

Resolutions YPAC 2021





Resolution 1

The youth are the present of politics

This resolution deals with the issue of children not being considered in political decisions which leads to a decline in interest and awareness, thus creating a society where the needs of the youth are not met. Politicians are not always interested in the views of youth. The lowering of the voting age increases political participation, as proven in Austria where the turnout of 16-17- year-old voters exceeds 18-21 year-olds.

Our suggestion is to increase communication between children and politicians. One way is to involve a member of every student council in local parliaments. The number of members depends on the institution such as the city council, local or national parliament. Also, they can be given opportunities to join and operate with lobbies and other institutions that promote their participation. Finally, we propose to lower the voting age in countries (other than Austria) at a communal and a national level to 16 years old in order to empower young people's involvement. This will secure commitment and expose children to current issues related to their future (e.g. climate change, migration, discrimination, digitalization). This will lead to effective inclusion of teens in politics. Therefore, more institutions such as youth parliaments and youth parties should be encouraged.

Resolution 2

Raising awareness and acceptance for LGBT+

This resolution is about raising awareness and acceptance for the LGBT+ community. According to the Agency for Fundamental Rights in Europe at least 60% of European youths have experienced bullying because of their sexual or gender identity in 2014. This causes many LGBT+ children to be afraid of coming out and increases their risk of self-harming or committing suicide. We think that a lack of knowledge about the existence of non-heterosexual forms of sexuality leads to less understanding and support for this group of young people. In order to help members of the LGBT+ community, we propose to include information about all forms of sexuality in the national curriculum. The states should decide in which subjects they want to integrate the new information on their own due to differences in their educational systems. Updating sexual education in schools to cover more than heterosexual relationships should be mandatory. This could be achieved by offering mandatory seminars for the stakeholders involved, like teachers, guidance counsellors or sex education specialists, to become experts in the topic of LGBT+.

We also encourage all countries to ban conversion therapy. Every person should have the freedom to live out their sexuality or gender identity without being punished for it. In fact, nobody chooses their sexuality and therefore somebody's sexuality cannot be changed. This makes conversion therapy extremely hurtful and can lead to mental health problems.

Resolution 3

Political education? Yes, we can!

This resolution is about increasing political participation by implementing more political activities in the school curriculum. We see that political education is under-represented in school which results in a lack of interest in politics. Studies suggest that this issue results in lower participation.

We propose to implement “special days” which are dedicated to deepen children’s understanding in political matters. They should take place regularly and bring politics closer to students through interaction with politicians and experts. This could include visits to political institutions or workshops at schools organized by independent organizations, such as UNICEF. It is important that schools adopt policies which support activities dedicated to increasing political awareness. Additionally, such events should be promoted. Finally, we suggest to integrate more political education into every national curriculum. This could be done by including it into already existing subjects such as history, languages, or geography. Another possibility would be to host a weekly political radio show for young people. It is important to put these ideas into action on all levels of education, starting from kindergarten, so children can experience the democratic process from a young age on. As a result, interest in politics and consequently political participation will increase. This will lead to more discussions and debates taking place in classes and will foster critical thinking and a constructive discussion culture inside and outside of schools. These skills and knowledge can then be applied in school parliaments and other activities such as student governments to increase its efficiency and allow students to gain practical experience.

Resolution 4

Stress is mess

This resolution is about informing pupils and teachers on mental health issues with adequate tools and resources.

a) For instance we propose a voluntary but recommended course designed by professionals and driven by the local government, that covers mental health issues, possible support and sensitising towards somebody else's health problems. This should be focused on schools and include teachers.

Additionally, lessons for pupils including anti-stress programs, for instance meditation, relaxing techniques or adequate coping mechanisms should be taught.

b) Offering permanent free of charge professional psychological help at schools as fast as possible with respect to the child’s privacy and anonymity.

Resolution 5

Equality for equals

We advocate a more inclusive and equal school system because we are convinced that schools should be a place where different age and society groups can be connected and, furthermore, be offered equal opportunities and support.

In order to reach this goal, we propose the following improvements to the inclusivity of the school system:

School districts should offer a possibility for students to stay after school, eat lunch, socialize with students from different age and society groups, dive into topics they are interested in and receive support from a teacher or an older student in whichever area they require it.

Furthermore we propose an additional buddy system, where younger students are assigned to an older student for guidance and support.

Besides of that, state-funded basic electronic devices and internet connection should be given to students from lower-income families to ensure equal digitalization for everyone.

Further education for teachers regarding barrier-free provision of information and disability-friendlier schools is highly required. Teachers should also be taught to be more aware of the various challenges students might face due to their sexuality, disability, origin or other factors, so they are more able to help struggling students.

Resolution 6

More inclusivity in children's social life

This resolution deals with the struggle of physically disabled children in society. We suggest actions against stigmatisation of disabled children and measures that can be taken to enable the same possibilities for children with disabilities as non-disabled children.

Today, children with special needs have to deal with many obstacles in daily life. Already at a young age, children with physical disabilities are excluded due to a lack of opportunities for participation in social life such as playing on playgrounds. In order to counteract this, we want cities and municipalities to update playgrounds in a way that children with impairments can also participate in playing activities. This will also ensure that non-disabled children will get into contact with disabled children and thereby gain more understanding for the needs of each other.

Furthermore, we encourage the states to focus on the implementation of pre-existing laws regarding accessible infrastructure. Well-developed infrastructure for disabled children is one of the main requirements children with special needs have.

We have also recognized that disabled children often cannot take part in social activities like sports clubs. We encourage cities and municipalities to support the foundation of inclusive clubs.

Resolution 7

A modern school for a modern world

This resolution deals with the relevance and the flexibility of schools and the subjects which are taught. The school system should adapt to the changes of our modern society and include more topics concerning the future.

In order to reach this goal, we propose the following actions:

In primary school, the curriculum should include more practical methods of teaching; one hour a week of every subject should be taught in a creative way. New experiences and excursions should be included at least twice a month, so the children have the opportunity to learn in a more creative way and to see and learn first-hand. In addition, we suggest the basics of digital competence and cyber safety should already be taught in primary school.

In secondary school, one hour gets cut from two different conventional subjects respectively and is replaced by other subjects concerning general knowledge and important information about the future and adulthood; the subjects that are reduced should vary every semester so the academic curriculum does not get compromised too much.

Concerning the non-conventional subjects, one part of them should be academic and the other ones should be alternative. Examples for academic subjects would be politics, money management and savings, human rights and values, environmental sciences, digital competence, cyber-safety and diverse culture education. Alternative subjects would be, for instance, stress and anxiety management, public speaking and social environment.

Resolution 8

Supporting religious variety

This resolution is about raising acceptance for all religious groups through education.

Children should have the possibility to gain general knowledge of all religions and ethics in order to foster their understanding and acceptance for members of different religious groups. Religious beliefs can have a strong influence on children. Especially at a young age, children seem to believe what they are told. For this reason, we are deeply concerned that only one religion is taught in most schools. For children who do not share this religious faith, these lessons are optional, but there are not always alternative subjects, such as ethics.

We propose to introduce a new subject instead of traditional religious lessons that covers all main religions and ethics. The concepts of the different religions should be explained and discussed from a philosophical, but not from a religious point of view. After a certain number of years, children should have the right to decide on their own if they want to continue studying this new subject or if they prefer to attend religious education classes.

In this new subject, children will get into contact with other religions and will be able to perceive differences as an opportunity and enrichment rather than a threat. Getting in touch with diverse religions and their cultures as early as in primary school, promotes one's own critical and personal thinking, which helps the development of children.