

Overview and assessment of the European Youth Energy Day 2022 Youth policy dialogue with Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson

How to ensure that Europe's future energy independence is sustainable?

Overview

A third edition of the European Youth Energy Day took place on 26 September, on the first day of the **European Sustainable Energy Week** (EUSEW). Held in the context of the **European Year of Youth**, the policy dialogue brought together Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson and 12 young people, who discussed a number of issues around the common theme “How to ensure that Europe's future energy independence is sustainable”.

Organised as a talk show, the Dialogue was hybrid, with some 140 participants onsite and almost 1,000 online. The dialogue was organised as a fully public event. It featured **Dylan Ahern** as moderator and a visual artist, **Paule André**, sketching live on paper the main ideas, highlights and thoughts shared during the Dialogue.



Moreover, during the whole session the physical and online audience was encouraged to interact by sending comments to the discussions of each group via Sli.do.

The full recording of the Youth Policy Dialogue is available online (<https://youtu.be/q2H2LhkXYkc>).

Promotion

The session was promoted with the hashtag **#Energy4Youth**, also in use for other related activities carried out by DG ENER and partners (together with the event hashtag **#EUSEW2022** and the official hashtag for the European Year of Youth). This hashtag had an estimated reach of 75.1K users.

The Dialogue was also promoted on social media by organisations such as Youth Forum and Fridays 4 Future (both present at the Youth Policy Dialogue), the moderator's work account (DeKiesmannen) and the Commissioner's account.

A **wrap up news article** with the event recordings highlights (including the Youth Policy Dialogue) was published after the event.

Topics discussed

The discussions between Commissioner Simson and the young participants were structured around four energy-related topics:

- “The energy transition within the current geopolitical context”
- “How to steer energy innovation and action on the ground”
- “How to ensure the sustainability of energy investments”
- “The importance of citizens’ engagement in the energy transition”



During their interventions, the young participants expressed their concern with the current energy crisis, and the need for diversifying the energy resources while ensuring sustainability for the climate and Europe’s energy future. A topic which received extra attention from several participants, was the Commission’s delegated act on taxonomy.

Special focus was given on the importance of engaging citizens to the clean energy transition. Steering

innovation on the ground, by promoting energy communities, incentivising research and investing on education on relevant energy fields, are perceived as key factors to achieve Europe’s energy neutrality.

The President of the European Youth Forum, Silja Markkula presented a comprehensive proposal for a Youth Test: *“Young people are asking to be considered when policies that are impacting their and future generations’ lives are made, since they have the longest to live with the consequences of any legislation adopted or decision made. Every new law and policy would be assessed for its impact on youth”.*



The event was very successful and appreciated by the participants, as their testimonials in social media attest. Few relevant takeaways to mention:

- *‘Only united behind science will we find a solution’* – Federica Gasbarro, UN ambassador for Climate.
- *‘As a young generation we are massively impacted by the decisions that our leaders are taking every day’* – Silja Markkula, European Youth Forum.
- *‘Energy security is renewable energy. This is exactly what it means. It is important that we are looking 10, 20, 30 years into the future.’* – Tobias Holle, Fridays for Future

Main takeaways

The session mainly foresaw the participants to ask questions from the Commissioner. Although Commissioner Simson addressed her own question to the participants, the total time allowed for young people to provide their input was limited. This approach allowed the youth to have quite a comprehensive overview of Commissioners' opinion on different energy policies, however provided limited opportunities to understand better the concerns and solutions the participants had. Any future event should provide a better balance between the "Q & A" to allow for a meaningful dialogue between the Commission and the participants.

For the 2023 edition of the **European Youth Energy Day**, the Commission will work on the elaborated idea of organising a youth policy dialogue with more interactive elements between participants, onsite and online, and with more space available for young people to express their views in the content of energy policy making.

It is very important to make sure that youth interested in energy issues from all Member States is offered the possibility to participate in this annual event. For future dialogues, particular attention will be given to a transparent selection and recruitment process. Commission may select delegates for the dialogue through open calls organised by the respective EC Representations. The youth panels should be reflecting the diversity of the European society.