Young in Bavaria – fit for Europe?
A group discussion about Europe at the Old Townhall in Munich

On March 5th 2018, as part of the Bavarian project “Young in Bavaria – Fit for Europe?!”, more than 80 young people participated in a group discussion about Europe at the Old Townhall in Munich. They developed proposals for new approaches in Bavarian and European youth policies.

With regards to topics of the nationwide voting du>>EUROPA>>wir (https://mitwirkung.dbjr.de/prozesse/du-europa-wir/) the students discussed challenges, problems and future prospects in the European Union and their impact on the young generation. The debate was hosted by journalist Lisa Weiß from the Bayerische Rundfunk.

Participants came from all over Bavaria: Students from the middle school Scheßlitz, the Laurentius middle school Neuendettelsau, apprentices from the state capital Munich, members of the youth parliament Dietmannsried and the Youth Advisory Board Schwandorf, young active participants in European affairs of the Zeitlarn community as well as students from Bavarian universities. Tobias Winkler, head of the European Parliament Liaison Office Munich, opened the event by giving an insight into the overall opinion on current European political issues such as Brexit via the audience interaction tool.
Slid.Do. With regards to issues in the EU-youth strategy for 2019, participants ranked “education, training and job options” and “environmental protection” as the most important topics. Following the introduction, participants got together in groups to develop concepts and proposals for the Bavarian and EU-youth policy agenda. A group leader in each group had been trained by the CAP in content and didactical-methodical skills in advance to conduct the discussion. In the afternoon two political actors joined each group to provide more input during an in-depth discussion. Members of the Bavarian Parliament Herbert Woerlein, MP (Youth policy spokesman of the SPD), Isabell Zaharias, MP (SPD), Eva Gottstein, MP(FREIE WÄHLER), Claudia Stamm, MP (independent), Members of the Town Council Munich Dr. Manuela Olhausen (CSU), Ulrike Boesser (SPD) , Sonja Haider (ÖDP) as well as Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Werner Weidenfeld (Director of the CAP) and Tobias Winkler (head of the European Parliament Liaison Office Munich) helped to convey a better understanding of the political situation in Europe. Due to their expertise in various realms, the experts initiated a lively discussion and assisted to further elaborate concrete proposals.

Afterwards, all groups developed position papers that were presented to plenum and press and will soon be brought to attention at the EU. Dr. Harald Parigger, Director of the Bavarian Agency for Civic and Political Education, commented on the presentation. He underlined the importance of a critical view on values in the dialogue between politics and the young generation in Bavaria in order to shape European politics.
He stressed the need for “more Europe in schools”, for instance by organizing numerous projects, by creating the subject Europe or by introducing students earlier to the field of social studies. Dr. Parigger demanded an increase of social studies in the Bavarian curriculum with a main focus on Europe.

Following the presentation, participants answered questions about their findings during a press conference. The event was covered favorably by Süddeutsche Zeitung journalist and expert on education Anna Günther. Munich’s second Lord Mayor and head of the Department of Labor and Economy Josef Schmid concluded the day with a speech in which he congratulated the participants on their findings and interesting ideas. Schmid underlined that these ideas also reflect the cosmopolitan and European spirit of the state capital. He encouraged the young people to further engage in European politics as well is in their social environment.

For the cooperation partners the project “Young in Bavaria - Fit for Europe” and the discussion workshop on the EU-youth strategy was a great success. By participating in the event Bavarian youth demonstrated their interest and engagement in European politics. After the event at the old town hall in Munich, on March 5th 2018, it is now evident that young people are aware of the importance of political discourse and commitment.

Findings of the Europe-dialogue and overview of the working groups (download)

Project Partners
The Bavarian Agency for Civic and Political Education, Centre for applied political science CAP at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich, European Movement Bavaria, the European Academy Bavaria,
the state capital Munich with the Europe direct information center Munich, Bavarian Hostel Learning Centre the European affairs association of the community Zeitlarn.

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