



1. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

Purpose:

During the political talks, we try to raise awareness among young people about the topic of politics. By asking questions in an informal way, we explore what young people think about this subject. We gain insights into the mindset of young people regarding politics and elections.

Structure:

During the informal conversation, we followed the script and let the young people lead the discussion. When there were uncertainties, we asked follow-up questions to delve deeper into their answers



3. THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

The young people discusses characteristics of good and bad governments. A good government is **forward-thinking, fulfills promises, has a realistic program, and represents diverse groups**. A bad government is **egocentric, lacks long-term vision, and prioritizes self-interest**.

Participants speculate that a short absence of government wouldn't have major effects unless a crisis arises. Opinions on whether leaders care about youth vary, with some believing they are valued for voting power, while others think politicians focus more on older generations. If in charge for a day, participants would **simplify governance, improve spatial planning, and protect nature**.

4. EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

The decision-making process in a country occurs at different levels. At the municipal level, decisions are made by the college of aldermen, the municipal council, and the mayor, with voting and consultation playing key roles. At the national level, bills originate from government proposals and are subject to voting procedures. Understanding how government works is essential to avoiding political naivety.

Media and information sources influence political awareness. While social media provides easy access to news, its reliability is often questioned. Traditional media, official news sites, and municipal sources are seen as more trustworthy. Misinformation, deepfakes, and misleading content, especially through social media algorithms, pose challenges.

Regarding elections, confusion exists about different governmental levels and voting processes. Many people struggle to grasp European elections, voting districts, and the impact of their vote. Despite this, voting is considered crucial, particularly at the local level, where small margins can determine outcomes. Voter awareness remains key to maintaining a functioning democracy.

5. BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

Objective Information & Simplicity

Provide clear, accessible information and simplify the political structure.

More Participation & Transparency

Increase citizen involvement and transparency in policy decisions.

Competence Over Quotas

Focus on abilities rather than gender quotas.

Voting Age

Keep the voting age at 18 for European elections.

Making No Promises

Focus on realistic, achievable goals and transparency.

Objective Information & Participation

Use videos, vlogs, and practical activities to educate young people.

Political Debates & Social Media

Engage young people through debates and social media content. European Politics: Increase awareness and appreciation for European politics.

Mental Well-Being & Climate

Address mental well-being and climate change.

Financial Inequality

Tackle growing financial inequality. Ask leaders about their beliefs, well-being, and approaches to social security and budget deficits, possibly in informal settings. The focus is on simplifying the system, increasing participation, addressing key issues, and making politics more accessible, especially for young people.



2. KEY INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

There are different perspectives on politics, describing it as **unclear, complex, polarizing**, and dependent on **consensus**. People's first exposure to politics varies, from family influences to school education, though many only engage seriously when they must vote.

Politics is seen as crucial for addressing community issues like public transport, affordable housing, youth centers, and social cohesion.

Recognized political figures include **Bart De Wever, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and Elon Musk**, with discussions on their influence. There is also appreciation for hardworking but less-publicized politicians.



6. CLOSING ACTIVITY

The political system is very complicated, even for young people. The local and national political system in Belgium is far too complex for young people to know who does what. Additionally, the European system and European actions are not tangible for young people and therefore not very well known. The young people found it an interesting session. They enjoyed participating and are happy with their involvement. It was also educational to hear the viewpoints and ideas of others.