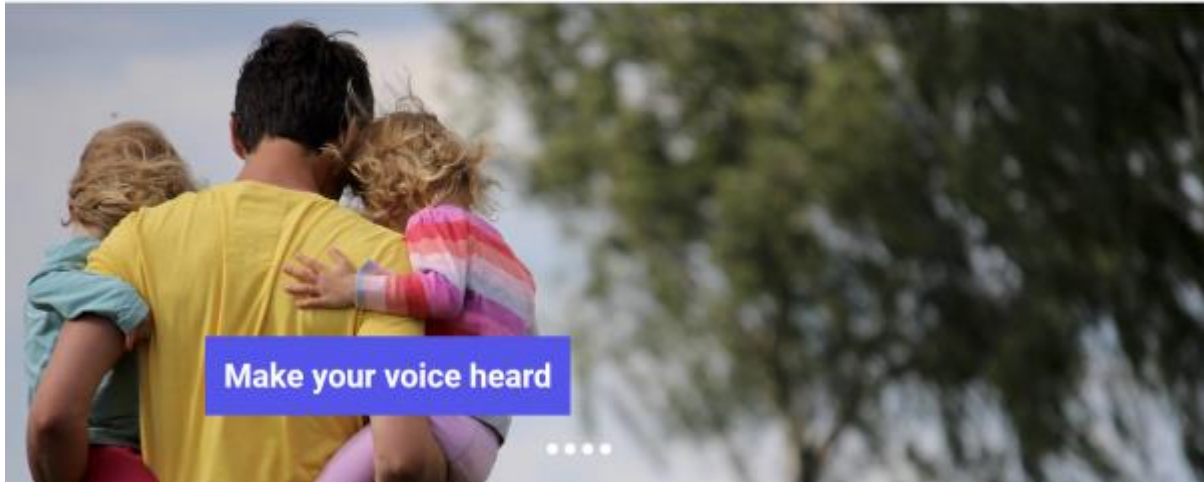


# EVENT REPORT

## The future is in your hands



### 1. Event Summary

This event was the last in a series of five events organised by The Wheel with support from the European Commission Representation in Ireland. The aim of the series is to engage civil society, and by extension the communities they represent, with the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). The topic of this particular event was Youth and Democracy and it was delivered in collaboration with students and teachers from Irish secondary schools involved in the European Parliament Ambassador School programme.

The event began with an introduction to the CoFoE and a demonstration of how to engage with the CoFoE online platform. The event also featured input from Nicola Clavin from the European Commission Representation in Ireland and Margaret François from the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland on the value of participating in these kinds of initiatives, particularly as it relates to young people. Each of the participating schools delivered 10 minute presentations that covered:

- Key priorities that the EU should focus on, especially in relation to young people
- Recommendations and ideas for addressing these priorities
- How the EU can involve citizens, and especially young people, in the process

The students were invited to feedback on each other's presentations and share additional ideas and recommendations via the Mentimeter app throughout the event. Emma Murtagh from The Wheel closed out the event with a summary of the recommendations and encouraged the students and teachers to continue to engage with the Conference on the Future of Europe by registering on the digital platform and sharing their ideas about topics of importance to them.

## 2. Participants

Irish schools involved in the European Parliament Ambassador School programme were invited to participate in the event on a first come, first serve basis. The first five schools registered were the ones invited to participate on the day. These schools were:

- Dunshaughlin Community College
- Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy
- Maynooth Post Primary School
- Stepside Educate Together Secondary School
- Christ King Secondary School, Cork

Unfortunately, Christ King Secondary School had to withdraw from the event. Two additional schools, Loreto College Cavan and St. Leo's College Carlow, attended the event as audience members and Loreto College Cavan submitted their own presentation after the event. We have included their recommendations alongside the other schools' in Section 4.

## 3. Statement from The Wheel

The Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) is a year-long EU-wide project to seek citizens' views about Europe's future challenges and priorities on a variety of topics, including issues facing the disability movement. The Wheel's goal with this event series is to facilitate Irish citizens and civil society playing a more participative role in shaping future developments across Europe and thereby influencing the decisions that directly affect them.

Through participation in EU initiatives like the Conference on the Future of Europe, civil society organisations can make their voices and the voices of their beneficiaries heard at EU level and have a chance to make real change. If it proves to be successful, the Conference's online platform might become a permanent public consultation tool – there's no time like the present to get familiar with it and do our part to make sure the future EU is an inclusive one.

## 4. Main topics and recommendations presented at the event

The following ideas and recommendations are categorised by theme and provide an overview of what was contributed by the participants in their presentations. The presentations in full can be accessed in Section 6 of this report.

- **Climate Change and Sustainability**
  - Reduce carbon emissions by walking, not wasting electricity, and eating less meat
  - Make recycling easier across the EU
  - Increase the GDP of countries across the world, particularly those with a low GDP
  - The EU should focus its investment on sourcing renewable energy such as solar panels, wind energy, hydroelectric energy and more
  - Young people can attend climate strikes to voice their opinions and prove to the EU governments that climate change requires immediate action and that young people are being severely affected

- Young people can share their ideas on how to combat climate change through social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter
  - Making different forms of travel more known and affordable – making travel to different countries more sustainable
  - Making public transport more accessible, clean and more frequent
  - Climate Change Advertisement – use social media to promote climate change to younger people and help it be shown as a more important topic
  - Eat local produce
  - Switch to electric vehicles
- **Migration**
    - Cover more issues around immigration in the media and news. It is not spoken about enough and we don't think there is enough coverage about it aimed at our age group
    - Have more housing for people who have immigrated to the EU, make housing for people in need a priority
    - Foreign Culture and Language Classes - for immigrants introducing and teaching them the local language and culture
    - Inclusivity for teenagers who have not come from Europe
- **Physical and Mental Health**
    - Educate and empower people to take better care of their mental and physical health
    - Employ mental health experts within schools
    - Sending out vaccines to countries that have not yet received any
    - Healthcare should be free in the EU as it is a basic human right
    - Free healthcare should be available 24 hours a day, as you cannot control the time you get sick/injured
    - An online database, only available to the health sector of each member state that gives a medical history of patients
    - We suggest that the EU allocates a psychologist to each school
    - Make schools install programs where they talk about mental health issues and raise awareness around it
    - Provide funding to European Union schools for new sports equipment
    - Facilitate an Annual Sports Day in European Union schools that all schools get involved in
    - Reduce the amount of unhealthy foods in school canteens and add healthier options
    - Have dedicated days/ weeks/events that promote the importance of talking about mental health in school
    - Discuss a different topic of mental health per week
    - Have questionnaires/ surveys on mental health in school
    - Speakers / presentations from people who have experienced loss due to mental health
- **Democracy and Equality**
    - Tax, fine and restrict countries that break the basic rules of the Geneva Convention
    - The EU should focus on bringing in regulations against unfair gender wage gaps and rules that discriminate against minority groups

- The EU should support women from countries without equalities and help the countries progress
- Bring young people together from different backgrounds to better understand each other and treat each other as equals.
- Bring regulations into discriminatory areas or countries
  
- **Education and Youth**
  - Raise awareness of programmes like EPAS and Erasmus+
  - Create a student exchange programme for secondary schools
  - Include more lessons on the EU and its institutions in school curriculums
  - Let young people know how they can make their voice heard in the EU through different initiatives
  - The EU should put more money into education, in order to encourage more young people to become doctors and nursing
  - There should be an EU wide grant which would allow EU citizens to study medicine and nursing for free or if not possible, for a reduced price
  - There should be an EU wide scheme where each school is partnered with their local hospital. Either the students would go into the hospital, or a doctor or nurse would come to speak to them
  - Make use of Junior parliaments and more events like this one
  - Use social media and make surveys to get people's opinions on issues
  - Better education opportunities in more remote areas as well as having more schools in remote areas
  - More information about travelling around Europe – education, career, recreational
  - Have more things like the Schools of Sanctuary programme and once again talk more about it in the school environment
  - Foreign Driving Lessons - to teach people how to drive on both sides of the road
  - Integration in Culture – a chance for kids to go and stay with a host family and really integrate themselves in different cultures
  - Travel Europe – A one- way ticket to travel around Europe: plane, train, bus
  - Courses about countries in the EU – Online or in person courses from people working/from different countries in the EU: history, culture
  - Governments should lower the prices of college and universities as some people don't have the money to afford it and it can push more young people away from completing their education
  - Governments should reduce the prices of school resources so people could afford to go to school such as primary and secondary school.
  
- **Social Justice and Employment**
  - More information about careers in other countries
  - Employing more people for the public service.
  - Making jobs in the public service more worthwhile
  
- **Housing**
  - Making more options open for students, making said options affordable on top of cost of education, more information about housing in different countries: a website?

## 6. Follow-up

This report was created based on the ideas and recommendations shared by the participants in their presentations. This report will be uploaded and shared on the CoFoE online platform and sent to all participants to encourage them to continue to contribute their ideas to the platform. You can view each school's presentation here:

[Dunshaughlin Community College](#)

[Loreto College Cavan](#)

[Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy](#)

[Maynooth Post Primary School](#)

[Stepaside Educate Together Secondary School](#)