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# Discover EU



**Youth participation** is about *ACTION* and *VOICE*, and Discover EU activities can focus on both of these things, or just one.



**VOICE** - Young people expressing their views with the aim of encouraging decision makers to make changes.



**ACTION** - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them.

## The tools in this module focus on:

### How to improve

participation through an individual Discover EU activity

### How to create

participation experiences for young people in a group Discover EU activity

### How to make sure

How to continue with youth participation after the Discover EU activity



If you are not sure where to start and feel it might be too much for you alone, please bear in mind that there are other young people around you that might have experience in a Discover EU activity and that have gone through some of the issues you are now facing. They may well be near you in a local Eurodesk or EU Info Centre, at the [European Youth Portal](#) or on the [DiscoverEU Official Facebook group](#). Don't be shy to ask for support!

# How to improve participation through an individual Discover EU activity?

A good place to start is at the very beginning – once you’ve decided that you are interested in discovering the EU by traveling or by spending some time getting to know one or more countries that you’ve never lived in.

## Designing participation experience

A good place to start is by exploring what youth participation is about (check the [What is youth participation?](#) module for more details). Also, there is more than one way in which young people participate and to what degree they feel confident and motivated to participate (check the [Young people leading projects](#) module for more details). The Discover EU activity can be a chance for you to experience, test, improve and explore different participation opportunities. This tool can help you decide on that and start thinking about different programme elements you need to design into your adventure.



Reflect upon the following questions:

### Looking at different groups that you are part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions?

☐

Are you consulted about decisions?

☐

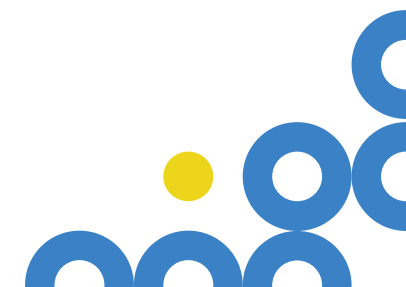
Are your ideas taken into account and are you able to influence the decision-making?

☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others?

☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions?

☐



## Designing participation experience



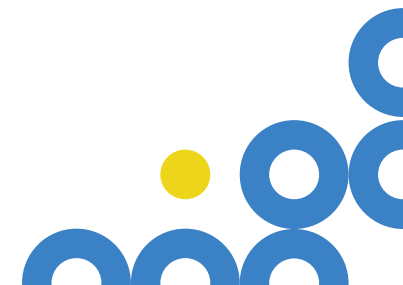
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**In which of those situations do you feel most comfortable?**



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**Would you like to change something?**



## Designing participation experience

Based on what you have discovered and decided, you can review the programme of the Discover EU activity and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing you with participation experiences, in relation to your areas of interest, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following to your programme while in the localities you are visiting during the Discover EU activity:



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**Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;**



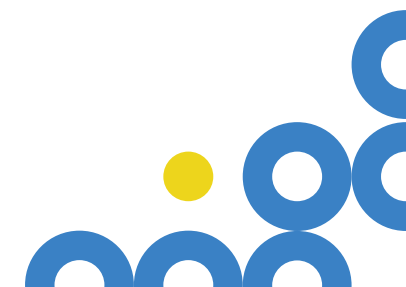
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**Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;**



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**Asking EuroDesk and/or the EU Info Centre to support you in organising a meet-up with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest;**





# Evaluating participation needs and interests



Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your Discover EU activity to be, you can look into the support mechanisms at your disposal. Look at the following questions and document your ideas:



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**Why are you interested in Discover EU?**



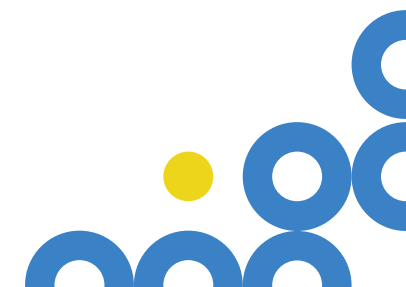
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**What would you like to accomplish by joining the Discover EU activity?**



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**What might be a genuine obstacle to your involvement?**





## Evaluating participation needs and interests



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**What kind of support would you need to be able to fully participate?**



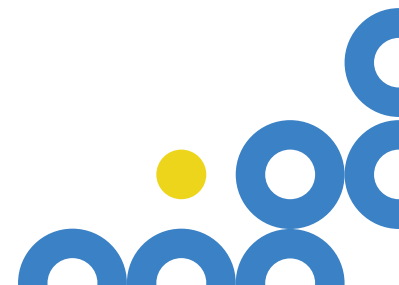
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**How much would you like to/could you personally invest in this activity if the support is provided?**



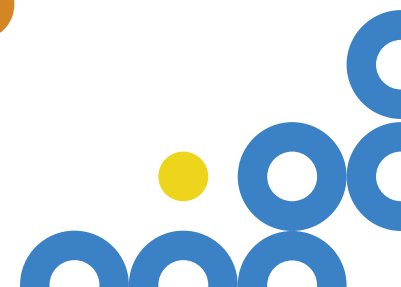
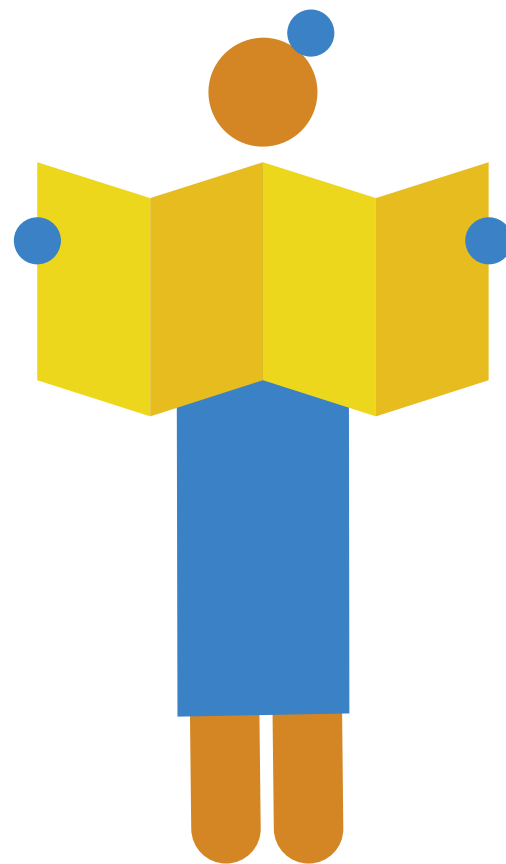
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**Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that you have identified.  
Perhaps you may address some of those on your own, and for some others you might need external support.  
Who could you ask to help you overcome them?**



# How to create participation experiences for young people in a group Discover EU activity

There are different ways you can use the Discover EU programme – on your own or as part of a small group. If you are interested in Discover EU as part of a group, start by sharing your idea with your peers. There are various channels to do this, including face-to-face meetings, social networks, online communication tools and info-boards, among others, and you can also be creative in how you do it, including creating an Instagram story, poster or video. Use your imagination and think about what your peers will find most interesting. Think about what they would be motivated to discover in the EU, and ask them about that.







# Designing a participation experience

In order for young people to have a meaningful participation experience, it is crucial that they first understand what youth participation is about (check the [What is youth participation?](#) module for more details). Also, there is more than one way in which young people participate and to what degree they feel confident and motivated to participate (check the Module [Young people leading projects](#) module for more details). With your Discover EU group you can decide if you want your Discover EU experience to be a participatory one. This tool can help you both to decide on that and to start thinking about different programme elements you need to design into your joint adventure.

Everyone in the group who is about to embark on a Discover EU project could reflect on the following questions:

## Looking at different groups that you are part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions?

☐

Are you consulted about decisions?

☐

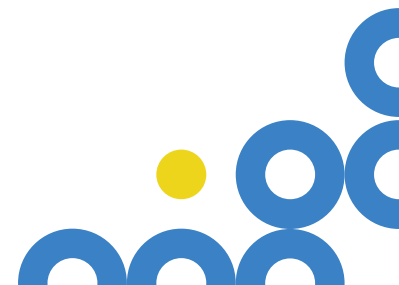
Are your ideas taken into account and you are able to influence decision-making?

☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others?

☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions?

☐



## Designing participation experience



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**In which of those situations you feel most comfortable?**




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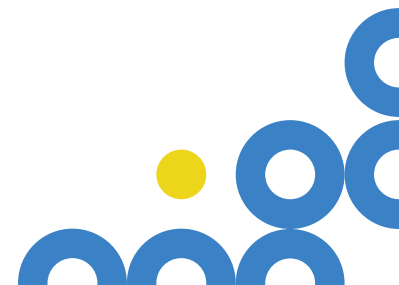
**How would you like the decision-making power to be in your Discover EU group?**

Could you imagine challenging yourself and going for other degrees of participation compared to where you usually find yourself?



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**Check the  Degrees of Participation and see where you feel confident and what you would like to experience, test and improve when it comes to different participation opportunities in this Discover EU activity.**



## **Designing participation experience**

Based on what you have discovered and decided, you can review the programme of the Discover EU activity and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing group members with participation experiences, in relation to their areas of interest, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following to your programme while in the localities you are visiting during the Discover EU activity:



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**Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;**



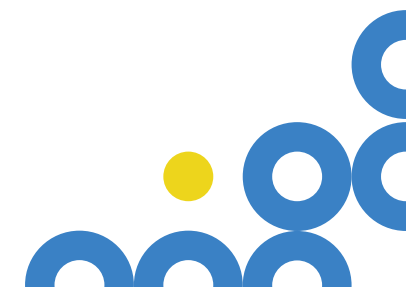
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**Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;**



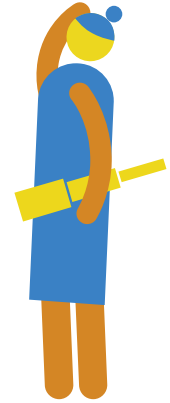
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**Asking EuroDesk and/or EU Info Centre to support you in organising a meet-up with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest;**





# Evaluating group's participation needs and interests



Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your group Discover EU activity to be, you can look into ways to understand and support each other to accomplish that. Everyone in the group could benefit from looking at the following questions and sharing their ideas:



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**Why are you interested in Discover EU?**



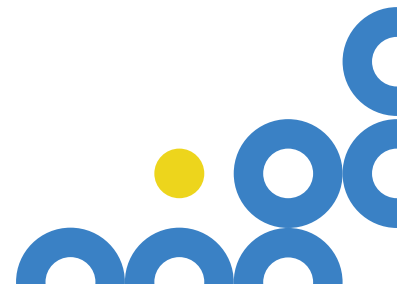
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**What would you like to accomplish by joining the Discover EU activity?**



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**What really might be an obstacle for your involvement?**





## Evaluating group's participation needs and interests



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**What kind of support you would need to be able to fully participate?**



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**How much would you like to/could you personally invest in this activity if the support is provided?**



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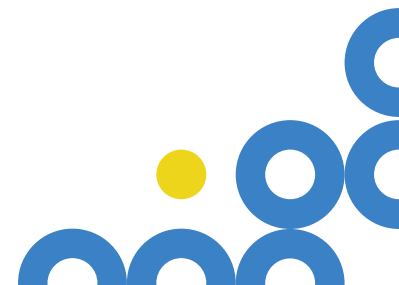
**Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that were shared in the group.**

Perhaps you can support them in overcoming those.

What kind of support could you offer to others in the group?

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Depending on what your group has agreed about their participation, you could apply following tool for informing, consulting and sharing decision-making with group members.





# Informing, consulting and sharing decisions with group members



You need an **information and/or consultation channel**. Agree on the most appropriate communication channel and then use this channel to inform and/or consult on any relevant milestones and issues.

**Not sure what to consult on?** The following are possible suggestions; however, it really depends on the specific Discover EU activity, as well as the interest and competences of the involved group members.



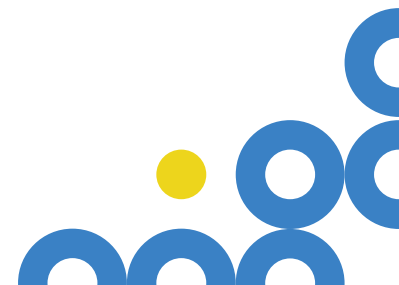
**Preparation phase** - You could discuss important organisational and logistical decisions pertaining to the travel itinerary, venue, timetable, activities to undertake, sites to visit and more.



**Implementation phase** - You could set up a daily reflection meeting to talk about how things have gone that day and to reflect on participation experience and learning points. You can also use such a meeting to consult about decisions you need to make regarding the programme and/or technical arrangements of subsequent days. Furthermore, you could ask each other to share any inspirational moments and ask for ideas and interests in being involved in other activities after you have completed the Discover EU activity.

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**Online tools and platforms** for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group does not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run-up or during the activity. In this case, you could use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions. Explore the participation resource pool to find more info about [internet safety](#).



# How to continue with youth participation after the Discover EU

Your Discover EU activity might be developed in a participatory manner and/or may have been a participatory activity. This already means that you had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for other such experiences.

In either case, you can start by looking at the ideas for follow-up of your Discover EU activity. You could plan activities that would further provide you with opportunities to learn and experience, as well as to raise a voice and take action.



## Planning next steps



After the Discover EU activity, depending on your group experience and topics of interest, you may think about:

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### **Organising meetings with group members to plan joint actions:**

present your experience and learning from Discover EU activity to other young people;

raise your VOICE or take an ACTION on the topic that interests all of you;

- you could check [Erasmus+](#) and opportunities for

  - starting a youth participation activity;

  - initiating youth exchange on the topic of your interest;

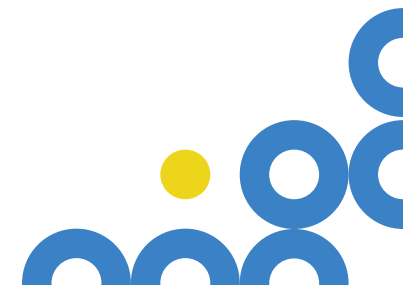
- you could check [European Solidarity Corps](#) and opportunities

for implementation of other solidarity projects and/or volunteering activities;

- you could check the opportunities offered by [Eurodesk](#) platform;

- you could check the [European Youth Portal](#) and the opportunities

for the participation in the [EU youth dialogue](#).





## Planning next steps



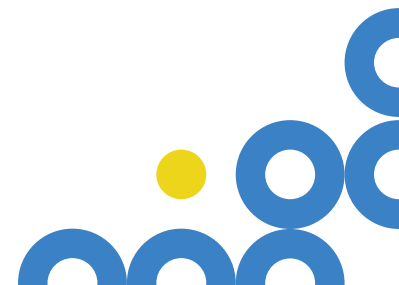
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**Conducting research into youth organisations working on topics you find interesting and initiating contact with them in order to explore ways in which you could come together and cooperate on some activities of interest;**



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**Agreeing with group members to share information with each other about youth organisations and their initiatives, campaigns and events that you find and believe might be interesting to join in and participate.**





# Where are you at now?



## Self-assessment for Discover EU activity

You can use this self-assessment tool, both before you even start your Discover EU activity – to know what you should pay attention to – or after you have implemented it and used some of the tools proposed in this module, in order to assess how it worked for you.

### Self-assessment for Discover EU activity

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#### **How well do you know what youth participation is?**

Check it against what is explained in the [What is youth participation?](#) module.



#### **How well do you understand different degrees of youth participation?**

#### **What do you have least experience with?**

Check it against what is explained in the [Young people leading projects](#) module.



## Self-assessment for Discover EU activity



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To what extent do you **feel competent** to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION **during** the Discover EU activity?



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To what extent do you **feel motivated** to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION **during** the Discover EU activity?



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To what extent do you **feel motivated** to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION **after** the Discover EU activity?

