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Current state of the art and gaps

AIT Austrian Institute of Technology

POLITIKOS – Wir müssen reden!

E-Riigi Akadeemia Sihtasutus

Centre for Economics and Public Administration Ltd

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	4
List of Tables	5
Abbreviations	6
Executive Summary	7
1 Introduction.....	8
2 Methodology.....	9
2.1 Scoping and sampling	9
2.2 Categorisation of websites	10
3 State-of-the-Art analysis	12
3.1 Overview of analysed platforms	12
3.2 Informative Websites.....	16
3.3 Consultative Websites.....	18
3.4 Cooperative Websites	19
3.5 Co-decisive Websites.....	22
3.6 Analysis of selected platforms	24
3.6.1 Opin.me	25
3.6.2 Youthforum	25
3.6.3 Yourvotematters.....	26
3.6.4 European Youth Portal	26
3.6.5 Eurodesk.....	27
3.6.6 Salto Youth	27
3.6.7 Euromat	28
3.6.8 Talking Europe.....	28
3.6.9 DEEP - Linking Youth.....	29
3.6.10 Ymobility	29
3.6.11 Move Project.....	30
3.6.12 European Youth Foundation.....	30
3.6.13 European Association for Local Democracy	31
3.6.14 Yvote.....	31
3.6.15 This time I'm voting	31
3.6.16 Democracy Alive	32
3.6.17 Give a vote.....	32

3.6.18	Youthvote2019	32
3.6.19	CRPE	33
3.6.20	European Youth Ideas / European Youth Event	33
3.6.21	Because Campaign during Thistimeimvoting.eu	34
3.6.22	Spaceu2019.eu	34
3.6.23	What Europe does for me?	35
3.6.24	Your Voice, Our Future	35
3.6.25	European Citizens' Initiative	35
3.6.26	VOLIS	36
3.6.27	E-Estonia	37
3.6.28	Parliament.gv.at	37
3.6.29	EURES	37
3.6.30	Your Europe	38
3.6.31	Have Your Say	38
3.6.32	openPetition	39
4	Gap Analysis	39
4.1	Identification of gaps Dimensions	39
4.2	Main gaps identified	46
5	Conclusions	48
6	High-level architecture of the proposed participation platform	48
7	References	50

List of Tables

Table 1	Categorisation of Websites	10
Table 2	Overview of analysed platforms	12
Table 3	Functionalities of informative websites	17
Table 4	Functionalities of consultative websites	18
Table 5	Authentication for EMYs	19
Table 6	Functionalities of cooperative websites	19
Table 7	Authentication of cooperative websites	21
Table 8	Co-decisive Websites for political participation examples	23
Table 9	Analysis of identified gaps: Dimensions	40

Abbreviations

AEGEE	Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALDA	European Association for Local Democracy
CRPE	Romanian Center for European Policies
DEEP-Linking Youth	Digital Ecosystem for E-Participation Linking Youth
ECAS	European Citizen Action Service
eID	Electronic Identification
EMY	European Mobile Youth
EP	European Parliament
ERYICA	European Youth Information and Counselling Agency
EU	European Union
EYE	European Youth Event
EYF	European Youth Foundation
iOS	Operating System from Apple products
LLC	Limited Liability Company
MEP	Members of the European Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
REC	Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme
RSS	Rich Site Summary
SALTO - Youth	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for Youth
SALTO EECA	SALTO-YOUTH Eastern Europe & Caucasus Resource Centre
SALTO - PI	SALTO-YOUTH Participation & Information Resource Centre
TU Wien	Technical University of Vienna
UK	United Kingdom
VAA	Voting Advice Application
WP	Work Package
YMobility	Youth Mobility Project

Executive Summary

The objective of Deliverable 3.1 is to present a state-of-the-art analysis of e-participation platforms and tools¹ for EU citizens, in general, and young people aged 16 to 29, in particular. Geographically, it covers platforms with a pan-European reach and others that are specific to the two target countries of this project, Austria and Estonia.

Approximately 30 platforms were covered in this review. Platforms in this sample were selected according to their capacity to

- raise awareness about EU citizenship rights;
- encourage political engagement among EU citizens, in general, and young mobile citizens, in particular; and
- enable mobile EU citizens to directly engage in civic and political participation by (a) connecting and networking digitally; b) receiving and exchanging relevant information across borders; and c) exercising their civic rights, online and off-line.

This document is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides an overview of its structure and content. Chapter 2 explains the methodology used to organise the selected platforms and tools into four categories according to their principal functions and objectives. Chapter 3 provides more detailed information and analysis of the selected platforms' features and functions. Chapter 4 presents the results of the gap analysis, while Chapter 5 presents the main findings and key conclusions. The high-level architecture derived from these gaps is presented in Chapter 6.

The main findings can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, the availability of information describing many different opportunities that potentially exist for public participation in general abounds which creates serious challenges of finding specific information that would meet the needs of European mobile youth. Secondly, such needs cannot be clearly identified and systematised by analysing the available resources. Thirdly, no dedicated resource exists to meet special needs of mobile youth in connection with democratic participation.

In this light, the aim of a suggested software tool is to help young mobile EU citizens meet their information needs by distributing curated information provided by qualified sources through a specially designed interface. This tool should help EMYs to

- participate more effectively in the democratic process, both at the EU and local level;
- better integrate themselves in the local community in their host country; and
- connect digitally with like-minded European mobile youth.

¹ In this document, the terms 'platform' and 'tool' are used interchangeably.

1 Introduction

The aim of Deliverable 3.1 is to review the state-of-the-art in the field of citizen participation platforms, in general, and those designed specifically for mobile European youth between 16 and 29 years of age, in particular, and to identify existing gaps. The review includes information about existing e-participation platforms and tools that could be of use in designing a platform architecture and functional prototype with the aim to enable participation of European mobile youth (EMY). This has been done by analysing the functionality of the selected e-participation platforms and tools. The analysis is undertaken by dividing e-participation platforms into the following four categories: (1) Informative, (2) Consultative, (3) Cooperative, and (4) Co-decisive.

Democratic participation as a socio-political practice has great potential to benefit from the use of technology-enabled civic empowerment and engagement processes. Process-based engagement approach has dominated in building e-participation models. According to OECD,² there are three main stages of participation: (i) e-Information – provision of information on the Internet, (ii) e-Consultation – organizing public consultations online, and (iii) e-Decision-making – evolving citizens directly in decision processes. The biannual UN e-Government Survey applies this three-stage model to rank countries.³

This three-stage participation model has served as a basis for other related models, such as the *Inform-Consult-Empower approach*⁴ that emphasizes the reduction of technological, social, organisational, cultural and political barriers for public participation. This model is based on a level-based approach by distinguishing between the levels of technology use via (i) *e-Enabling via informing*, especially those who require special support to gain access the right information, (ii) *e-Engaging via consulting* with citizens to enable deeper contributions and support deliberative debate on policy issues, and (iii) *e-Empowering via supporting active participation* and facilitating bottom-up ideas to influence the political agenda.⁵ This model highlights the importance of active participation at all levels. This model is similar to the OECD's stage-based model.

In turn, the Association for Public Participation (IAPP) proposes a five-tiered classification that combines the above models:

² OECD (2001), *Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*. Paris: OECD; (https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/citizens-as-partners_9789264195578-en)

³ United Nations Organisation (2018), *2018 E-Government Survey*. New York: United Nations; (<https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/UN-e-Government-Surveys>)

⁴ Lee, D., Loutas, N., Sanchez-Nielsen, E., Mogulkoc, E. and O. Lacigova (2011), *Inform-Consult-Empower: A Three-Tiered Approach to e-Participation*. In: Tambouris, E., Macintosh, A. and de Bruijn, H. (eds.), *International Conference on Electronic Participation (ePart) 2011, Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS) No. 6847*, pp. 121-132. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer; (http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-642-23333-3_11)

⁵ Macintosh, A.(2004). *Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making*. In: *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)*, pp. 10-, Washington: IEEE Computer Society

- *Information provision*: fact sheets, web sites, open houses.
- *Consultation*: public comment, focus groups, surveys, public meetings.
- *Involving the public*: workshops, deliberative polling.
- *Collaboration*: citizen advisory committees, consensus-building, participatory decision making.
- *Empowerment*: citizens' juries, ballots, delegated decisions.

All models are similar in that they start with information provision, followed by public consultations. The IAPP model further details consultations into additional organisational, collaborative and representational forms.

Based on the review of these models, the document has applied a four-stage model by adding the collaborative, cooperative aspect, as described earlier.

2 Methodology

2.1 Scoping and sampling

The scope of this deliverable is to give an overview about online platforms that:

- a. raise awareness of EU citizenship (in general and about formal political participation rights),
- b. provide information about elections where young EU citizens can exercise these voting rights while staying abroad – including both administrative information on “how to vote” and substantive information on the elections themselves; and
- c. provide opportunities for EMYs to engage in the political discourse, both at EU level and locally in their host country.

The focus hereby is primarily on information gathering and information exchange by EMYs living in their host countries. The descriptive approach in this state of the art is used to classify the websites in existence accordingly. The deliverables D2.1, D4.1, D4.2 and D4.3 build the basis for further gap analysis and identification in the later sections of this deliverable. The focus of the search is on political and social participation, with a particular emphasis on the exchange of formal political participation opportunities. Keywords like EP elections, e-governance for mobile youth in the EU, software and platforms for political participation, tools for liquid democracy, citizen science, crowd sensing, crowdsourcing, e-participation mobile youth in EU, online political communication for EU students, youth engagement, platforms and software for political participation in Austria, Erasmus funded projects, European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe within the EU for students were therefore used in this research.

Keywords used:

- European Parliament elections
- Voting abroad
- E-governance for mobile youth in EU
- Software and platforms for political participation in EU

- Tools for liquid democracy in EU
- E-participation for mobile youth in EU
- Online political communication for EU students
- Youth engagement within the EU
- Platforms and software for political participation for Austria
- Platforms and software for political participation for Estonia
- Projects funded by Erasmus+, Framework Programmes, H2020
- European youth foundation of the council of Europe
- E-Voting / I- voting within the EU for students

2.2 Categorisation of websites

The market of political participation platforms offers the possibility to classify them in a structured way. The type of e-participation degree can be distinguished according to Schoßböck et al.⁶ in:

- informative
- consultative
- cooperative and
- co-decisive character

Purely informative websites are less complex in their implementation than the consultative, cooperative and co-decisive websites. Informative websites include the subscription to newsletters, announcements or broadcasting of political conferences. The next intensity level of participation is consultative, which means it contains citizen panels, chats, complaint-management or discussion forums. A furthermore complex form of participation is the third type with a cooperative character offering online mediation, citizens` journalism or interactive planning. The fourth option about e-participation has a co-decisive nature, meaning a digital voting system or offering tools like online surveys to influence policy making processes. The institutions offering the technologies can be either Non-Governmental Organisations, Non-Profit Organisations, Profit Organisations, or Governmental Organisations. The scope of those organisations can vary from a municipal level to a nation-wide or even to a supranational activity.

Table 1 Categorisation of Websites

Categorisation	Aim	Examples
Informative	To inform about planning and decision making. It is a one-way communication	Newsletter, Data Base, Publications, Conference

⁶ J. Schoßböck, B. Rinnerbauer, P. Parycek, „Digitale Bürgerbeteiligung und Elektronische Demokratie“, Chapter 2, Digitale Bürgerbeteiligung, „Forschung und Praxis – Chancen und Herausforderungen der elektronischen Partizipation“, Hrsg. M. Leitner, Springer Verlag

	principle from the institution in charge to the citizens.	Streaming, Announcements, etc.
Consultative	A bi-directional communication. Mainly the focus here lies in contribution to a certain question or draft. Hence user can submit question proposals. How strong the influence from the citizen`s side might be can be variable. The possibility of providing feedback makes this form more interactive than just informing.	Citizen-Panels, Chats, Complaint Management, Discussion Forums, etc.
Cooperative	Intensive communication for codetermination processes can basically form the foundation for the next level for decision making.	Online-Mediation, Citizen journalism, Interactive planning, Online Surveys, etc.
Co-decisive	Most intense way of participation, with legal consequences and legal bonding due to decision making.	E-voting/ I-Voting, public design competitions for urban development

The platforms that are analysed in this deliverable are introduced in Chapter 3. A short description of the platform itself as well as their functionalities is provided. A summary of the main differences (with respect to the project's objectives) and commonalities in their web appearances and technical features is given.

Each category represents a different level of participation ranging from rather passive to more active involvement of the target user. The possibilities of civic engagement can also be distinguished in various ways of how the participation can be realized, either through consultation in a sense of giving feedback to questions headed to citizens or information provided to them. Campaigning from politicians additionally to the election period to receive support from citizens or electioneering might be used to push pre-election activities for candidates that can be voted for. During the process of petitioning, citizens can express their point of views, the potential of a constant dialogue between citizens and decision-makers is noticed. Besides the already mentioned concepts, spatial planning, services delivery, information provision mediation solutions could theoretically exist. The categorisation of websites sums up the possible theoretical approaches and helps to group the websites to

identify what is existing and what is not. The comparison is used a basis to identify the gaps of EMYs needs and what the websites offer to meet them.

3 State-of-the-Art analysis

3.1 Overview of analysed platforms

To receive a first impression about relevant platforms Table 2 gives an overview of existing platforms by grouping the websites according to the afore mentioned categorisation structure. There is a clear accumulation of informative offers on the market of e-participation platforms. The different columns sum up the platform names, the category, the purpose and finally the target group itself. To highlight hereby is the fact, that there are many platforms but few address European young mobile citizens at first sight.

The websites informing about upcoming votes or voting mechanism usually target all EU citizens. Since EMYs have specific needs due to their particular situation in a host country the offered content is not always directly helpful to find required information quickly. Other websites that address EU citizens focus on voting but see young and mobile students, such as EMYs, as a subspace of the more or less 500 million inhabitants of the European Union. In Table 2 Overview of analysed platforms the last column highlights the addressed target groups of each website and platform. It shows the following: According to the core target group of the project which has been defined as 16-29 years old mobile students (European mobile youth as shortened known as EMYs) living either in Austria or Estonia, additionally to the initial definition an expanded target group seems to be reasonable to also address young mobile EU citizens who are working in another EU member state, also known as “working EMYs”. So some websites aim to address mobile citizens but not particularly just young people, and vice versa platforms designed for young people are not necessarily concentrating on the mobile behaviour of their users. Therefore the term young mobile EU citizens has been chosen to take this fact into consideration. Hence, young mobile EU citizens represent either the core target group of young mobile students as well as the expanded target group of young Europeans working as interns, trainees, fulltime or as apprentices in a host country.

Reflecting the categories explained in the section Methodology it can be emphasized that most websites set their priorities on the informative and cooperative character. Consultative and co-decisive types are merely present. A potential explanation for why only so few co-decisive websites exist, might result in complex legal aspects, e.g. dealing with data ownership and security issues concerning the implementation of co-decisive platforms.

Table 2 Overview of analysed platforms

Name of Platform	Category	Purpose	Target group
EURES	Informative	Providing information and resources for mobile citizens.	All EU Citizens, mobile EU citizens of all ages, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are

			working or studying in a host country.
Your Europe	Informative	Providing general information to mobile EU citizens about their rights.	Mobile EU Citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are working or studying in a host country.
Giveavote.eu	Informative	Awareness raising for voting	Young EU Citizens
Youthvote.eu	Informative	Awareness raising for voting	Young EU Citizens
Thisimeinvoting.eu	Informative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens
Howtovote.eu	Informative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens
Yvote.eu	Informative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens
Eurodesk	Informative	Network of European and national information centers for young people	Young mobile EU citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are working or studying in a host country.
European Youth Card Association	Informative	Discounts for mobile Youth	Young mobile EU citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are working or studying in a host country.
European Youth Foundation	Informative	Financial & educational support	Young mobile EU citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are working or studying in a host country.
European Youth Portal	Informative	Information and opportunities	Young mobile EU citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY),

			who are working or studying in a host country.
Youthforum	Informative	Advocating youth needs	Young EU citizens
Youth & Environment Europe	Informative	Environmental Protection involvement	Young EU citizens
https://www.digitales.oesterreich.gv.at/burgerbeteiligung	Informative	Awareness raising for E-participation possibilities	Austrian Citizens
Salto Youth Portal	Cooperative	Training Opportunities for Youth work	Youth Organisations & Young EU citizens
Opin.me	Cooperative	E-participation project creation support	Youth Organisations & Young EU citizens
European Youth Award	Cooperative	Ideas contest	Young mobile EU citizens, European Mobile Youth (EMY), who are working or studying in a host country.
European Parliament Youth	Cooperative	Educational program and networking program to raise	Young EU citizens
Youthpass	Cooperative	Learning outcome documentation	Young EU citizens
Youthforeurope	Cooperative	Awareness of Institutions	Young EU citizens
Youthvote2019.eu	Cooperative	Awareness raising for voting	Young EU Citizens
Democracyalive.eu	Cooperative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens
Euromat.eu	Cooperative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens

Yourvotematters.eu	Cooperative	Awareness raising for voting	All EU Citizens
Have your say	Consultative	Contribution to EU policy and law-making by giving feedback on Commission initiatives. Empower citizens to make suggestions on simplifying and improving existing laws.	All EU Citizens
Deeplinkingyouth.eu	Consultative	Empowerment of E-participation through live chats with particular European Parliament politicians	All EU Citizens
Bürgerbeteiligungsportal des Österreichischen Parlaments	Co-decisive	Informing about how policy-making works in Austria. Providing access to participatory instruments in Austria. Registrations to participate in current parliamentary events.	Austrian and EU citizens
volis.ega.ee	Co-decisive	Paperless document management and processing, participation of virtual meetings	Estonian Citizens
e-estonia.com	Co-decisive	e-identity, e-residency, e-law, e-health records, e-cabinet, I-voting, e-Tax, e-banking, e-business register, Estonian education information system, etc.	Estonian Citizens

European Initiative	Citizens	Co-decisive	Exchange information with the “European Citizens' Initiative Forum”, raise awareness about citizens' initiatives that are submitted to the European commission. Provides access to the “European Citizens' Initiative” Platform.	All EU citizens, EU citizens in their host countries, mobile citizens in their host country.
https://petiport.secure.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/home		Co-decisive	Official EU Petitions Web Portal to support citizens to start and submit a petition for the European Parliament.	All EU Citizens
https://www.openpetition.eu/		Co-decisive	Initiatives and Petitions platform to support citizens to start and submit a petition	All EU Citizens
https://www.brz.gv.at/was-wir-tun/services-produkte/e-participation-e-democracy/neue_plattform_ermoeglicht_buergerbeteiligung.html		Co-decisive	Website in progress, support for democratic processes, and empowerment of civic participation	Austrian Citizens
https://www.wiengestalten.at/		Co-decisive	Participation project map, database about existing projects on municipal level for citizens, who are interested in engaging on local level in Viennese districts.	All EU Citizens

3.2 Informative Websites

Considering the functionalities of the informative websites Table 3 highlights that most of the platforms are provided in English, French and some of them are available in a multilingual form covering a broad range of languages spoken within the European Union.

The languages chosen are depending on the origin of the project partners who are involved. The information flow can be described with different navigation menus, to support user of a website to find relevant information. Graphic elements are also used to visualize messages. The way the menus are structured varies slightly from “Burger Menus”, to a menu structure with more detailed submenu tabs.

Further to mention is that information is displayed in tiles to group different topics graphically and content-wise. All the websites integrate their social media presences, interesting to highlight here is the different channels that are in use to communicate with their target groups. Additionally, usually no authentication is required to access the informative websites. There is no EU wide service dedicated to inform EMYs about local engagement opportunities, guides to political and civic movements, electoral and other campaigns.

Table 3 Functionalities of informative websites

Name of Platform	Receiving information for EMY	Information flow for EMY	Language provided for EMY
Giveavote.eu	Yes	Navigation menu, social media linking, easy to read, through clear graphic elements, mailing list	English, Bulgarian, Spanish, Czech, Danish, German, Estonian, French, Suomi, Maltese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian, Croatian
Youthvote.eu	Yes	Tiles separate information units, social media linking, mailing list	English
thisimeimvoting.eu	Yes	One pager, mailing list	English, Bulgarian, Spanish, Czech, Danish, German, Estonian
Howtovote.eu	Yes	Menu, linking to Euromat, choosing a country	English
Yvote.eu	Yes	Blocks of information structure content Submenu, offer to navigate through subsections	English
Eurodesk	Yes	Accessibility toolbar, references to each national Eurodesk, tiles design	English
European Youth Card Association	Yes	Information flow similar to give a vote web appearance, menu to	English

			navigate to different tabs, intense colouring	
European Foundation	Youth	Yes	Tiles display information about topics offered	English, French
European Portal	Youth	yes	Tiles display information about topics according to health, culture, work etc.	28 languages
Youthforum		yes	Linking to social media, news feed, search function, Burger menu	English, French
Youth & Environment Europe		yes	Contact via email, newsfeed, subscription for newsletter	English
Youthvote2019.eu		yes	Showing Information about Quiz opportunities, Presenting the results of Online Debates	English

3.3 Consultative Websites

Reflecting the search results of consultative websites, it can be concluded that for European mobile youth the offer of this category platform is quite low and only one fitting example is provided in this analysis. Having a look at the authentication Table 6 Authentication of consultative websites of consultative platforms it can be revealed that for the ones found neither an electronic ID, nor any form of Application specific user management nor a 3rd party login is necessary to obtain information or engage in interaction. But this might be the case due to no current content available on the dashboard, hence the assumption could be made that the project was ceased.

Table 4 Functionalities of consultative websites

Name of Platform	Comment	Commit ideas, opinions	Evaluate content, chose
Deeplinkingyouth.eu	Comment on a digital dashboard	Participate in digital competition on the topic of mobile youth	Experimental AI filtered social media listening, classify articles

Table 5 Authentication for EMYs

Authentication for EMYs			
Name of Platform	eIDs provided by state	Application specific User Management	3rd party login
Deeplinkingyouth.eu	no	no	no

3.4 Cooperative Websites

Most of the cooperative website are offered in a multilingual way and only some just in English. In order to support community building for those who are interested in political participation, offline events are announced in an event calendar format. To encourage citizens to submit ideas to contests there is also a section about the existing guidelines, for those, who might be interested in gaining more knowledge about the contest's details. One example of the website offers the possibility to donate a certain amount of money to support activities in the future in the name of democratic activism. The information flow navigating through the sites can primarily be described through various tabs, news feeds and linking to social media channels. Some websites offer a download area to get more detailed information.

Table 6 Functionalities of cooperative websites

Name of Platform	Establish collaboratively results	Information flow	Language provided
Salto Youth Portal	Events participation for are shown	A news feed integrating current tweets from twitter, different navigation tabs display information about youth work, newsletter subscription, linking to social media appearances	English
Opin.me	Encouragement to develop digital participation platforms	Various tabs initiate either to start a project or show latest project results, to get	English, German, Italian, French, Slovenian, Slovakian, Danish, Georgian, Russian

			deeper information a login is required	
European Youth Award	Guideline for contest submission, Get involved section, detailed options to define level of involvement	Linking to social media channels as well as RSS notifications, tabs represent information in categories like events, contests, winning projects, mentors, media	English	
European Parliament	Member platform	Search function, European Map to choose from target groups destination, differentiation of participation focus	English	
Youthpass	Menu on the top of the website shows options with sub options	Newsletter subscription, Create certificates, publications in form of leaflets, handbooks, card game, essays, testimonies	All European languages	
Youthforeurope	Menu on the top of the website shows options with sub options, depending on field of interest a favourite listing can be created and modified after login	Upcoming events are presented with tiles, search bar for opportunities, newsletter subscription, detailed project description with google maps linking	English	
Democracyalive.eu	Member platform	Social media channel linking, Donation option	English	
Yourvotematters.eu	Login to use election scenarios	One pager, Social media channel linking,	Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, English, Greek, Italian, Polish,	

			Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Hungarian
Euromat.info	voting advice application tool	One pager, Social media channel linking,	English, German, French, Danish, Slovenian, Czech and Polish

Looking at the way of authentication that the users of cooperative websites are facing (see Table 7) eIDs are not necessary for a kind of identification process, sometimes login or registration with email is mandatory, sometimes it is volunteer or in some cases additionally a 3rd party login provided either by Google, Facebook or Twitter is provided. To be part of a community periodical information material about activities is sent to its members through newsletters once registered.

Table 7 Authentication of cooperative websites

Authentication for EMYs			
Name of Platform	eIDs provided by state	Application specific User Management	3rd party login
Salto Youth Portal	no	Login/registration via email	no
Opin.me	no	Login/registration via email	Facebook, Google
European Youth Award	no	Login/registration via email	no
European Youth Parliament	no	Login/registration via email	no
Youthpass	no	Login/registration via email	no
Youthforeurope	no	Login/registration via email	Facebook, Google
Democracyalive.eu	no	Login/registration via email	Facebook, Twitter
Yourvotematters.eu	no	Login/registration via email	Facebook, Twitter

Euromat.info	no	no	no
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3.5 Co-decisive Websites

Focusing on the websites with co-decisive character that are available now within the EU one has to say, that those in existence are not primarily addressing young mobile citizens only. Different examples can be given for e-participation possibilities. The Estonian project VOLIS (System for Local Democracy Procedures) for instance was created for sharing all information regarding of the local decision-making with the public and also encouraging people to participate in these processes. VOLIS creates operating environments for the members of councils and local governments and shows the public what is happening at the sessions along with the agenda, voting results and automatically-writing protocol through the Internet.

Another example can be found in the Estonian Internet Voting system, which aims at Estonians instead of European mobile youth. Further there is EUCROWD which is the European Citizens Crowdsourcing. This project aims to raise awareness of the possibilities and to develop the skills at national and European level for using innovative channels of e-participation of citizens in politics and policy with a focus on the application of crowdsourcing in fostering a democratic debate on the future of the European Union.

Additionally, the European Citizens' Initiative is a way for EU citizens to help shape the EU by calling on the European Commission to propose new laws. Once an initiative has reached 1 million signatures, the Commission will decide on what action to take.

The Petitions Web Portal for example ensures that EU citizens can communicate with Parliament and express their right to petition, which is one of the fundamental rights of all European citizens and residents, enshrined both in the Treaty and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. A petition allows the Parliament, through its Petitions Committee, to conduct an ongoing reality check on the way in which European legislation is implemented and measure the extent to which the European institutions are responding to its citizens concerns. The objective of the Petitions Committee is to provide a response to all petitions and, when possible, to provide a non-judicial remedy to legitimate concerns on issues related to the EU fields of activity which petitioners raise.

The portal is designed to allow citizens to submit their petitions electronically, but its purpose is also to communicate the issues which are raised by others, in a summary form, and provide information about petitions already received. The search function allows to focus on issues which concern citizens directly and see what others are saying about EU-related issues. Indeed, this portal also allows to add online support to open petitions which the members of the Petitions Committee have declared admissible.

Another example can be found in "openPetition" that supports petitioners in creating their petition, collecting signatures and submitting the petition to the appropriate recipient. In addition, "openPetition" asks for comments from parliamentarians independently of the formal petition process. Whether it is about the preservation of the youth club, the decommissioning of nuclear power plants, changes in the law or the development of wind turbines.

Table 8 Co-decisive Websites for political participation examples

Name of the Platform	Category	Objective	Target Group
VOLIS.ee	Co-decisive	Paperless document management and processing, participation of virtual meetings	Estonian Citizens
e-estonia.com	Co-decisive	e-identity, e-residency, e-law, e-health records, e-cabinet, I-voting, e-Tax, e-banking, e-business register, Estonian education information system, etc.	Estonian Citizens
Eurocrowd	Co-decisive	Raise awareness of the possibilities and to develop the skills at national and European level for using innovative channels of e-participation of citizens in politics and policy with a focus on the application of crowd-sourcing in fostering a democratic debate on the future of the European Union E-participation	Finish Citizens
European Citizens' Initiative	Co-decisive	Exchange information with the "European Citizens' Initiative Forum", raise awareness about citizens' initiatives that are submitted to the European commission.	All EU Citizens
European Petition Web Portal	Co-decisive	Official EU Petitions Web Portal to support citizens to start and submit a petition for	All EU Citizens

		the European Parliament.	
openPetition	Co-decisive	Initiatives and Petitions platform to support citizens to start and submit a petition	All EU Citizens
BRZ eDem (eDemocracy)	Co-decisive	Website in development, support for democratic processes, and empowerment of civic participation	Austrian Citizens
Wien gestalten	Co-decisive	Participation project map, database about existing projects on municipal level for citizens, who are interested in engaging on local level in Viennese districts.	All EU Citizens

Furthermore, considering possible platforms from a municipal perspective the website “wiengestalten.at” aims to provide central and transparent information at a glance about where in Vienna “co-designing” is feasible. The participation projects can also be called up after registration. Respective persons/organisations who are carrying out the project are also linked in order to obtain more detailed information. The projects can be searched in the knowledge database by topic, district or method using the search function. Alternatively, an interactive map can be used to zoom into the respective area to find current and past participation projects.

Even though websites already exist that promote co-decisive functionality for EU citizen in general there is no website aiming at European mobile youth in particular. A couple of reasons can be found as an explanation for this. On the one hand legislative and juristically concerns can be expressed, on the other the complexity of implementing a secure platform for political discussions in combination with decisions that will influence policy-makers actions can be considered as a major challenge.

3.6 Analysis of selected platforms

The following section give an overview about the different platforms which have been analysed within the state-of-the-art analysis. Hence three main keywords will be introduced shortly to avoid terminology issues. Those are on the one hand the ‘Topic’ that describes the content of each website that is displayed shortly, the ‘Purpose’ that underlines the goals of the institution or project that is described on the website such as e.g. whether the support in e-participation,

and on the other hand 'Features' that represent the technical functionality that is offered by the website/platform such as search engines, forums or polls.

3.6.1 Opin.me

Topic:

The aim of the project is to get more young people involved in political decision-making and increase youth trust in European political institutions. Eleven project partners from eight different countries developed an open online participation platform along with different mobile tools and apps for smartphones and tablets. This way, young people can get involved whenever and wherever they wish. The platform is able to be utilized by youth organizations and administrations of any size and level all over Europe. The aim of EUth (the project responsible for the realization of opin.me) is to get more young people involved in political decision-making and increase their trust in European political institutions. This is an attempt to combine the need for youth-friendly digital and mobile participation tools. The solution is created within the EUth project: OPIN, an all-in-one proven digital and mobile participation toolbox, ready to be embedded in web presence of youth organisations or administrations. To increase the quality and quantity of e-participation by young people it is essential that the EUth -toolkit is known and frequently used by the target audience. ERYICA, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency with its network of 34 umbrella organizations will take care of that: specially trained youth workers will build an expertise network all over Europe. OPIN is an all-in-one digital and mobile participation toolbox for youth organisations or public administrations. Professional e-Participation processes creation platform without high level of proficiency in building e-participation platforms. All stages of the project are transparent and supported by OPIN's software, features for digital and mobile participation, intelligent community management, integration of offline events, multimedia information about a possible project.

Purpose:

The toolbox is developed to support quality participation by design. Concentrated practical tips and a decision support tool help to plan and find the right tools for your purpose. It is possible to build an e-Participation process using the following options: Text review (collaborative text work), Brainstorming (collect ideas), Idea challenges (collect and ideas and vote), Agenda setting (plan meetings), Spatial tool (collect ideas regarding certain areas), Polling (customizable multi-step polls), Opin.me offers six ready-made participation templates, which can be customized by adding dates, information and face-to-face events

3.6.2 Youthforum

Topic:

The European Youth Forum is a platform of youth organisations in Europe. It represents over 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe. The Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations. In the current uncertain political and social context that affects young

people, they can be powerful catalysts for positive change and contributors of innovative solutions to Europe's challenges.

Purpose:

To overcome the challenges faced by young people, the European Youth Forum has three main goals such as: greater youth participation, stronger youth organisations, increased youth autonomy and inclusion. With these goals in mind, the Youth Forum will continue advocacy work to become an agenda-setter on youth affairs, empower member organisations to maximise the impact of expertise and enforce a rights-based approach.

3.6.3 Yourvotematters

Topic:

YourVoteMatters.eu is a multilingual digital platform, designed as a communication tool between the 2019 European elections' candidates and their electorate. The platform is developed by a consortium of five European organizations, composed of: Riparte il Futuro (Italy), VoteWatch Europe (Belgium), European Citizen Action Service (Belgium), Vouliwatch (Greece) and Collegium Civitas (Poland) with the aim of enhancing the dialogue between all the actors involved in the next round of elections (politicians, political parties, citizens, organizations).

Purpose:

To provide citizens about news and views: This section consists of a series of policy debriefings referring to the latest political developments in the European Parliament electoral campaign. It also keeps EU citizens informed about the phases of this special online project. By voting on 25 key issues on which members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have also voted over the last five years, EU citizens can find out which sitting MEP or new candidate most closely matches views.

3.6.4 European Youth Portal

Topic:

The European Youth Portal offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. It provides information around eight main themes, covers 35 countries and is available in 28 languages.

Purpose:

The information on this website is arranged by themes, such as education and training, creativity and culture, health and well-being and many more. These can be found on the homepage and on the button bar at the top of each page. Each topic also has a number of sub-themes, which can be found by clicking on the theme buttons. The information is provided both at European and national level. There is the possibility to click on "Choose a country" to switch between different countries and the European level information.

3.6.5 Eurodesk

Topic:

“Eurodesk” is an international non-profit association created in 1990. As a support organisation to Erasmus+, “Eurodesk” makes information on learning mobility comprehensive and accessible to young people and those who work with them. With a network of national coordinators connected to over 1100 local information providers in 36 European countries (with Serbia joining in March 2019), “Eurodesk” raises awareness on learning mobility opportunities and encourages young people to become active citizens. “Eurodesk” is the main source of youth information on European policies, mobility information and opportunities. It answers enquiries and provides guidance for mobile young people across Europe. “Eurodesk” updates and manages content on the European Youth Portal, it also answers enquiries coming from the Portal.

Purpose:

“Eurodesk” federates around 1100 local youth information providers, so-called “multipliers” that are regional or local organisations working with young people, delivering youth information to them and advising them on mobility opportunities. Multipliers can be youth centres, associations, municipalities, etc. but despite their variety, the core of their mission as “Eurodesk” multipliers is the same. To ensure the quality of services in all the 36 “Eurodesk” countries, “Eurodesk” offers its members quality training and support, and access to youth information services and tools.

3.6.6 Salto Youth

Topic:

Young people and youth workers, take part in a competition, submit stories. Almost 1 million “Youthpass” certificates, which document learning experiences participants made through social activities related to projects funded by the European Union. Toolbox for Training & Youth Work, created to help EU citizens find and share useful training Tools, the Toolbox is an online catalogue EU citizens can browse through freely or even contribute to.

Purpose:

SALTO -YOUTH is a network of seven resource centers working on European priority areas within the youth field. There are resource centers in “Eastern Europe & Caucasus”, “Euro Med Inclusion & Diversity”, “Participation & Information” and the “South East Europe Training & Cooperation Solidarity Corps”. SALTO EECA supports cooperation between Programme and Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation within Erasmus + Youth and European Solidarity Corps. The “SALTO-Youth Inclusion & Diversity Resource Center” provides publications and resources for international youth work. The “Salto-Youth Participation & Information Resource Center” (SALTO PI) works on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. It is supporting the European Commission, the network of national Agencies of Erasmus +. Youth in Action in 33 programme countries and other partners involved in fostering participation of young people in democratic processes. It acts as an evidence-based knowledge hub and impartial broker based on its expertise and experience with programme management to contribute to the links and synergies between EU youth policy and programmes.

3.6.7 Euromat

Topic:

The EUROMAT focuses mainly on making a voting experience interesting while providing a user with essential information about the main positions of the European parties. Which European party matches to the users' opinions and future vision of the European Union most is addressed hereby.

Purpose:

The Purpose is to inform EU citizens about their voting possibilities according to the content of all available electable parties for the European Parliament Election in 2019. In the end of the questionnaire there is a forwarding recommendation to another platform called "talking Europe". This an online platform for discussing different political opinions with other European Citizens.

3.6.8 Talking Europe

Topic:

Talking Europe web appearance starts with the statement that "Opinion-Bubbles" shape social discourse throughout Europe, therefore people have always been shaped by their social environment in terms of their social views and political convictions. However, media and technological developments are accelerating this trend. Social networks want to keep their users on the platform as long as possible – Thus, only information that corresponds to one's own ideas is displayed and conflicts are usually reproduced loudly and un-objectively. At the same time, with trade unions, churches and political parties, the institutions that traditionally served the (opinion) exchange between different social groups are losing importance. In the end, political discourse is more polarized than it has been for a long time. In talk shows, Facebook comment columns and on Twitter, polemical and undifferentiated statements are often the most popular. Hence this platform intends to bring Europeans together for online discussions.

Purpose:

Looking at Europe, it can be observed that there is a serious split between eastern and western European states and societies. Also, social and political debates are still limited to nation states. An exchange between European citizens hardly takes place and all too often remains at the level of political and economic elites. The result is a widespread lack of interest in the European Union and too little exchange with each other. This poses a threat to European cohesion, mutual understanding across borders and the European idea. The lack of a common language poses a high threshold for a lot of people to participate in European discussions and exchange.

There is a lack of places and opportunities for EU citizens to meet and discuss the future of the EU in a reasonable, safe and easy manner. Yet, the internet, digitisation and artificial intelligence provide a lot of potential for low-threshold exchange across borders and opinions. It enables citizens to meet online within a few clicks and have discussions about the recent news in their mother tongue. The mission of "Talking Europe" is to make use of this potential

and shape the reasonable, hate-speech free and low-threshold online exchange for Europe's citizens.

3.6.9 DEEP - Linking Youth

Topic:

The aim of the Digital Ecosystem for E-Participation Linking Youth (DEEP-Linking Youth) project is to explore how e-participation can foster young people's empowerment and active participation in democratic life. The project will test the functioning of a digital ecosystem for youth engagement by bridging technology and young citizens on a common task with the aim to provide quality input to decision-making in view of producing a sustainable impact.

Purpose:

As part of the DEEP-linking Youth project, ECAS has developed a set of guidelines for decision-makers on how to use e-participation as an instrument to engage young people and stimulate their active participation in democratic life. The guidelines are based on the outcomes of the project, which involved examining different ways to reach out to young people using digital tools and the creation of an online Digital Dashboard for policy-makers to listen to the views of young people, particularly those who do not typically engage in decision-making processes.

3.6.10 Ymobility

Topic:

YMOBILITY develops a comprehensive research program which addresses the following issues: On the one hand it is important to identify and quantify the main types of international youth mobility in the EU, and their key characteristics, on the other understanding what determines which individuals do and which do not participate in international mobility as personal and professional development strategies is also considered as their motives, migration channels and information sources. Further analysing the individual outcomes in terms of both employability and careers and non-economic terms is equally significant as analysing the territorial outcomes for the regions of both origin and destination, in economic, demographic and cultural terms. Nonetheless, differentiating between short-term and long-term outcomes, taking into account return migration and future intentions to migrate will be identified as well as implications for policies in migration but also of education, the economy and housing.

Purpose:

The research utilizes existing secondary data for the whole of the EU but will mainly rely on primary quantitative data (large-scale surveys) and qualitative data (interviews). The study will focus on 9 countries representing different contexts for youth mobility: Romania, Slovakia and Latvia; the UK and Sweden; Germany, Italy, Ireland and Spain. The policy analysis will be informed by interviews undertaken with key informants. Experimental methods will be used to assess how individuals will respond to different scenarios of future economic and social change.

3.6.11 Move Project

Topic:

The move project carries out a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of mobility of young people in the EU. It generated systematic data about young people's mobility patterns in Europe based on qualitative case studies, a mobility survey and on secondary data analysis. Further as a result it provides a quantitative integrated database on European youth mobility. Offer a data based theoretical framework in which mobility can be reflected.

Purpose:

Europeans can make research-informed recommendations for interventions to facilitate and improve the institutional, legal and programmatic frames of mobility with regard to different forms and types of mobility as well as to the conditions / constraints of mobility for young people in Europe. Citizens can give consultation and expertise to those countries facing significant challenges related to geographical mobility of young people. Based on the needs and demands of guidance counsellors who deal with international youth mobility, the "eGuidance" Concept is tailored to the international circular mobility of young people as well as to the advanced training of European guidance counsellors in order to improve the quality of counselling. The theoretical framework and the practical themes and topics will be transferred and implemented in an adequate and effective way by elaborating best-practice-examples of modern interrogative and counselling techniques. In order to achieve this, the concept is developed to identify and elaborate the concrete basics of the methodology of career guidance, adapted to the essentials in the area knowledge of international circular job and vocational mobility of young people. There is a comprehensive interactive e-Learning internet portal that provides easy access to information and resources needed by European guidance counsellors, who work in the field of youth mobility. The concept is implemented onto the portal as a smart, autodidactic e-Learning program with an interactive interface, simulating a counselling interview. This e-Learning program is set up of an online manual (of methods and content), broken down into exemplary dialogues and sequences, which applies the concept.

3.6.12 European Youth Foundation

Topic:

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities. Only youth NGOs from Council of Europe member states as well as the European Cultural Convention Signatories: Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Holy See, can apply to the Foundation. It is a division in the Youth Department of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Democratic Participation, Directorate General of Democracy.

Purpose:

The European Youth Foundation is an instrument: to make the voice of youth heard at a top decision making level; managed by both youth non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government representatives, who decide and monitor the CoE Youth program. To support European non-governmental youth organizations and networks; to promote peace, understanding and respect. Diverse opportunities for personal growth and skills development through non-formal and peer-led educational activities are represented. Network of Change makers create a network of the next generation of diverse, young change makers, equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to positively shape the world around them.

3.6.13 European Association for Local Democracy

Topic:

ALDA – a European Association for Local Democracy, is dedicated to the promotion of good governance and citizen participation at the local level. ALDA focuses on activities facilitating cooperation between local authorities and civil society. ALDA was established in 1999 at the initiative of the Council of Europe to coordinate and support the network of Local Democracy Agencies, which are self-sustainable, locally registered NGOs acting as promoters of good governance and local self-government. Today, ALDA is a key stakeholder in the field of local democracy, active citizenship, and cooperation between local authorities and civil society.

Purpose:

ALDA is an organization gathering more than 300 members (including local authorities, associations of local authorities, and civil society organizations) coming from more than 40 countries. ALDA is funded through membership fees, as well as project funding from the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and other public and private donors.

3.6.14 Yvote

Topic:

Main focus of “Yvote” is on the people in Europe, especially the youth, in order to equip them with the needed knowledge and to encourage them to be engaged in the democratic process in the future. “Yvote`s” motivation manifests in increasing the participation and youth engagement in Europe to tackle mistrust and apathy amongst the citizens through peer-to-peer education.

Purpose:

From a simple street action, to giving a workshop, organizing a discussion or even a whole action week several options of interaction are possible. For young people with high motivation but lack of information there is a collection of materials to support gaining information about the EU and how it is functioning or it is possible to discuss the importance of voting or engage young people in the dialogue about current political topics.

3.6.15 This time I'm voting

Topic:

“This time I'm voting” also known under the domain together.eu is the European Parliament's institutional, non-partisan platform, independent from any political party and ideology promoting the idea of voting for the European Parliament Election.

Purpose:

The communication action's objective is to promote democratic engagement in the European Union. The European Parliament as an institution does not support any specific political party or members of the European Parliament.

3.6.16 Democracy Alive

Topic:

Democracy Alive is a community where pro-European activists, campaigners and citizens can connect, co-operate, co-create and work together for the things they really believe in. In this community activists from across Europe can come together and take action to defend, strengthen and promote European democracy. It can be seen as a space where people can find support for their initiatives, from human resources to donations, promotion to networking. An Action Centre provides a platform for the users to take part in weekly campaigns and promotes the various activities of the members throughout Europe.

Purpose:

This activist hub initially took shape as DEMOCRACY ALIVE - the European Democracy Festival, from 11-13 April 2019 on the Dutch island of Texel. The festival was an environment where citizens, stakeholders and elected representatives could engage on the important issues of today. At a challenging time for European cohesion, DEMOCRACY ALIVE served to increase voter turnout in the 2019 European Parliament elections by promoting the #ThisTimeImVoting campaign. Democracy Alive was organised by the European Movement International, the largest pan-European network of pro-European organisations. Democracy alive is present in over 30 countries, bringing together European civil society, business, trade unions, NGOs, political parties, local authorities and academia.

3.6.17 Give a vote

Topic:

#GiveAVote is a youth activation campaign powered by the European Youth Card Association (EYCA) and the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The campaign is led by 25 young activists from 13 EU member states: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

Purpose:

Purpose is to motivate all young people to vote in the European Elections and all elections in general. In the 2014 European Elections, only 28% of young people voted – the lowest turnout among all age groups. The EU has a huge impact on many aspects of young people's lives and young people should have their say on the decisions made. Voting, choosing the candidates to represent them, is the democratic way to influence the way the EU works.

Engage young people to shake things up in the way politics works. Because young people are less likely to vote compared to other age groups, they are not seen as a great source of votes for political parties. Therefore, politicians build their strategies and priorities without paying enough attention to young people. The platform states that going to vote is a sure way of making politicians pay attention to young people's needs and the causes they support.

3.6.18 Youthvote2019

Topic:

Increasing voter turnout before the EU elections of May 2019 through interactive debates, information and quiz competitions are at the core of YouthVote2019.eu. The platform is part of

the project. ” A new narrative for Europe – a more engaging one” aiming to raise awareness and know how among youth on the importance of EU 2019 elections and empowering youths and youth workers with the needed tools to gain momentum and influence over EU’s direction through interactive and user friendly methods.

Purpose:

Founded in Bucharest in 2009, the Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE) is one of the foremost think tanks operating in Central and Eastern Europe, a leading forum for debate in the region, as well as for Eastern Partnership countries (focused especially on Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia) on EU affairs, democratization and overall evidence-based public policy. CRPE’s mission is to promote Romania as an influential leader in the development of EU agendas and policies. Another major objective is to advance the Europeanization processes in Romania and to promote European citizenship by providing expertise, monitoring tools and research in various fields and by initiating public debates.

The aims are to be active in the fields of education, youth work and culture to: Promote and enhance civic action and civil society’s interconnectedness and effectiveness in influencing decision-making at any level. Empower youth and increase employment opportunities through training, skills development, and civic and social participation. Confront interpersonal and intergroup stereotypes and enhance intercultural understanding inside and outside the perceived limits of Europe as a means to peace and well-being.

3.6.19 CRPE

Topic:

Falling voter turnout is a common trend and young voters abstain more than the general population in all European democracies. The democratic deficit and low electoral turnout is not faced by specific countries, but it is a phenomenon happening at EU level. The gap between the democratic institutions in Europe, their representatives and Europe’s young generation is growing. Although young people are more likely to be present in other forms of political participation (protests, strikes, joining pressure groups, etc.), their overall election turnout is dramatically falling. In 2014 only 28% of under 25 were voting, compared to the general election turn-out rate which was 42.6 %.

Purpose:

Elaborating and designing an interactive and user-friendly platform that will allow user friendly interaction with youths and promote critical thinking and argumentative speeches (organizing interactive quiz competitions and e-debate competitions). Organizing a 6 days Learning Activity in Brussels for youths and youth workers with specifically designed training modules and first-hand experiences with representatives of the EU institutions. Elaborating a guideline on lessons learnt on how to empower youth on the importance of EU elections and combating online disinformation campaigns. Based on the findings during the project that will be disseminated at EU level. The project targets youths, students, youth workers from Romania and Greece, with an interest in EU affairs/ EU elections that can further create a snowball effect and replicate the activities of the project in their organizations (through specific trainings on EU elections, debate Competitions, EU Narratives and Counter Narratives).

3.6.20 European Youth Ideas / European Youth Event

Topic:

The Youth Outreach Unit of the European Parliament wants to make it easier for young people to participate actively in European democratic life. First launched for European Youth Event 2018, this is an online platform where users can outline own ideas on the issues that Europe is facing today and the ideas for the Europe of tomorrow. The most concrete ideas elaborated on this website will also be forwarded to the Members of the European Parliament and other policy makers.

Purpose:

Every two years, the European Youth Event brings together thousands of young people from all over the European Union and beyond to share and shape their ideas on the future of Europe. It is a unique opportunity for youth to meet and inspire each other and decision-makers right in the heart of European democracy. The fourth edition will take place at the European Parliament's seat in Strasbourg on 29-30 May 2020. Following the event, the ideas, concerns, and hopes from young people are presented in a report distributed to all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Some participants will also be able to further develop the most impactful ideas and present these directly to the Members of the European Parliament in the parliamentary committees during "Youth Hearings". The EYE strives to promote equality with a strong commitment to accessibility for everyone. All young Europeans, who are between 16 and 30 years old, can take part. Participation at the EYE is free of charge. Participants need to arrange and cover their own travel and accommodation in Strasbourg. The European Parliament is committed to promote inclusiveness and civic engagement.

3.6.21 Because Campaign during Thistimeimvoting.eu

Topic:

The European elections took place in May 2019. Between Thursday 23rd and Sunday 26th depending on where you lived or where citizens voted. Europe faces many challenges. From migration to data privacy. And opportunities too, extending the digital single market, for example, while strengthening the proper protection of Europe's consumers and creators. These are just some things that the European Parliament is taking action on. And will continue to.

Purpose:

The purpose of the campaign "This time I'm voting" is to raise awareness within the European population according to its political participation. Fundamental radicalism in which cultural diversity is turned into division of societies is a common phenomenon nowadays. The fragile nature of democracy can be noticed through extreme political positions.

3.6.22 Spaceu2019.eu

Topic:

Spaceu2019 is the first pillar of an online tool for the 2019 European Parliamentary (EP) Elections, specifically tailored for mobile EU citizens voting either in their country of citizenship or residence, in a moment where the European transnational voting space has become ever more important. In a nutshell, it is an interactive database, informing users on their electoral rights and to allow them to compare the conditions and requirements for participating in the political process of their country of residence or citizenship. The second pillar is euandi2019,

a Voting Advice Application (VAA) helping citizens find the political party that best matches their policy preferences.

Purpose:

The main objective of both pillars was to create a more aware European-wide, politically active citizenry, therefore making the EP elections more relevant and transnational. This also may have helped getting citizens out to vote, given that EP elections are traditionally prone to particularly low levels of turnout. The main target group were EU mobile citizens as well as those with a dual citizenship, but also European citizens at large as this device is open to all and gives useful information on how to vote, and which parties are the best match, to static citizens as well.

3.6.23 What Europe does for me?

Topic:

How does Europe affect the everyday lives of its citizens? How does it impact jobs, families, our health care, our hobbies, our journeys, our security, our consumer choices and our social rights? And how is Europe present in our towns, cities and regions? As European citizens, no matter where they live or how they make their living or spend their time, the EU has an impact on their daily lives. This website presents a series of short notes exploring EU deliveries and actions from the individual's point of view. In a one-page format, these notes are available for you to read, share or reuse.

Purpose:

This is a living website and we will add more material in more EU languages over the coming months. So, what does Europe do for its citizens? As citizens of the European Union, they are at the heart of what Europe does, and how and why it does it. 'Europe', or 'Brussels', cannot decide things on its own or in a vacuum. And the EU can only act when a goal can be best achieved together than by individual countries acting independently. These briefings explore EU deliveries and the outlook for future action in selected policy areas.

3.6.24 Your Voice, Our Future

Topic:

'Futurium' is a platform dedicated to Europeans discussing EU policies. Groups can be browsed without registration. If there is an intention to make a comment or like something registration is required. After creating an account the user can post in any EU language; the community managers and other colleagues respond in the users' language. The platform is initially developed for digital topics, but any topic relevant for the European Union is welcome to be addressed there.

Purpose:

The name 'Futurium' refers to the times ahead of citizens, as policies impact the future. This platform is dedicated to European citizens for discussing EU policies.

3.6.25 European Citizens' Initiative

Topic:

It is a participatory democracy instrument that allows citizens to suggest concrete legal changes in any field where the European Commission has power to propose legislation, such as the environment, agriculture, energy, transport or trade. An initiative enables citizens from different member states to come together around an issue close to their heart with a view to influencing EU policy-making. To launch an initiative, it takes 7 EU citizens, living in at least 7 different Member States who are old enough to vote. Once an initiative gathers 1 million signatures with minimum thresholds reached in at least 7 countries, the European Commission must decide whether or not to take action. The rules and procedures governing the citizens' initiative are set out in an EU Regulation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in February 2011.

Purpose:

A citizens' initiative is possible in any field where the Commission has the power to propose legislation, for example environment, agriculture, transport or public health. In order to launch a citizens' initiative, citizens must form a "citizens' committee" composed of at least 7 EU citizens being resident in at least 7 different member states. The members of the citizens' committee must be EU citizens old enough to vote (Citizens do not need to be registered to vote, just old enough.) in the European Parliament elections (18 years old, except in Austria & Malta where the voting age is 16, and Greece where the voting age is 17). Citizens' initiatives cannot be run by organizations. However, organisations can promote or support initiatives if they do so with full transparency. The citizens' committee must register its initiative on this website before starting to collect statements of support from citizens. Once the registration is confirmed, organisers have one year to collect signatures. The Commission will examine the initiative. Within 3 months after receiving the initiative: Commission representatives will meet the organisers so they can explain in detail the issues raised in their initiative, the organisers will have the opportunity to present their initiative at a public hearing in the European Parliament, the Commission will adopt a formal response spelling out what action it will propose in response to the citizens' initiative, if any, and the reasons for doing or not doing so. The response, which will take the form of a communication, will be formally adopted by the College of Commissioners and published in all official EU languages. The Commission is not obliged to propose legislation because of an initiative. If the Commission decides to put forward a legislative proposal, the normal legislative procedure kicks off: the Commission proposal is submitted to the legislator (generally the European Parliament and the Council or in some cases only the Council) and, if adopted, it becomes law.

3.6.26 VOLIS**Topic:**

VOLIS (System for Local Democracy Procedures) was created for: - to change decision making of the local authorities, using software solution for that; - to share all information regarding of the local decision-making with the public and also encouraging people to participate in these processes. VOLIS creates operating environments for the members of councils and local governments and shows the public what is happening at the sessions along with the agenda, voting results and automatically-writing protocol through the Internet.

Purpose:

The information system has the following key features: Paperless document management and processing Different possibilities for participation in meetings including virtual participation E-voting ID card Automatic self-writing session protocol Session Webcast and recordings archive Participatory Democracy – including possibility to do paperless all participatory budgeting processes and use polls where secure voting by e population is provided.

3.6.27 E-Estonia

Topic:

Estonia's e-Governance rests on three pillars: legislation, the ICT sector's capability to implement the government's vision, and the trust of citizens in e-solutions. Digital Estonia is possible due to an advanced technological foundation – affordable internet connection everywhere, X-Road for the secure interconnection of national databases, and digital identity enabling digital signatures. The Tax and Customs Board was the first state agency to launch e-services in Estonia in 2000. The first e-service made it possible for legal persons to submit digital declarations on their sales, income and social taxes, mandatory funded pension contributions and unemployment insurance premiums, submit VAT refund and transfer requests and view balances. The Tax and Customs Board implemented e-services to save costs and improve the efficiency of public services while simplifying business affairs for customers. Another goal was to meet customer expectations, as the successful development of internet banking had led to a demand for public sector e-services.

Purpose:

The goal of e-Estonia Briefing Centre is to inspire global policy makers, political leaders, corporate executives, investors and international media with the success story of e-Estonia and build links to leading IT service providers.

3.6.28 Parliament.gv.at

Topic:

The Parliamentary Administration informs the public on the Website of the Austrian Parliament about parliamentary activities and the services provided by the Parliamentary Administration and provides free access to all parliamentary documentation.

Purpose:

Europeans interested in how the government in Austria is running can find useful information on this website. European citizens intending to attend plenary sittings of the National and Federal Councils can find information on this website. Since sittings of the National and Federal Councils are in principle open to visitors interested in attending. Information about the history of the parliaments' buildings can also be found.

3.6.29 EURES

Topic:

EURES (European Employment Services) is a cooperation network formed by public employment services. Trade unions and employers' organisations also participate as partners. The objective of the EURES network is to facilitate the free movement of workers within the

European Economic Area (EEA) (the 28 members of the European Union, plus Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland) and Switzerland.

Purpose:

EURES targets both job-seekers interested in moving to another country to work or to study, and employers wishing to recruit from abroad. EURES offers a network of advisers that can give information, help and assistance to jobseekers and employers through personal contacts. EURES advisers are trained specialists who provide the three basic EURES services of information, guidance and placement, to both jobseekers and employers interested in the European job market.

3.6.30 Your Europe

Topic:

This website gives an overview about EU citizens living abroad and might need support in special areas. It does not matter whether the arising issues concern travelling, so certain documents might be needed, or to get information about passenger rights, information about driving abroad are also displayed. There are also categories addressing issues concerning work and retirement as well as residence formalities.

Purpose:

Another important area of information builds the education and youth section, information about universities, traineeships or volunteering activities. For those who are interested in health affairs can also find information about specific health care topics, such as medical treatment issues or how to receive medical prescription abroad. Further topics like cross-border inheritance issues can be discussed by Europeans as well as.

3.6.31 Have Your Say

Topic:

This website from the European Commission intends to achieve better policy making results and improve regulation communication, therefore the Commission has decided to open up policy and law-making. The intention is to listen more to the people who are affected by the regulation – the EU citizens themselves. Since better regulation relies on evidence and a transparent process, both EU citizens and stakeholders (for example, businesses, public administrations and researchers) are involved throughout. Furthermore the Commission identifies areas for improvement to the existing body of EU legislation. And when proposing new policies and laws, the Commission is focusing on the things that really do need to be done by the EU.

Purpose:

The purpose of the platform can be summarized as follows: New ideas for policies and legislation are outlined in documents called roadmaps and inception impact assessments. This is also the case for evaluations and 'fitness checks' of already existing laws. EU citizens can give their feedback during a period of 4 weeks. Through public consultations EU citizens can express their views on the scope, priorities and added value of EU action for new initiatives, or evaluations of existing policies and laws. The consultation is done via tailored questionnaires.

Public consultations are open for a response period of 12 weeks. Once the Commission has finalised a legislative proposal and submitted it to the European Parliament and the Council, EU citizens have another opportunity to give feedback. The feedback period for Commission proposals is 8 weeks, after which the contributions will be passed on to the Parliament and the Council.

3.6.32 openPetition

Topic:

openPetition supports petitioners in creating their petition, collecting signatures and submitting the petition to the appropriate recipient. In addition, openPetition asks for comments from parliamentarians independently of the formal petition process. There is an area member that can be accessed via a registration through a users` email address. Both successful and less successful projects are transparently shown without being registered. There is also an option for monetary donations available to support ongoing projects.

Purpose:

This website helps EU citizens to submit legal initiatives and petitions for their concerns. There is a step by step guideline for potential participants how to argue in an understandable way why something needs to be changed. Further it highlights which decision-maker(s) can be addressed with a petition and it helps to clarify why the matter is important for the user and others by means of a personal story. The website supports the citizen to emphasize their intentions and express their ideas with a multimedia approach to embed pictures and videos. An initiative can be spread via social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter as well as WhatsApp and e-mail. Connections to topically appropriate Facebook groups or forums could also be realized. The website combines the offline and online world, since signatures can also be collected offline and then uploaded to the online petition. There is a possibility to plan online actions with supporters, such as a Twitter action with an individual hash tag dedicated to the person making the decision, or offline actions such as a demonstration. Additionally, decision makers and supporters can be contacted to talk the person who is making the decision and ask for a personal meeting for the submission. If no appointment can be agreed on, supporters can be asked for help and the person making the decision can be reached out jointly via Twitter, e-mail or writing a letter.

4 Gap Analysis

4.1 Identification of gaps Dimensions

The analysis of the state-of-art examination focuses on the three main objectives of the work package 3:

- Enable EMYs to receive information,
- Enable EMYs to exchange information and
- Enable EMYs to connect information

To analyse the main findings relevant gap dimensions were identified to examine each of the platform against. In the following all derived dimensions are listed and the result of the analysis of each platform is summarized in Table 9 Analysis of identified gaps: Dimensions:

- Website provides knowledge about participation for EMYs
- Allows an EMY for pro-active communication and clarification
- EMY receives reliable information by/on platform/website
- EMY is enabled to participate in an interactive way

In the following all dimensions are described in short:

The dimension **“Provides information about participation opportunities for EMYs”** indicates whether information about registration processes for democratic participation either in form of elections or petitions is accessible to EMYs on the website or portal without registration.

The dimension **“Allows an EMY for pro-active communication and clarification”** indicates whether there is an option for EMYs to request further information or ask questions via the portal, such that others may benefit from it.

The dimension **“An EMY receives reliable information”** indicated whether there is any evidence on the site that shows to EMYs the source of information and whether this information is either provided by an official European Commission funded project, a European Union’s political body, or an authentic non-governmental institution related to the European Commission.

The dimension **“Enables an EMY to participate in an interactive way”** indicates whether there is any connection between the website an EMY is visiting, and a corresponding community of users, specific to the corresponding sites’ contents, such that the EMY may discuss political issues.

To indicate the relevance and the level to which the dimensions are addressed and easy to use “traffic light system” ranging from: “true” over “partially true” to “not true” is used.

Table 9 Analysis of identified gaps: Dimensions

Name of Platform	provides information about participation opportunities for EMY	allows an EMY pro-active communication and clarification	EMY receives reliable information	Enables an EMY to participate in an interactive way
Giveavote.eu	Partially true, since to get informed EMY is forwarded to another European Commissions Website	Partially true, local activists can be contacted via email, subscription to newsletter possible, articles can be	True, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union	Not true, just a link to the social media presence

		submitted via email		
Youthvote2019.eu	Partially true, but information about the European Elections in general and not country specific.	Not true	True, the project is financed by the European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices	Not true, there was a debating contest and a quiz about political topics available, but the service is not offered anymore
thisimeimvoting.eu	Not true, EMYs interests can only be summited, but no detail about registration details for the election are provided	Not true	True, copyright sign by European union 2019	Not true, just a link to social media presence
Howtovote.eu	True	Not true, no way to ask questions via the portal	True, With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union for the project "My Europe, My Say".	Not true, just a advising tool how to vote, only a link to the social media presence
Yvote.eu	True	Partially true, EMY can fill in contact formular	True, supporting organisations and Patronages of Members of the European Parliament are shown.	Not true, just a link to howtovote.eu and a link to the social media presence
Eurodesk	True, participating calendar of	Partially true, contact via email on	True, the website has been funded	Partially true, opportunities to go abroad can be

	offline events related to the European Parliament	general info email address possible	with support from the European Commission.	viewed without entering the member area, link to social media presence
European Youth Card Association (EYCA)	Partially true, linking to the giveavote.eu website, offline seminars possible to attend	Partially true, contact via email on general info email address possible	Partially true, for EMY not at first sight clear who is in charge for the content	Partially true, Blog entries possible if EMY gets in contact with EYCA Team, link to social media presence
European Youth Foundation	Partially true for individuals EMYs, rather EMYs engaged in NGOs	Partially true, through contact form	True, Council of Europe Portal	Partially True, project map, member area available
European Youth Portal	True, linking to European Youth Parliament	Partially true, through contact form	True, the team of "Eurodesk" is in charge an initiative by the European Union	Not True, EU Youth dialogue participation in offline mode possible
Youthforum	True, newsfeed with election related articles	Partially true, EMYs can get with the website responsible team in contact via general email address	True	Partially true, search function for topics, listening to podcasts, reading newsfeed
Youth & Environment Europe (yee)	Partially true, EMYs can be involved in environmental protection projects	Partially true, EMYs can get with the website responsible team in contact via general email address	True	Partially true, register as a member, members map, volunteering offers, "yee news", member news, blog entries

digitales.oesterreich.gv.at/burgerbeteiligung	Partially true, just in German available for EMYs in Austria	Not true	True, official governmental website on national level	Not true
Salto Youth Portal, Resoruce Center in Estonia	True	Not true	True, Erasmus + funded project, European solidarity corps	Partially true, login to use Salto dashboard, offline training events
Opin.me	True	Not true	True	Partially true, login to access member area, participate in existing projects
European Youth Award	True	Not true	True	Partially true, ideas contest submission, youth for innovation student programs
European Youth Parliament	True	Not True	True	Partially true, EYP member platform, offline events, Election Simulations
Youthpass	Partially true, because it aims at EMYs that have already experienced a stay abroad involved in strengthen democratic processes	Partially true, EMYs can contact SALTO team via email	True, Erasmus+, SALTO-Youth Training and Cooperation Resource Centre	Partially true, login to member area, receiving certificates about Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes
Youthforeurope	True	Not true	True	Partially true, provides an opportunity finder, for volunteering projects, training

				courses, youth exchanges, jobs, European solidarity corps
Democracyalive.eu	True	Not true	True	Partially true, after registration with Twitter, Facebook or email, to gain access to existing community
Euromat.info	True	Not true	True	Not true, the results cannot be shared, but there is a hint about using the platform talkingeurope.com to exchange political opinions there.
talkingeurope.com	True	Partially true, EMY can send an email to an official press contact	Not true, because on first sight it's not clear who is running the website	Partially true, after a registration, matching algorithm finds someone from another European country with a different opinion. In multiple 1:1 chats at the same time, real-time translation tools enable the discussants to participate in their mother tongue.
Yourvotematters.eu	True	Not true	True	Not True
Europeans Citizens' Initiative	True	Partially true, after authentication EMY can ask for advice and gets reply in different languages	True	Partially true, registration for offline conference, joining a forum after login, starting an initiative or supporting, promoting one, search function, take part in

				discussions, moderation function
Deeplinkingyouth.eu	True	Not true	True	Partially true, digital dashboard, live chat functionality with politicians
volis.ee	True	Not true	True	Partially true, after login with an electronic ID
e-estonia.com	True	Not true	True	Partially true, EMYs could fill in feedback form, factsheets can be downloaded, website has more informing character for Estonians
EUCROWD	True	Not true	True, co-funded by the Europe for citizens program of the EU	Not true
European Petition Web Portal	True	Partially true	True	Partially true, Login, to start a petition or to support an existing
openpetition.eu/	True	Partially true, feedback can be sent via official email address	True	Partially true, Login, to start a petition or to support an existing petition

BRZ eDem (e-Democracy)	True, but in German only	Not true	True	Not true, website is still in progress, so level of participation needs to be defined at a later point
wiengestalten.at	True, but on municipal level and in German only available	Partially true, contact form for EMY but other EMYs don't see the feedback	True	Partially true, with German skills EMY able to participate in local projects using a project map, search in project database

4.2 Main gaps identified

Considering the amount of information that is provided either by the European Commission itself or via the web presences operated by non-profit organisations or non-governmental organisations in the context of political activism, it can be argued that there is a need to better organize and structure the way information is accessed by EMYs to meet their specific needs.

Although websites for raising political awareness have a variety of links to various social media environments that are accessible for EMYs, there are strong indications that interaction between EMYs takes place primarily inside these social media channels, mainly in closed, private group chats on messaging services and communication platforms like “WhatsApp”, “Signal” or “Facebook”. These groups tend to be fairly small, separate and rarely connect among each other.

Further it can be assumed that it is difficult to seize, and maintain the attention of EMYs, who tend to switch between different communications channels frequently. This could happen because unstructured exchanges, such as group chats, are not particularly suited to support complex discussions. General information that is relevant, and important for the group a large might get lost in the flow. A tool that focuses on the target group's specific information needs and provides assistance in navigating the available sources of information could help solve this kind of issue.

Analysing the platforms that are customized to attract younger European citizens' needs it concluded to define the age range the target group more granular. Splitting up the target group of EMYs could be helpful due to different stages in life they are facing. Young adolescents such as EMYs might have different priorities in their daily lives and respectively stronger interests in certain fields of political issues.

The state-of-the-art analysis shows that many websites seem to promote quite similar content. There are informative and consultative formats specifically for European mobile youth to find openings for internships and studies, job opportunities or support for starting a business. Other platforms that focus on mobile youth primarily focus on assisting them to adapt to the living and social arrangements of their host country, but do not usually cover democratic participation. Platforms that focus on EU elections, by contrast, tend to address EU citizens in general, but not specifically mobile youth.

Gaps identified in the context of receiving information:

- Information for mobile EU citizens about democratic participation is available but scattered across a broad variety of websites and platforms;
- Relevance of the information provided for the target group varies; in some cases information is not sufficiently complete and specific for participative purposes;
- Information that is relevant for the target group is difficult to identify (s. also “Other gaps – Language barriers”);
- Mobile EU citizens are a relatively small subset of the voting population in their host country whose specific information needs regarding political participation go largely unmet;
- Most of the information is supplied on the assumption that users are actively searching for it, instead of being approached and advised proactively (“pull, not push”);
- Data sources, and their credibility, are not always obvious on websites and platforms. For users it is often difficult to recognise websites that are operated by, or linked to authoritative sources, such as EU or member state institutions;
- Comparing the websites in existence it can be stated that EMYs are addressed on the one hand partly but on the other hand not as the single target group, rather more as a subsample of a broader group of individuals aiming either at young and mobile Europeans, young Europeans, mobile Europeans, or as EU citizens in general.

Gaps identified concerning EMYs to connect digitally:

- No linkage across different communication channels or between platforms is offered except for social media plugins:
 - All platforms require authentication to digitally connect with others;
 - Sharing across different platforms, and building communities, is difficult.
- Technologies to connect communities with ownership and transparency are not offered; social media plugins exist but authority and ownership belong to a third party;
- Social media groups might be covering similar content in their discussions but valuable information that would be relevant to all EMYs is not shared across groups.

Other relevant gaps identified:

- The EMY community is fragmented and dispersed; information needs are quite granular and differ for host country;
- There are no resources that specifically cater for EMYs who just arrived in their respective host country and consolidate relevant information in an accessible, user-friendly way;
- Most offerings analysed use English as their main language, only a few translate their content into several European languages (e.g.: opin.me, giveavote.eu);

- At the host country level, information tends to be provided in the national language, with English as the most frequent, and often only, translation made available;
- Many initiatives follow a top-down approach of providing information without offering users the possibility to further exchange about the information received.

5 Conclusions

The state-of-the art analysis shows that information on participation is available but scattered across many sources. Even though the massive amount of information is technically accessible either on the websites or on their linked social media presences it is quite challenging to follow all those sources of information and links to navigate through the several sites that are already available. To focus on the target groups needs and restructure the way information is accessed across different social media channels could help to find relevant information about political engagement possibilities. The target group is diverse and uses different means to communicate. Identified gaps derived from the conducted state of the art analysis show the need to interlink these group to better use existing information. The creation of a common information space is an important result of the technical solution proposed.

This tool can help EMYs to integrate themselves better within local communities in their host countries by enabling them to receive and exchange information as well as connecting digitally with like-minded European mobile youth.

Looking at the websites EMYs can possibly find, it must be emphasized that most of these websites have mainly an informative or consultative character in common. Nevertheless, there are also examples of websites that support cooperative and finally co-decisive participation for EMYs, but the number of such platforms is very limited. The more complex the level of participation is for EMYs, the lower the number of offered platforms is which could be related to high legal and security requirement in the latter cases.

6 High-level architecture of the proposed participation platform

This section provides the first basis and an initial outline of the architecture and functionalities of the prototype platform developed. The state-of-the-art analysis provided the needed overview about the current offering for raising awareness and foster participation of young and mobile students. The focus lies on the identified needs of EMYs derived from the analyses conducted in WP4 activities and the identified gaps based on the state-of-the-art technology. Main objective is to enable EMYs to receive and exchange information as well as to connect digitally with other EMYs. The main issue for EMYs manifests in the fact that the information which is available is scattered among a multitude of different websites. The identified approach to help EMYs to fulfil the three objectives mentioned above, is to build a tool which allows EMYs to distribute curated information provided by trustworthy sources through a bot interface.

The main gap identified concerns the fractured nature of the target group and the scattered of information available. The young and mobile students do not share the same information space therefore the proposed high-level architecture tries to interlink these groups across different channels.

In the following the main functioning of the platform is described:

- To better connect EMYs digitally a messenger-bot (chat bot) will be developed which can be used by all groups interested to be integrated into e.g. a Facebook group. This supports the need to link across platforms and different communication channels.
- Trustworthy stakeholder (like student unions, etc.) can use the bot on their social media presence that is linked to the EMY bot logic which increases the quality and reliability of information circled around.
- A stakeholder that provides curated information on participation publishes a new item through an agreed-upon application programming interface (API), such as a REST interface.
- The new information becomes a news item in the EMY digital space (processing may be required).
- The news item is transferred to our EMY bot logic and thus made available to each “bot” of any stakeholder that has been linked the EMY bot logic, thus offering a shared information space with relevant news to the EMYs.
- Every participant that has added the respective “contact point” bot to their contact list or group will receive a notification about this new item from the bot.

Furthermore, information that is available on websites which promote political engagement for Europeans in general as the European Citizens Initiative or openpetition.eu can be exchanged using the bot to distribute information more precisely in a more customised way for EMYs for those who are interested in starting a petition for example. Additionally, the suggested bot logic can help to connect existing e-participation groups on “Facebook” and “Telegram” to help EMYs an exchange across the borders of those online discussions.

The advantage of interlinked communities across different communication channels is that information only needs to be shared once. This message-based information sharing (e.g. a title and a link to the source of the information) minimizes barriers, the additionally offered discussion space stipulates further participation. The tool should emphasize the transition or the development of a person from a first contact EMY to an EMY with active participation.

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