



Political Talks Report on Youth Perspectives on Political and Electoral Systems

1. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSIONS

The sessions in Kalamaria brought together young participants from 19 to 25 years old, in order to explore their perspective on politics, governance and civil engagement. The conversations uncovered a dual view of politics, influenced mostly by individual experiences during Greece's financial crisis, as a source of disillusionment (corruption, falsehoods, inequality) and a vehicle for positive change (development, inclusiveness, justice). Despite having little academic knowledge of political institutions, participants exhibited a great desire to comprehend and have an impact on them. In addition to suggesting doable changes like young councils, easily accessible civic tools, and more accountable leadership, they underlined the significance of decentralization, transparency, and political education. The sessions demonstrated that young people are not just willing but eager to actively participate in forming their communities and political futures, provided they have the proper assistance and platforms.

2. KEY INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

First exposure to politics: Most participants were introduced to politics via school and family discussions, particularly during the 2010-2018 economic crisis. Student councils were a formative but sometimes disappointing early political experience. One participant, the child of a mayor, grew up immersed in political dialogue.

Issues in the community politics can address: Local concerns included accessibility, transport, education, environment, and youth engagement. Participants expressed skepticism about local government's ability to act due to limited responsibilities and citizen awareness. Specific locations like Aretsou and the coastal front of Kalamaria were cited as needing political attention and redevelopment.



3. THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS

Good governance is defined by: Rule of law, justice, transparency, respect, and citizen-focused action. Politicians should respect the law, serve people's interests, and honor their office.

Bad governance includes: Corruption, nepotism ("our own children"), inequality, and self-interest. Participants strongly criticized the idea that politicians in Greece are above the law, citing immunity and misuse of power. Once asked what would happen if there was no government for a week the initial reactions were humorous ("everything would be fine"), but deeper discussion revealed concerns about: Chaos, anarchy, corruption, and inequality without government. Some imagined societal rebuilding from chaos, with new power structures forming ("structured chaos").

If the participants were in charge for a day, they would prioritize education, justice, healthcare, accessibility, and economic reform. Focus on fair wealth distribution, reducing work hours, and supporting production sectors.



4. EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

Limited knowledge of political processes: Most participants only understood basic electoral mechanics shown during elections. Confusion around MP elections, seat bonuses, and thresholds in the Greek electoral system.

Strong desire to understand government structures: Participants stressed that understanding the system means real engagement. Politics influences everyday life (e.g. education, healthcare, freedoms), making it essential to comprehend. Recognized the need to understand who holds power, how decisions are made, and how to influence them. Political literacy seen as a right



5. BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS

Ideas for a New Political System.

Decentralization: More power and autonomy to local governments. **Increased inclusion:** Citizens would be more engaged if local problems were solved locally.

Transparency & accountability would improve with closer proximity between citizens and decision-makers.

Emphasis on truthfulness in politics and fighting corruption.

First promises if running for office focus on realistic promises:

Safe streets, accessible sidewalks and crossings. Deliver on what was explicitly promised during the campaign.

6. CLOSING ACTIVITY

Participants valued the freedom of expression and open discussion format. The informal setting helped make complex political topics more understandable. Many felt they left with a clearer understanding of the Greek political system, including voting rights, election processes, the function of democratic institutions. For many, it was their first deep dive into political systems.

Participants noticed a lack of organized local initiatives for youth engagement and they called for continuous opportunities to be involved in political life, not just during elections. Youth asked for infrastructure and programs to support political literacy and participation, and expressed readiness to be active political participants, not just passive observers—if given support, space, and tools.