters and presenting their ideas in front of everybody, young people developed their creativity and communication skills, next to their e-democracy knowledge. Every group had their creative vision on how politicians should involve young people in the process of Moving Democracy Online.

Below, each group presenting their vision and POSTER as the final outcome of their work.

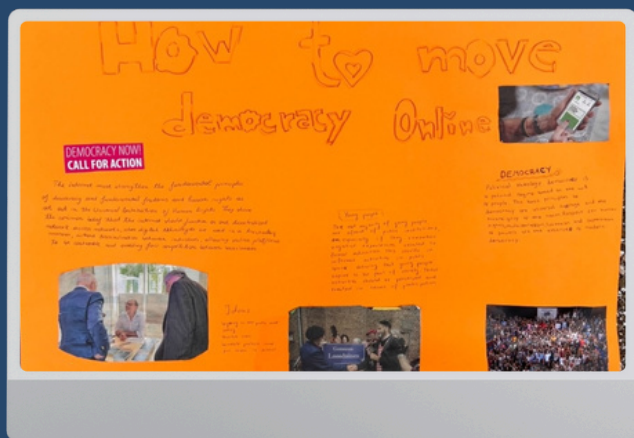
## GROUP 1



## GROUP 2

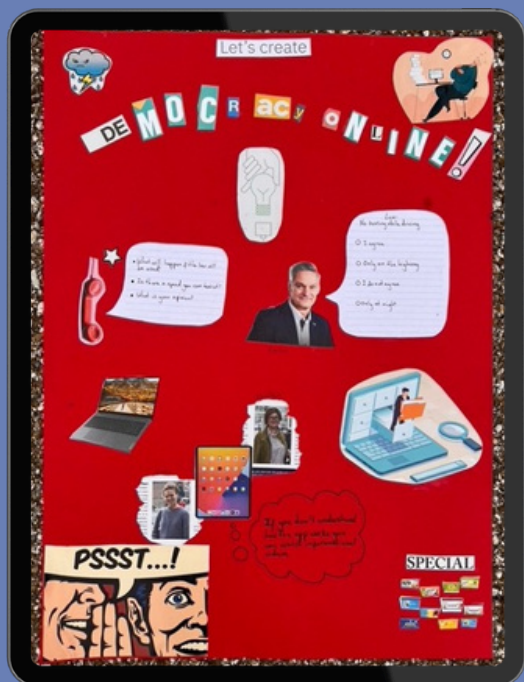
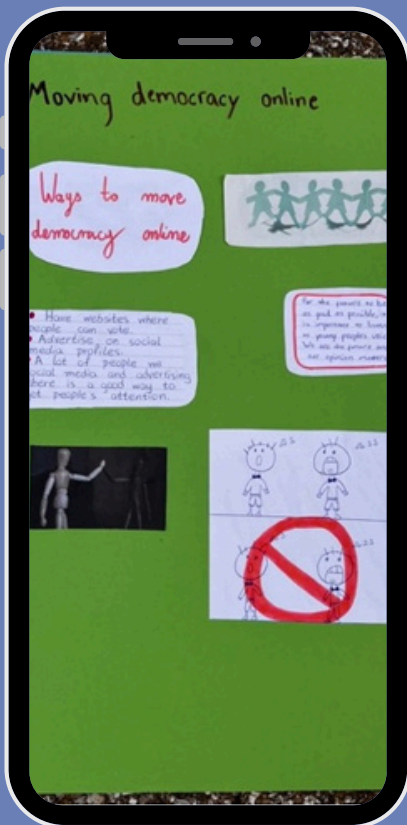


## GROUP 3

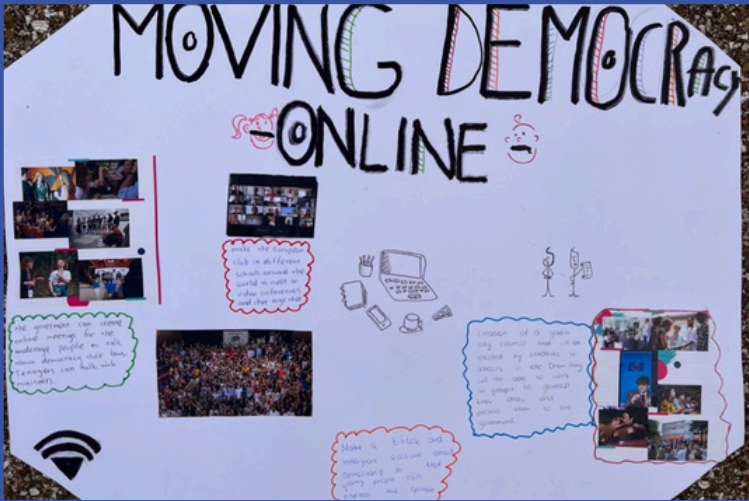




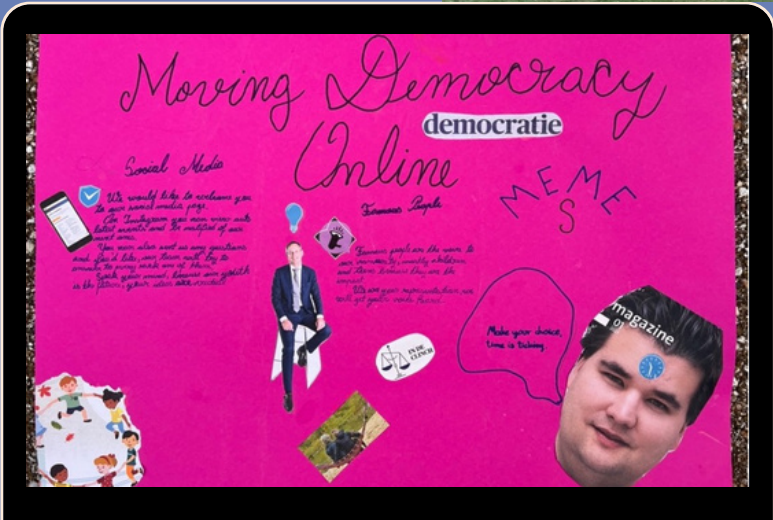
## GROUP 4



GROUP 6



GROUP 7



# TEN WORDS BEST DESCRIBING YOUR PROJECT EXPERIENCES



Democracy  
Parliament  
Adventures  
Travel  
Trains and buses  
Presentations about countries  
Gaining knowledge  
Making friends  
Trying food  
Bicycles

Experience  
Knowledge  
Language  
Fun  
Learning  
Cultures  
Traditions  
Democracy  
Digitalisations  
The Hague

Educational  
Interesting  
Cultural  
Socialising & Fun  
Tiring  
Creative  
Improving English  
Democratic  
Parliament  
Environment

Tired  
Productive  
Fun  
Exciting  
Interesting  
Educational  
Unique  
Joyful  
Wonderful  
Emotional

International  
Politics  
Culture  
Spiders  
The Hague  
Rain  
Intense  
Bicycles  
The tasks  
Language







13

The programme taught us that young people can influence the fate of politics and democracy. They have a voice that can be heard

14

Everyone's opinion is important and everyone can improve the future with their ideas

15

EU is very important, young people have an impact on their community, there are pros and cons of moving democracy online

16

Because the Eastern countries were under communist influence, there are many differences in government systems and that affects their democracy

17

An international platform can be created where politicians can educate people from other countries. Thus making aware a very large number of people of what democracy is

18

The Hague is a very open city for people from other countries





# THE EXPERIENCE YOUR GROUP WANTS TO TAKE HOME



# HOW WILL THE PROJECT INFLUENCE YOU IN THE FUTURE?

The Hague inspired us so much, we learnt how politicians, mayors and diplomats are keeping the democracy running



It helped us overcome the language barrier and taught us many useful things that will be useful in everyday life

We will be more confident in our English



We are going to vote next election when we turn 18



It helped us know other countries and people



# WHAT MAKES YOUR COUNTRY UNIQUE IN EUROPE?

## GROUP 1

Iceland – clothing  
Romania – polenta  
Netherlands – bikes  
Greece – alphabet  
Poland - Pope

## GROUP 2

Dancing and eating together

Presentations because each country is different and cannot be easily compared



## GROUP 3

Iceland - cold weather, different nature  
Romanians - kidnapping the bride  
Greeks - women show that they are not afraid of the men on their weddings  
Poland - Kupala Night  
Netherlands - small country, lots of people

## GROUP 4

Greece - islands  
Romania - meat  
Iceland - free water  
Poland - government  
Dutch - everything is legal

## GROUP 5

Iceland - everyone is family  
Romania - party people  
Greece – cuisine  
Poland – pierogi (dumplings)  
Netherlands - bikes



# SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

## What Do You All Share As Europeans?

### GROUP 1

Rule of law  
Solidarity  
Open-minded society  
Freedom  
Peaceful

### GROUP 2

Continent  
Traditions  
Eurovision  
Sport  
NATO

### GROUP 3

Europe  
Beauty  
Democracy  
Humour  
Good food

### GROUP 4

Sports  
Democracy  
English language  
Freedom  
Access to the sea

### GROUP 5

Erasmus+ participation  
Respect  
Same rights  
Democracy  
Friendly people



## What Makes You Different?

### GROUP 1

Language  
Religion  
Traditions  
Cuisine  
Manners

### GROUP 2

Currency  
Languages  
Traditional dances  
Food  
Temperature  
Music

### GROUP 3

Food  
Languages  
Temperatures  
Traditions  
Religions  
Clothing styles

### GROUP 4

Food  
Traditional clothes  
Events  
Education system  
Climate

### GROUP 5

Food  
Languages  
Not all in European Union  
Do not all have a royal family  
Culturally diverse



# WHICH ACTIVITY MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON EACH GROUP?



Traditional evenings

Meeting at the Dutch Parliament

Traditional evenings



Doing the posters

We could not choose between meeting the member of Parliament and working on the posters  
(equal votes)



# MAIN PREJUDICES BROKEN AFTER JOINING THE PROGRAMME



## GROUP 1

- Bossy, mean, selfish
- When you judge someone and find out we are wrong we feel awful
- Romanians are extremely patriotic
- Polish people are loud and smoke a lot



## GROUP 2

- We thought that Poles were alcoholics. They are not that much and it is a bit exaggerated
- Iceland: that everyone has a sheep farm. They do not
- Romania is a poor country. It is not



## GROUP 3

- Poland = cannibals, alcoholic, exactly like Russians
- Iceland = sleeping with sheep, wear green
- Romanians = loud
- Netherlands = smoke weed often



## GROUP 4

- Polska - they are intolerant, homophobic
- The Netherlands - superior
- Iceland - nobody goes to work there
- Greece - do not speak English
- Romanians - they are racist



## GROUP 5

- Romanians are thieves
- Icelanders are rich
- Greeks love cheese (feta)
- Polish people are like Russians



## WHAT TO DO FURTHER WITH THE GUIDE? THOUGHTS FOR THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



### ONLINE INTERACTION

- make an interactive website, name all scenarios and define them, promote it on social media

### WEBPAGE

- make a website with our scenarios and explanations of the member of Parliament. Promote it on various social media so it can reach the targeted audience

### INVOLVE PRESTIGIOUS PEOPLE

- involve professors and politicians in online meetings where they would explain about democracy;
- listen to their voice and bring it to real life

### KAHOOTS!

- every day of the project should end with Kahoots! about the knowledge we learned

### DISTRIBUTION

- the Guide could be sent to schools and NGOs

### PROMOTION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

- the best way to promote our scenarios: create Instagram accounts promoting them and allow people to vote if they support our ideas or not

### GAMES ABOUT DEMOCRACY ONLINE

- make a new project and create games and quizzes about democracy online

### POSTERS ONLINE

- promote our posters online





# DEBATING WITH EXPERTS

Alongside the programme sessions where youngsters worked together with each other to create the Scenarios, the group exercised their involvement in the democratic process as active citizens, by sharing their opinions and debating with top experts and policy makers.

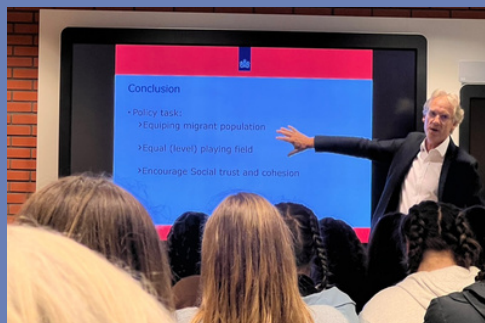
These sessions were organised under the title: **"Debating with Experts"** and among those discussing with the participants were an Ambassador, a member of the Dutch Parliament, a prestigious professor from the European academic community, a governmental senior policy adviser and a policy maker from the Municipality of The Hague.

## SESSION 1

Workshop at the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs

How Can Politicians Involve Young People in the Future of the Democratic Process?  
- The Perspective of the Dutch Government -

Activity led by **Arjen Verweij**, Senior coordinating research advisor and **Jaapjan Rijlaarsdam**, representative of the Dutch Government to ELA (European Labour Authority)



## SESSION 2

Workshop at the Romanian Embassy in The Hague

Activity led by **HE Lucian Fatu**, Ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

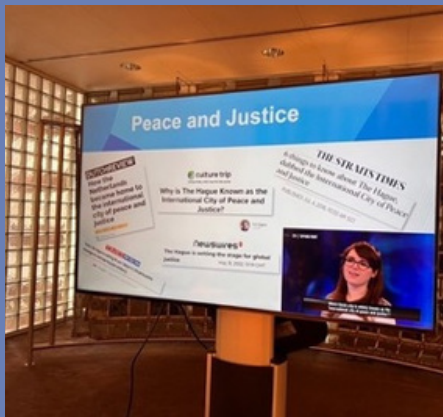




## SESSION 3

Workshop at the Municipality of The Hague

Activity led by **Tona Belderbos**,  
Policy Officer at the International Affairs Department



## SESSION 4

How to Reach Youngsters and Inform Them on  
Their Rights as European Citizens?

Informal debate led by **Prof. Dr. Jaap de Zwaan**,  
emeritus professor of European Law at Erasmus  
University Rotterdam, former dean of the Law  
School, director of Clingendael Institute and board  
member of the Foundation



# HOW CAN POLITICIANS INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS?

## Presenting the Scenarios During a Meeting With a Member of the Dutch Parliament



The group was welcomed to the Dutch Parliament by **MEP Thom van Campen**, Member of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands (from VVD - Liberal Party).

He was assisted by his spokesperson and a policy adviser.

During informal discussions, the groups presented their **Scenarios for Connecting Youngsters to the Democratic Process**. Thom van Campen was giving feedback on the ideas of the youngsters. He encouraged them to actively get into politics if they want to have a direct impact on the changes to society, advising them to be very patient and consequential to their goals.

“Try to use the online ways to get in contact or find a decision-maker, a politician in your city, in your province or on a national and European level to ask some questions about your subject and to debate with him or her about it.”





## CLOSING THOUGHTS

By attending the project, participants learnt about democracy through active engagement. They became more aware of the importance of digitalisation, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of e-democracy. They became familiar with the decision-making process at local, national and European levels and the tools available for making their voices heard.

Taking things a step further, they got actively involved in designing concrete solutions for Moving Democracy Online. Their conclusions were presented and discussed during various meetings with officials in The Hague.

Youngsters developed skills on how to interact with authorities and how to work in different teams. By creating the scenarios included in this Guide, they learnt how to better structure the information they collected.

As a result of their participation, they have improved their knowledge on where to look for the right information, how to use the tools available to them and how to better engage in dialogue with the decision-makers. They learnt how to cooperate in the digital age, erasing borders and growing closer to each other.



## TWO FINAL REFLECTIONS

“The whole project made me value my belonging to the EU much more. I really enjoyed being able to make new friends with people from different countries and I think that there should be more opportunities for youth to integrate with each other. Overall, I found the topics interesting and important.”

**Julia Włodarczyk, Poland**

“In order to be involved in the democratic process, we need to take action and spread the word. And we do that best online, these days. But to ensure a flourishing future for democracy, politicians should give more importance to young people and give them access to more resources.

That is what the project taught us”.

**Ioana Filfanescu, Romania**



# MOVING DEMOCRACY ONLINE

## Scenarios for Connecting Youngsters to the Democratic Process



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