The Europe Kids Want

Sharing the views of children and
young people across Europe

Autumn 2019

About 'The Europe Kids Want' project

Children and young people have a key stake in Europe's future. They MATTER. Not only because it is their future that is affected by today's decisions, but also because their involvement in decision-making helps them to understand democratic values and fundamental freedoms which underpin the European project. They are voters of tomorrow and change-makers of today.

As European leaders debate the future of Europe, **UNICEF and Eurochild** launched an online opinion poll (survey), inviting children and young people to share their views on the Europe they want. 'Europe Kids Want' gathered children's and young people's experience of family-life, school, society and their thoughts on Europe.

Understanding the results of the 'Europe Kids Want' poll

We assessed the responses of 19,933 children and young people from over 48 countries in Europe. The findings shared in this brochure are based on the responses received within the period of one year (July 2018 – June 2019).

Process and results

The 'Europe Kids Want' online poll was developed by children's rights experts and tested with focus groups of children themselves. It was available in 29 languages and questions were written in child-friendly language to encourage responses from under 18-year-olds. No personal data were collected in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679. The opinion poll is not representative of a specific sample, group or country nor exhaustive in terms of coverage of the targeted population or of the issues children may face in Europe and beyond. Findings of the survey are not necessarily providing comprehensive, complete, accurate or up to date information.

This brochure offers a glimpse into the views of the children and young people who responded to this consultative process between 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019. It is meant to support decision makers understand children's views on key issues that affect them.

Who's involved?

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. The UNICEF Office for Relations with EU Institutions in Brussels works together with the EU in all areas relevant to UNICEF's work, promoting children's rights. For more information about UNICEF and its work, visit: ***www.unicef.org***

Eurochild advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policymaking. We are a network of organisations working with and for children throughout Europe, striving for a society that respects the rights of children. We influence policies, build internal capacities, facilitate mutual learning and exchange practice and research. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the foundation of all our work. ***www.eurochild.org***

Special thanks goes to the Child Rights Intergroup in the European Parliament and the organisations involved in the Child Rights Action Group.

The children and young people who responded to 'Europe Kids Want' are...

- **Age range of respondents:**

9 years or younger	**5.1%**
10-14 years	**38.8%**
15-17 years	**37%**
18 - 30 years	**19.1%**

- Total number of children and young people: **19,933**

- Respondents mostly identified as: **Female (62.9%)**

- Number of responses to questions: **55,645**

- **Over 48 countries represented** (mostly in Europe)

52% of children and young people worry about **not finding a job**

Children and young people aged 15 and above are most worried about not finding a job. With 43.6% youth unemployment rate in Greece and 38.6% in Spain, concerns are visible among children as young as 10 years old, in many European countries. Children from Italy, Romania and Poland fear the most about not finding a job.

Do you think what you learn at school is preparing you for your future ?

Age group 10-14

Not very much	11.3%
Not at all	3.4%

Age group 15-17

Not very much	24.7%
Not at all	6.3%

Age group 18-30

Not very much	31.9%
Not at all	9.4%

In response to the question, it is noted that as children get older, the less likely they feel that school is preparing them for their future.

When asked about their fears for the future, the possibility of war and violence where they live and not being able to find a job worries children and young people the most. Stopping bullying and making sure no one is treated badly because of being different are topping the most important issues for children to feel safer at school. Greater awareness of climate change and environmental degradation appears to affect the younger generations. Results also show that only a mere 11.6% do not worry about their future at all. It is interesting to note that the aspects that children and young people are most worried about are the same areas where they think that the European Union could be supportive.

Violence and not being able to find a job
at the top of children's fears

Thinking about your future, which of these things are you most worried about? (Choose a maximum of 3)

Not being able to find a job	51.6%
The possibility of war or terrorist attacks	47.2%
Climate change	38%
Not having enough friends or family members to support me in the future	22.9%
There is too much violence where I live	18.4%
Drugs and alcohol are used too much by people around me	16.6%
I'm not worried about my future	11.6%
Too many people from other countries moving to the country where I live	8.8%

2/3 of children feel positive towards people from other countries

Children and young people are curious and welcoming towards people from a different country, with a different language, culture or religion living in their area. When asked about how they would react if people from a different background come to live in their area, the majority of kids would be curious and would want to make the newcomers feel welcome.

Tolerance and being treated equally features prominently amongst the expectations of children when dealing with the online environment or in response to how people from other countries or backgrounds should be treated.

How would you feel if people from a different country, with a different language, culture or religion, came to live in your area?

I would be curious to get to know them	36.6%
I would want to make sure they feel welcome	30.4%
I would feel that if people came to live in my area they need to learn the language and follow the traditions of my area	19.2%
I would feel uncomfortable if they would come to live in my area	3.6%

Making new friends and speaking the local language are the two most important issues for children and young people feeling at home when asked if they had to go and live in a new place. They thought that these were the most important things in a human relationship.

If you had to move to a new place where you didn't know anybody, what are the 2 most important things that would help you feel at home? (Choose a maximum of 2)

Making new friends	62.6%
Being able to speak the language spoken at the new place	56.2%
Being able to go to school	27.9%
Being with others who speak my language or come from a similar background	25.6%
Taking part in sports or other after-school activities	17.1%

What do you think would make your school a safer place for you /your schoolmates? (Choose a maximum of 3)
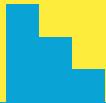
Making sure no one is treated badly because of being different	**59.7%**
Stop bullying	**43%**
Making sure no one can use or buy drugs or alcohol in or around the school	**34.3%**
Better school buildings and grounds	**33.5%**
My school is already a safe place	**23.7%**
More and better security, such as cameras at the school gate	**20.1%**

6 out of 10 children think that treating different people equally would make **school a better place**
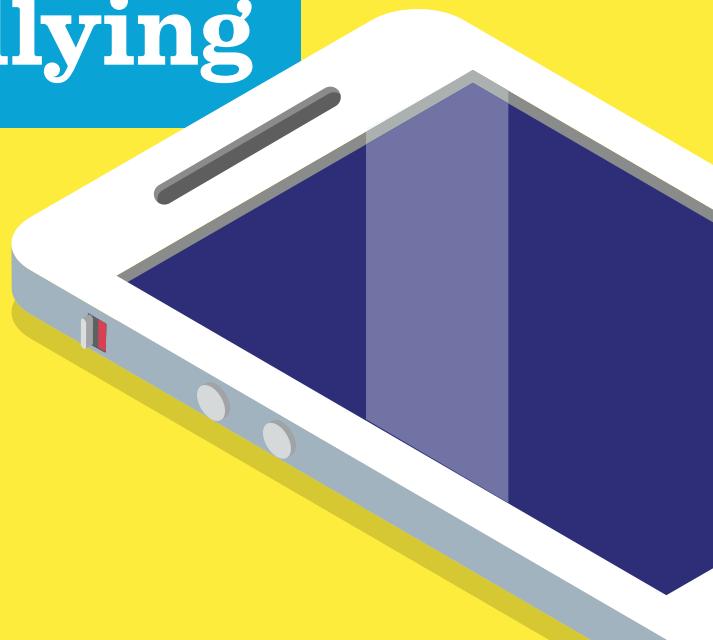
Worries about being online:

Other people can say cruel things or post unkind videos or photos	**47.3%**
I'm afraid that other people find out things about me I don't want them to know	**36.6%**
People I chat with can pretend to be somebody they're not	**33.7%**

Children and young people **of all ages** are worried about **online bullying**

They fear being targeted by cruel messages, unkind photos or videos of themselves.

2/3 children are unhappy with the way cities or towns engage with them

While children are aware of their rights (87% of respondents have heard of children's rights), they do not always feel that their opinions are heard by adults when making decisions. Among all settings, family, school, cities/towns, children and young people feel that city and local decision-makers listen the least to their views. 43.2% of respondents are unhappy with the way cities or towns engage with them.

Do you feel adults listen to you and your opinions when making decisions?

	Always	Sometimes	Never
In my family	44.8%	50.9%	4.28%
In my school	16.1%	67.1%	16.7%
In my city/town	7.1%	44.6%	48.3%

The Europe we want
"**41% of children** think the EU makes their **life better.**"

Children of all age groups are aware of the European Union. Only 4 % of children and young people responding to the poll do not know the EU. And 41% of all respondents think the EU makes their life better.

Top three recommendations for the EU
What should the EU do to improve your life or future opportunities?

1	Helping to keep peace in the world	54.7%
2	Protecting the environment	47.4%
3	Helping to make sure everyone is treated equally	41.9%

Realising the 'Europe Kids Want'
- What the European Union can do

1. Since 52% of children are worried about their future employability, the EU needs to invest in reducing inequality and breaking the cycle of disadvantage through child-centred policies such as education reform, early childhood development, health promotion, community development and family strengthening. This commitment to children's rights has to be reflected in the EU's internal and external policies in a comprehensive way with links to the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. 2/3 of children in Europe are unhappy with the way their towns/cities listen to them. Decision makers must involve children and young people in global, European, national and local policy dialogues. The EU must set up mechanisms to enable children to participate in its decision-making processes. Children are important drivers of change and should be empowered to participate in decision-making as key partners for the realisation of more inclusive societies.

3. 60% of children in Europe are online all the time. At the same time, technology is an enormous challenge and an opportunity for children and young people. 47% of children are worried that other people can say cruel things online. Children and young people are exposed to various forms of violence, with bullying online and offline having an increasing impact on their lives. The EU has already taken steps towards their protection – in family, at school, online, GDPR – and should continue to raise awareness, share good practices to prevent violence and abuse, particularly in schools, online bullying and hate speech. Fake news and artificial intelligence are new areas where the EU has to ensure children's rights are safeguarded.

4. Two thirds of children and young people are positive about diversity, which is one of the core values of the EU. The EU and all the EU Member States have committed to promote and protect the rights of the child. It must therefore ensure that all children are protected, especially the most vulnerable, regardless of their origin or migration status.

5. Climate change is among the top three worries of children and 47% of children believe that the EU has a role in protecting the environment. The EU must integrate climate change into poverty reduction efforts and national development planning, aiming at reducing the vulnerability to climate impacts and respecting the Paris agreement on climate change to secure a healthy future for all children.

To find out more about
'The Europe Kids Want' visit
**www.childrightsmanifesto.eu/
europe-kids-want/**