

# Newsletter



EURYKA is a cross-national research project which provides systematic and practice-related knowledge about how inequalities mediate youth political participation. It suggests novel democratic models to help reimagine a more inclusive European politics.

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## YOUTH POLICIES ACROSS EUROPE

How do policies which regulate political, social and cultural activism provide opportunities for participation and reduce the social exclusion of young people? As part of the EURYKA project, a comparative assessment of public policies for promoting youth political participation (online and offline) and social inclusion was conducted between February and July 2017. The analysis studied nine European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

### Findings Snapshot

#### Electoral participation

*How do countries vary in their policies to promote political and civic participation?*

##### **Further reading:**

"EURYKA Integrated Report on Policy Analysis" (Deliverable 1.1) prepared by the University of Uppsala project team ((Katrin Uba, Elias Collin).

Available at the project website: [unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka](http://unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka)

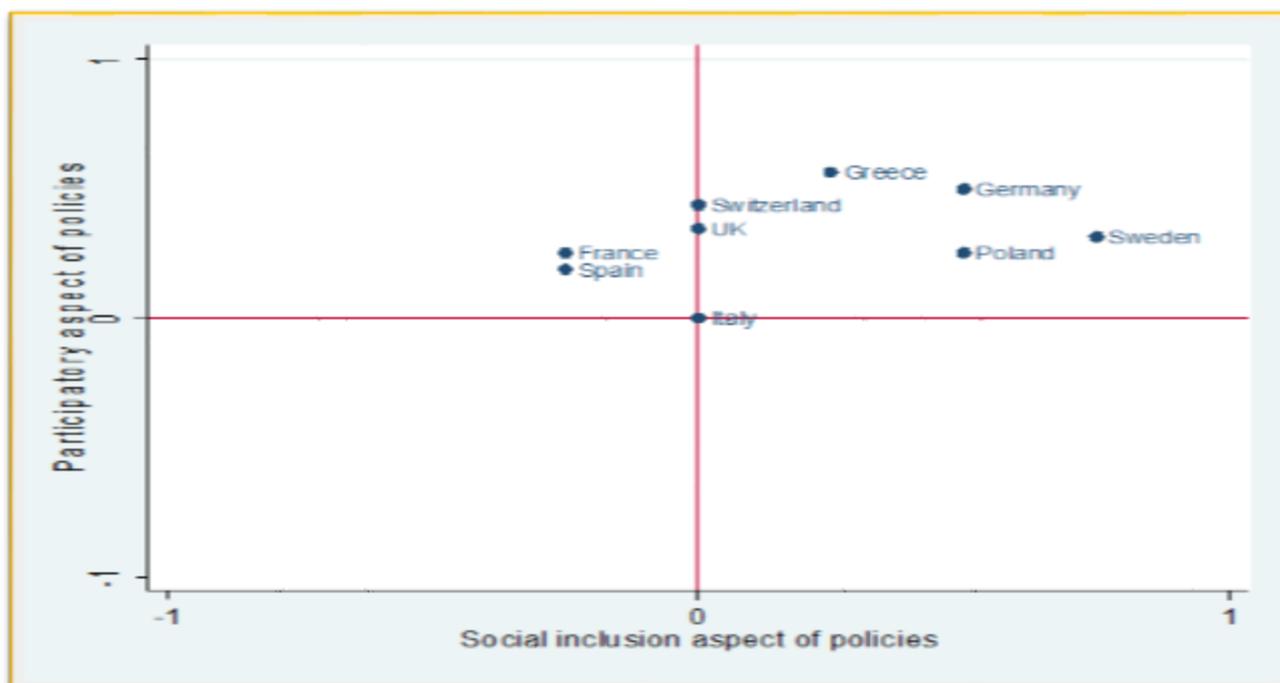
Young people seem to have more opportunities for electoral participation in Greece, Germany and Switzerland than in Italy; there are more policies that reduce existing inequalities of electoral participation in Sweden compared to Spain or France. Country positions in respect of the electoral policies on participatory and social inclusion scales are presented in Figure 1.<sup>1</sup> Greece, with its voting age of 17, its simple rules for setting up a political party, and the automated system of voter registration is ranked as the country where young people (in comparison to other age groups) have more opportunities for electoral participation than in other countries, especially Italy. The low rank of Italy is related to policies that do not

allow people under the age of 25 to vote for the Senate, or people under the age of 40 to be elected into the Senate. Moreover, Italy's rules for setting up new political parties are relatively complicated. The remaining countries – Germany, Switzerland, the UK, Sweden, France, Poland and Spain – have very

<sup>1</sup> Countries were ranked based on the evaluation of policies along two axes: their 'participatory aspect' and their 'social inclusion aspect'. We gave a score (from -1 to +1), which describes the extent the particular policies address the opportunities for participation of young people in comparison to other age groups and the inclusion of vulnerable groups. For more details, see the EURYKA Integrated Report on Policy Analysis (available at the project website: [unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka](http://unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka)).

similar election-related policies, and these only open up a few opportunities for young people in comparison to other age groups. France has restricted the age of running for office in the national legislature to those over 23 years old, so therefore gains a somewhat lower score than Switzerland or the UK. Although in Switzerland the general regulations for voting age are very similar to other countries, there is a significant state initiative for getting young people out to polling booths.

**Figure 1. Participatory and social inclusion aspect of electoral policies**



The social inclusion dimension of electoral policies ranges from the countries which have several special policy initiatives for vulnerable groups (Sweden), to those countries where there is a clear lack of such initiatives or poor implementation of them (France, Spain). The relative position of the country is also affected by the fact that people with mental disabilities are not allowed to vote in some countries (Germany, Greece, Poland, Spain) and that people with physical disabilities face significant difficulties (Spain). Similarly, prisoners are sometimes – depending on the seriousness of the crime – disenfranchised in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and the UK, while no such limitations exist in Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Gender quotas, which are sometimes seen as a remedy to tackle gender inequality, are used by political parties for making the party-ists in Sweden, by some of the German parties, and in Italy as a result of electoral reform of Law no. 215 (23.11.2012).

### Civic participation

#### *Does civic education matter equally in all countries?*

Policies regulating civic education are relatively similar, since in many countries there are obligatory courses of civic education (France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK). In Sweden, civic education is not compulsory as it is not a specific course, but it is well-integrated into the usual curricula of primary and secondary schools. In Italy, civic education has not been compulsory since 2015 and classes of “Citizenship and Constitution” are integrated into history classes. Just recently, in March 2017, Italy made use of the European Structural Funds for promoting ‘global citizenship’, where all Italian schools are allowed to apply for specific education programs on topics such as food education, wellness, environmental education, economic citizenship and active citizenship. In Spain the subject ‘Education for Citizenship’ was eliminated from schools’ curriculum in 2016 as the ruling Partido Popular saw it as “indoctrination”. The measure was the result of ten years of intensive debate and controversy raised by the Catholic Church. The new subject, called ‘Civic Constitutional Education’, is oriented to educate about

the Constitution's normative frame and has been criticized by the Spanish LGBTB movement due to the exclusion of LGBTB issues from the new subject's content.

### Do countries address the digital divide affecting youth political participation?

Young people are particularly known for using the internet and social media for participating in politics.

**Yet, none of the examined countries use e-voting in national elections, although France used to allow e-voting for citizens residing outside the country until the June 2017 elections, while Switzerland and the UK have tried internet-based voting on a few occasions.** Some countries have special programs for increasing the digital skills of vulnerable groups (e.g. France). In Sweden, where the digital divide is smaller, such initiatives are rarer, but the majority of the government webpages have an English version and are accessible through the automated reading function for people with visual disparities. Other countries, such as Germany, Greece and the UK use regional policies for encouraging digital education, but invest less in making the existing information easily accessible to people with disabilities and/or ethnic minorities. The Italian National Plan for Digital School (PNSD) was launched in 2015 and has not shown any clear results yet.

### Labor market participation

#### *What role do policies play in promoting labor market inclusion across countries?*

In our examined countries, Italy has introduced several measures to incentivize the recruitment of young people (Law 76/2013, Law 99/2013, Law 183/2014). It has accompanied these policies with other labor market reforms (Jobs Act), which has made the labor market more flexible and increased the precarious status of young workers. Thus, if we evaluate the consequences of these Italian labor reforms, then the scores given to Italy would be closer to those of France and Greece. As we have mainly followed the legislation, the Italian score in Figure 2 is somewhat higher than in these two countries, which have not promoted youth employment to a similar extent.

Young people face a similar problematic status in Spain and although the Spanish national budget of 2017 includes an item called 'Complementary Help for Youngsters inscribed in the Youth Guarantee System', it is not designed for helping those young people in temporary employment, and the state's spending on active employment policy has actually decreased by 4.8%. In Greece, where many of the initiatives for decreasing youth unemployment are financed by EU funds, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food adopted a somewhat innovative measure against youth unemployment in cities – it aims to attract young people to rural areas and promote their involvement in agriculture.

Figure 2. Participatory and social inclusion aspect of labor and unemployment policies



Crucially, **the problems of temporary employment for young people are common in the southern and northern welfare states**. Swedish labor policies, particularly the law of employment protection (LAS), have a principle which states that the last person to be employed is also the first person to go in times of work shortages. However, youth unemployment in Sweden is also tackled by a special 'Youth to work' delegation in the national employment authority, which also aims to increase employment among young immigrants. The latter is important for evaluating the social inclusion dimension of policies, since it is aimed at reducing the existing inequalities. The German Federal Employment Agency encourages vocational training, which increases accessibility to the labor market among young people as well as among vulnerable groups.

From a comparative perspective, UK policies are even less beneficial for young people than those in Spain because the minimum wage for young people (18 to 20 years old) in the UK is £5.60 per hour, while the regular wage is £7.50 per hour. Furthermore, the Job Seekers Allowance policy in the UK gives young people under 25 a benefit which is 20% lower than the benefit received by job seekers over 25. Compared to the rest of the countries, the degree to which labor and unemployment policies in the UK include the special treatment of vulnerable groups is lower than in other countries under study, especially Sweden or Germany. The low 'score' is explained by the situation where the policies for claiming out of work benefits for people with disabilities are becoming increasingly stringent and restrictive. Furthermore, there are no visible state initiatives for engaging newly arrived immigrants in the labor market.

## Social inclusion

*Do policies address young peoples' needs and facilitate social inclusion and activism?*

We examined to what extent policies regulating health, family, housing and transportation address young people and vulnerable groups and offer opportunities for social inclusion and societal activism. Cross-country variation in policy landscape reveals multiple challenges for young people. Examples are given below in terms of family policies.

## Family policies

None of the countries studied have any special treatment for young people in their family policies – every family with children, including teen parents, are entitled to parental leave as regulated in the particular country and parental benefits according to the general rules. One exception is Spain, where parents under 21 are not required to have made a minimum of social security contributions for receiving benefits. Looking at policies related to children's rights, all countries have adopted international regulations for children's rights. The differences appear in terms of the extent children are given voice in the process of separation: this is a common rule in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and in the UK, but not in Greece.

## Cultural participation

*How do countries fare in terms of promoting youth cultural activism?*

Countries can be divided into two groups here: those with national-level special treatment of young people, and others with more regional level initiatives. France represents the first group, with its free museums for individuals younger than 26 years (this applies to all young Europeans) and an experimental initiative of a free one-year subscription to a daily newspaper for all 18-year-olds. There is also increased interest in cultural education after the terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016, considering it to be a way of creating a bond of solidarity between young people.

In Italy, all museums, monuments, public galleries and state archaeological sites are free for all EU citizens under 18, while young people aged 18-25 are entitled to reduced ticket prices (50%), and the Ministry of Education has established the teaching of musical instruments as part of the overall individual training project in secondary school. Poland also has a national policy for offering reduced prices for cultural activities, but here eligibility is restricted to people with disabilities, students (until they reach 26) and their teachers. In Sweden, private museums and other cultural facilities have diverse discounts

depending on municipal subsidy. The policies in the UK are similar to those in Sweden in respect of museums and cultural education, while the National Theatre has a discount for everyone under 25.

## EVENTS

### *EURYKA Summer School 2018 on Youth Political Participation in Times of Inequalities*

The EURYKA project and the Centre on Social Movement Studies (COSMOS) will organize a Summer School on “Youth Political Participation in Times of Inequalities”. The Summer School will take place in Florence, Italy, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 and will open to 20 graduate students as well as early career researchers throughout Europe and beyond with a specialized interest in youth participation and democracy, in different fields of study and methodological traditions, including political science, political sociology, political communication, political anthropology and sociology.

The Summer School will address fundamental issues such as:

- How do young people form their opinions and take actions to bring about social and political change?
- What strategies do young people develop to cope with growing inequalities, collectively and individually?
- How do these strategies relate to issues of democracy, power, politics, policy-making, social and political participation (online and offline) and the organization of economic, social and private life?
- How can participation of young citizens be encouraged and increased through their interest in involvement and how democratic models could be reshaped in order to make room for young people's interests and aspirations?
- Which are the prospects and potentials for youth agency and political engagement online and offline in Europe? What do technological developments mean for young people's ways of doing politics?

The Summer School will bring together young scholars and more established academics interested in these issues through an intensive curriculum of lectures with established scholars and workshops with young activists. From 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, in parallel to the Summer School, European Alternatives will hold a **Democracy Campus** for activists. The campus will promote the emergence of transnational political and cultural forms of activism through workshops, masterclasses, seminars and performances. It will deal with issues ranging from precarity, to municipalism, to new media and artistic strategies, and will address questions of how activism can influence institutions and build democracy across borders. All the Democracy Campus events will be open to Summer School participants and there will be co-organized events.

### Keynote Speakers

The Summer School will include four keynote speeches. Confirmed keynote speakers are:

- **Gema M. Garcia Albacete**, Department of Social Sciences, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid.
- **Donatella Della Porta**, Political and Social Sciences Department, European University Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, Florence.
- **Jennifer Earl**, School of Sociology, University of Arizona, Tucson.
- **Marco Giugni**, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Geneva.

### Organizing committee

Scientific Committee: Lorenzo Bosi, Marco Giugni and Stefania Voli

Email contact for questions and further information about the Summer School: [euryka.summerschool@gmail.com](mailto:euryka.summerschool@gmail.com)



*EURYKA Seminar on 'Social Movement Organizations in the Internet Age', presented by Dr. Jennifer Earl*

The seminar was organized by EURYKA and the Spanish project partner, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), on 15th December 2017. Research on digital protest has shown that some uses of digital technology can dramatically lower organization and participation costs. As a result, social movement protests and campaigns have been able to hold with little to no involvement from traditional social movement organizations (SMO).

This talk assessed the developing debate around SMO involvement in several ways. First, the talk assessed the extent to which SMO-centric understandings of social movements' influence depend on a specific model of power and the talk suggests that new models of power may have been opened up using digital technologies. Second, the talk assessed the literature on SMO involvement in the organization of protest, which includes assessing the day-to-day contributions of SMOs (including in terms of youth engagement and movement inclusivity) as well as the ecological impact of SMOs on movements. Third, the talk assessed evidence on shifts in the so-called "demand side" of protest, represented by preferences of potential and actual protest participants for SMO-organization. Finally, the talk identified important horizons for future research on this topic.

Check out UOC's EURYKA page here: [euryka.rdi.uoc.edu/](http://euryka.rdi.uoc.edu/)

## CONSORTIUM MEETINGS

### *Third Consortium Meeting in Barcelona*



Taking place at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) between the 13-14 December 2017, the third project meeting of the EURYKA project focused on ongoing and forthcoming research activities, including looking at the publication of research findings. Participants from all partner organisations were in attendance and the discussion looked at concrete steps for the coming parts of the project. This included ongoing work to complete Workpackage 2 on Political Claims Analysis, the sampling approach for the conduction of the interviews as part of the Biographical Analysis of Workpackage 4, and planning for the Experimental Analysis of Workpackage 5. Participants also discussed the forthcoming International Scientific Conference OF the project, ideas about the EURYKA working paper series, the summer school, the summer camp, publications and conferences.

## ABOUT EURYKA

**EURYKA - Reinventing Democracy in Europe: Youth Doing Politics in Times of Increasing Inequalities** is a cross-national research project which provides systematic and practice-related knowledge about how inequalities mediate youth political participation. It suggests novel democratic models to help reimagine a more inclusive European politics. EURYKA brings together researchers and civil society practitioners from nine European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. With the aim of strengthening European democratic life, the project intends to reach a better understanding of the conditions, processes, and mechanisms underpinning how young people do politics: how do they form opinions and take actions to bring about social and political change? At the core of EURYKA's conceptual framework lies the idea of youth political participation as forms of coping mechanism for dealing with inequalities. The project, thus, investigates the norms, values, attitudes and behaviors underpinning such mechanisms and how these relates to issues of democracy, power, politics, policy-making, social and political participation (online and offline) and the organization of economic, social and private life.

## PROJECT IDENTITY

### COORDINATOR

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### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project type:** Collaborative project  
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