



erasmus+ and  
european solidarity  
corps agency

# Walk the talk: promoting democratic participation in Erasmus+ VET

Sepie NVT Event– 01.07.2025

**Presented by Joana Freitas (SALTO Participation & Information)**



# ABOUT US: SALTO Participation & Information



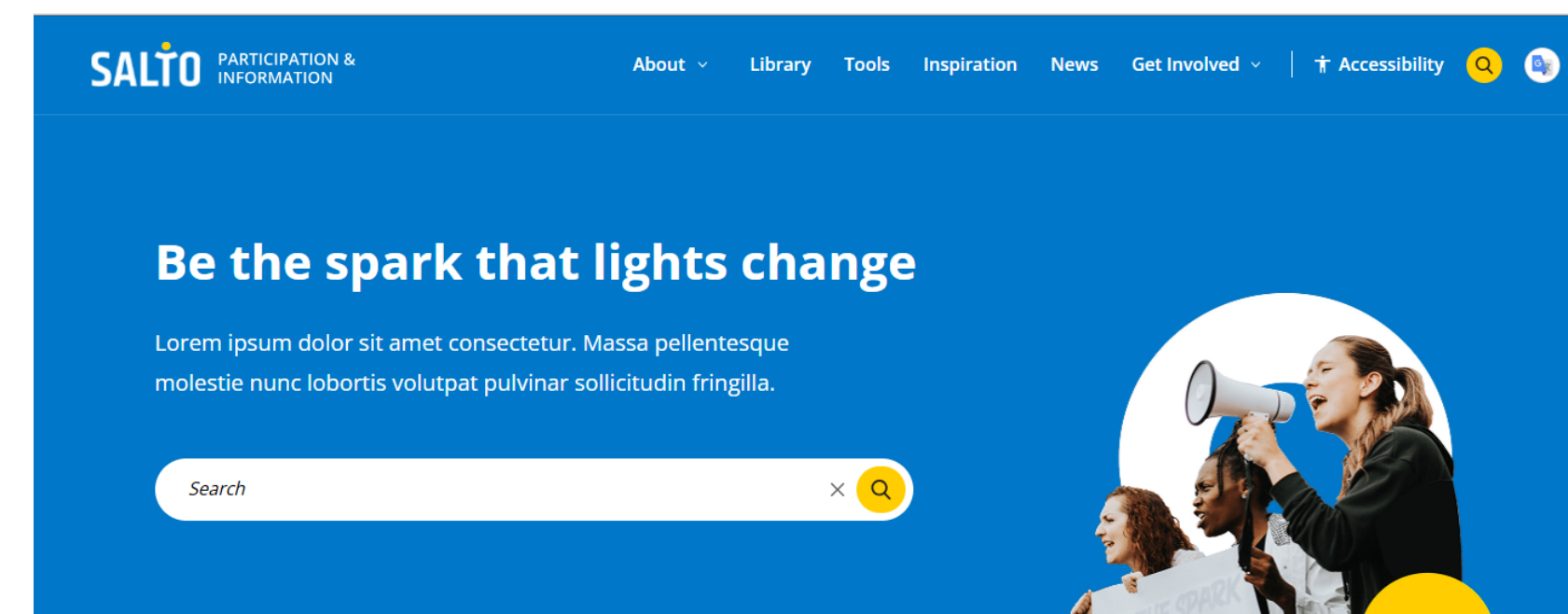
- ❖ **Main goal:** inform, support, and inspire NAs, beneficiarries and other stakeholders in using E+ and to promote meaningful democratic participation guided by EU values
- ❖ **One of 11** RCs (25 years of SALTO!), founded in 2018, active on all sectors (inc. VET) since 2023
- ❖ **Resource Center** mandated by European Commission to guide the implementation the "Participation priority" based in Tallinn, Estonia (HARNO)



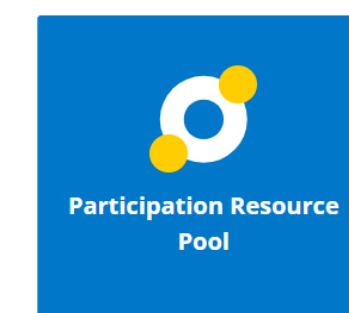


# ABOUT US: Main activities

- ❖ Capacity-building of National Agencies
- ❖ NA Participation Contact Points Network
- ❖ Youth Participation Strategy
- ❖ Direct support to EC on our priority
- ❖ Knowledge hub: **participationpool.eu**
- ❖ Resources creation & dissemination
- ❖ Support to events and projects on participation of Erasmus+ stakeholders



## What is it all about



Participation Resource  
Pool



Participation in  
democratic life



Participation in the  
Programmes



SALTO Participation &  
Information



# ABOUT THE PRIORITY: What does it mean?

## „PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE....

Is the **RIGHT** of **citizens** (EU Treaty, 1992) to **influence** societal decision making on matters affecting them **and be active** in their communities by:

- **freely expressing their views** (i.e. voting, contacting your representatives, participating in citizen consultations, being part of a council, etc)
- **engaging** in activities aimed at social change (such as being part of a collective, stand for election as a representative, **volunteering**, protesting, boycotting, wearing political symbols, etc.)









# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY „PARTICIPATION“?



Coordown | No Decision Without Us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZnq04yP8-I>

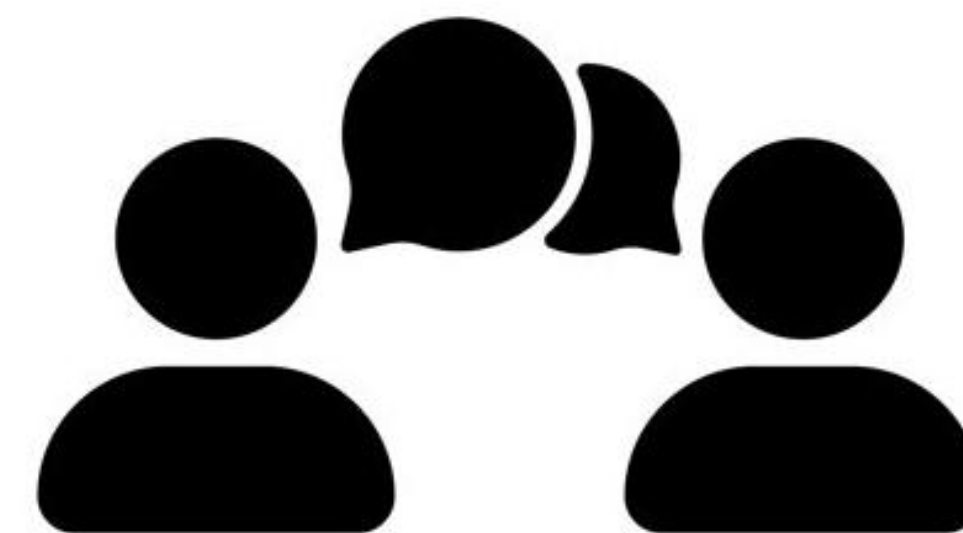
## DEBRIEF: INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION AND SHARING DECISION-MAKING POWER

Do you include...

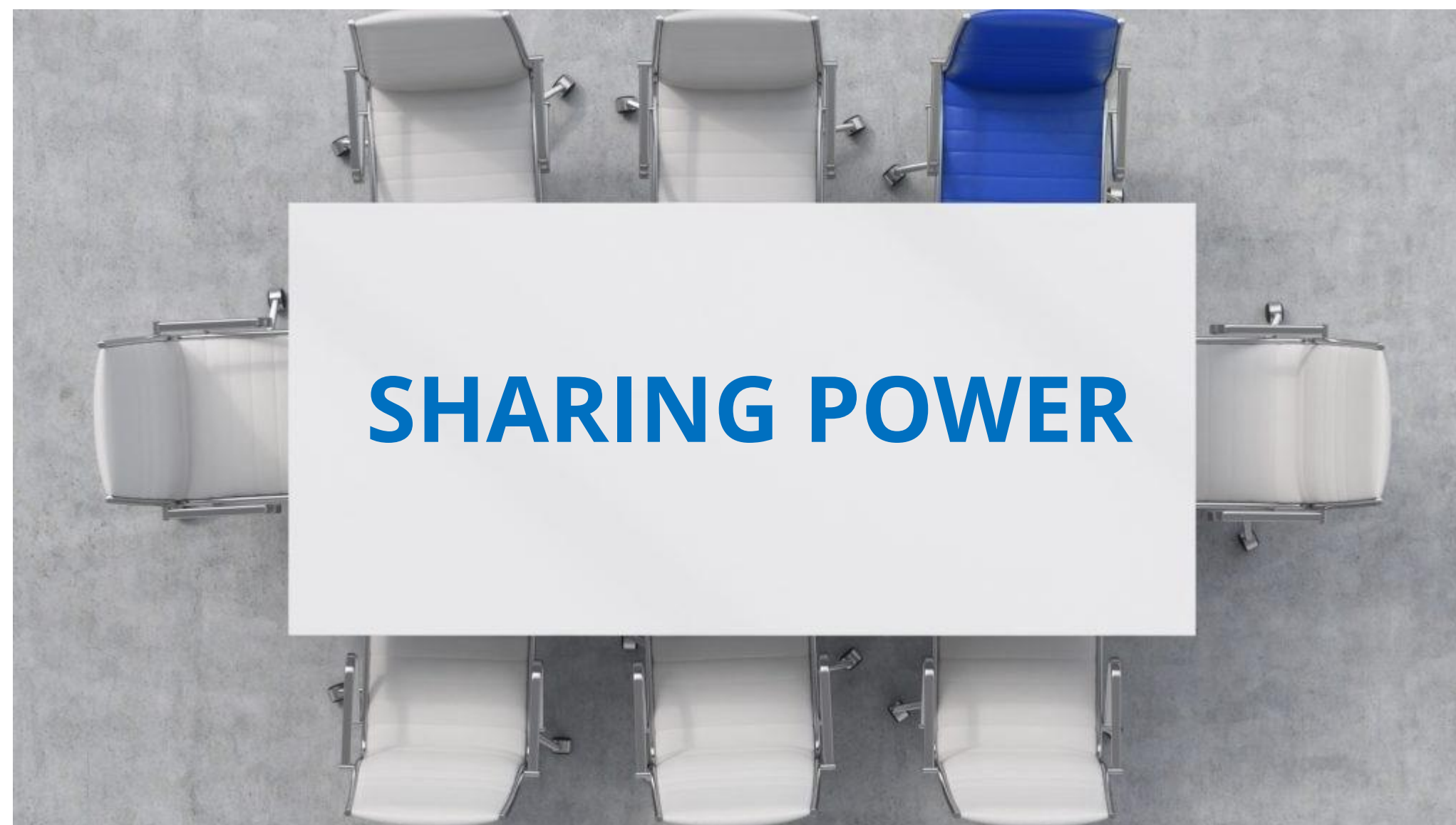
- ❖ Your students
- ❖ Your staff
- ❖ Your colleagues
- ❖ Your partners (companies, municipality, etc)

...in decision-making processes? How?

**Share with the person next to you! (5 mins)**



# INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION



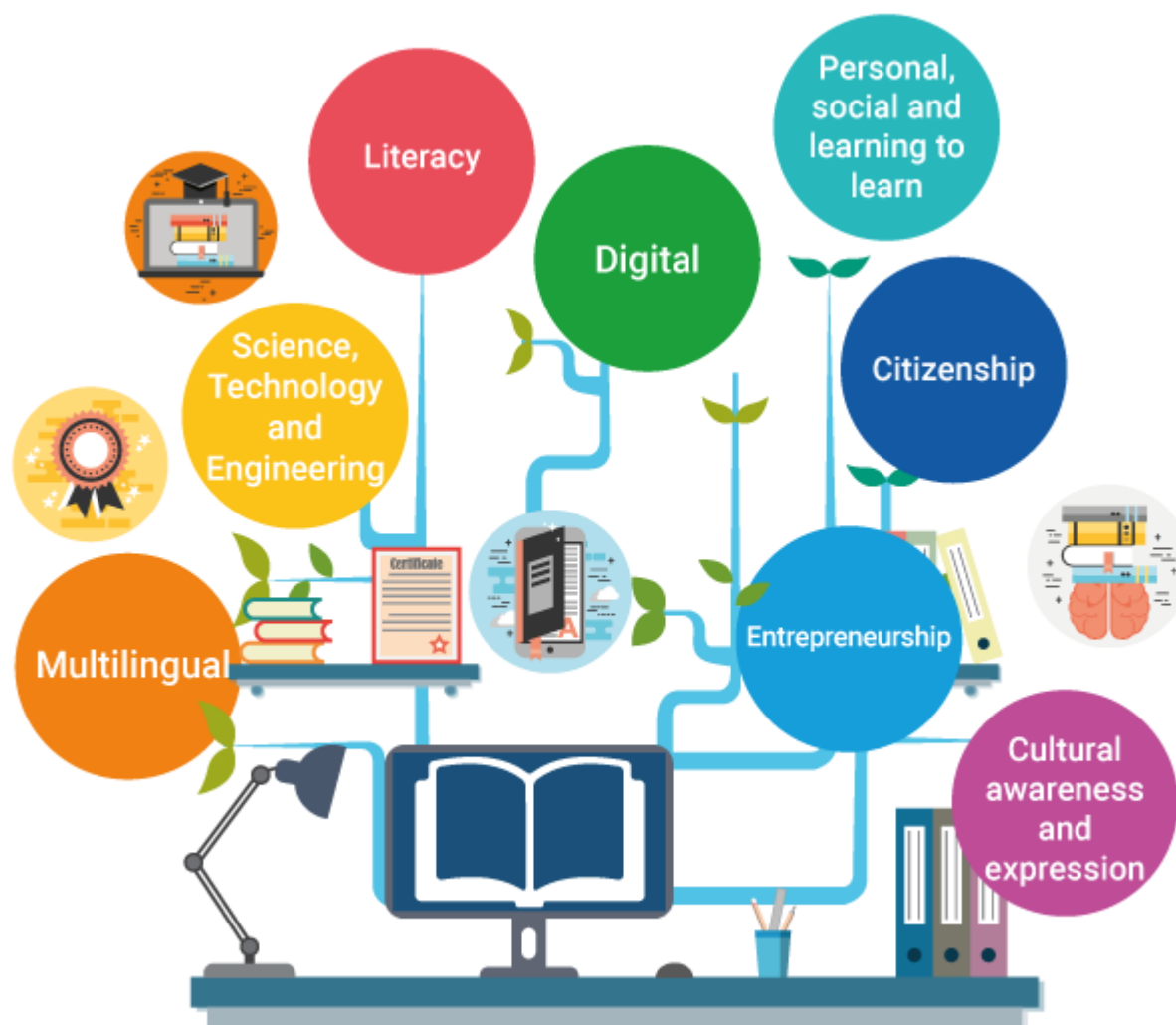
... requires providing people with:

- **the means**
- **the space**
- **the opportunity**
- **and, where necessary, the support**

... to influence decisions that impact their life



# ABOUT THE PRIORITY: Why does it matter?



- **Participation as a right** (e.g. Treaty of the EU, 1992 and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).
- **Increasing the opportunities for participation as one of the goals of education** (e.g., Dewey, Freire)
- **Active citizenship as one of the EU Lifelong Competences**
- **Education and training to contribute to the future of our democracies and the EU** ([Council of the EU Recommendation 2023](#))



## SOME RELEVANT REFERENCES IN VET

### Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET)

„Vocational education and training programmes **offer a balanced mix of vocational including technical skills (...) and other life skills** which provide strong foundations for resilience, lifelong learning, lifelong employability, social inclusion, **active citizenship and personal development;**“

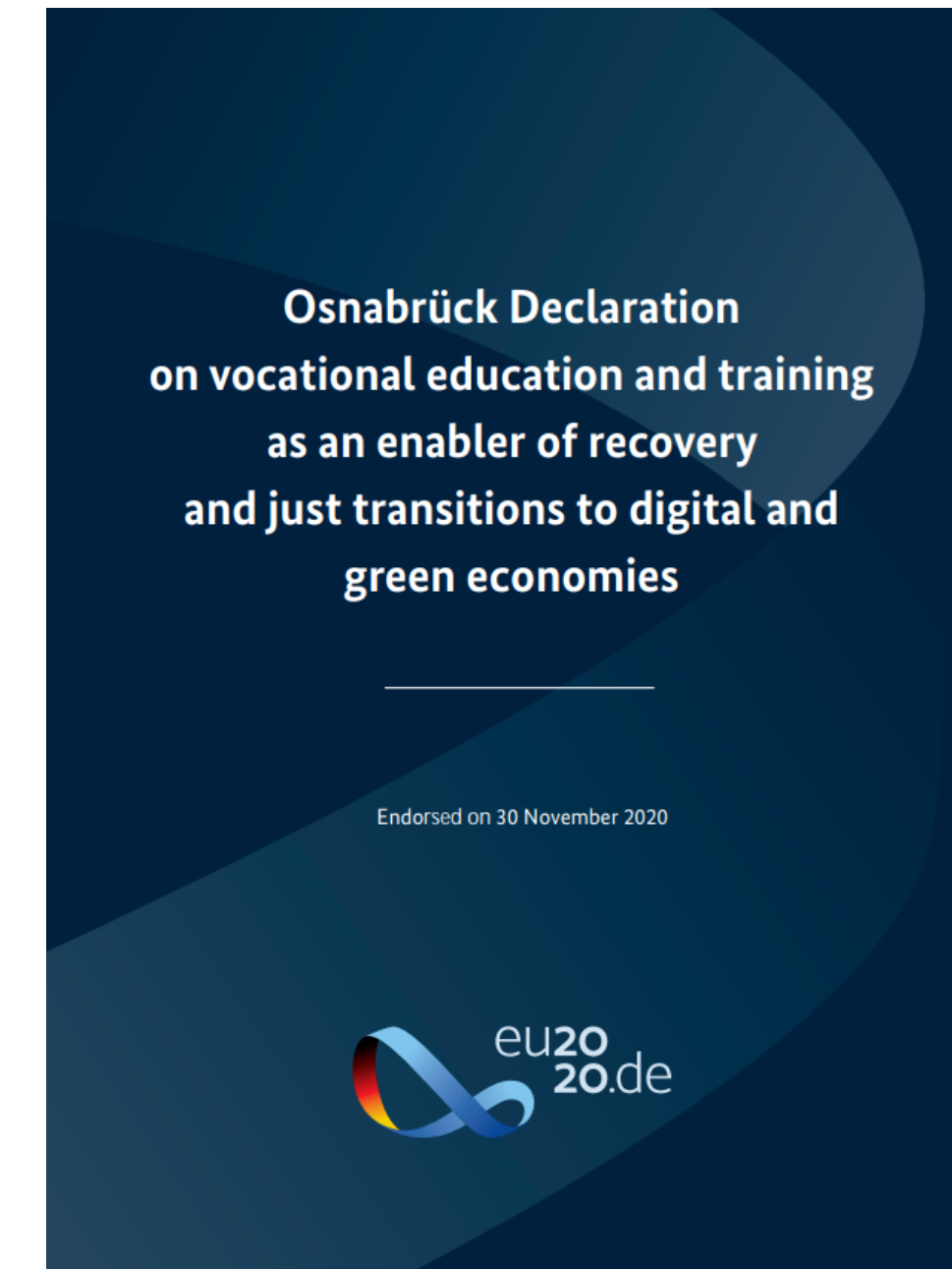
[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC\\_2020\\_417\\_R\\_0001](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2020_417_R_0001)

### Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) 2021/C 66/01

#### Priority area 1 - Quality, equity, inclusion and success in education and training

„xii) Promoting civic, intercultural, and social competences, mutual understanding and respect, and ownership of democratic values and fundamental rights at all levels and types of education and training. „

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b004d247-77d4-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1>



„Excellent VET contributes to strengthening democratic citizenship and European values“

[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck\\_declaration\\_eu2020.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck_declaration_eu2020.pdf)



## ABOUT THE PRIORITY: How can Erasmus+ help promote democratic participation?

- Erasmus+ can **provide organisations and informal groups of young people with funding** for creating the adequate contexts and opportunities for participation
- Projects can lead **to increased social and intercultural communication competence and feeling of a European identity**
- Activities can be designed for **experiencing a democratic culture, and developing** critical thinking and media literacy and other **skills**





# HOW TO INCLUDE DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN ERASMUS+ VET PROJECTS?

**TELL ME**  
AND I WILL FORGET  
**SHOW ME**  
AND I MAY REMEMBER  
**INVOLVE ME**  
AND I WILL UNDERSTAND

- As a project topic (ex. KA2 projects)
- Through project activities (i.e. explore Léargas' [Trasnversal Skills Toolkit](#) for inspiration)
- During the project life cycle (ex. students leading planning or dissemination activities)
- As part of your organisational culture (i.e. explore more on Council of Europe [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in Vocational Education and Training \(VET\)](#))



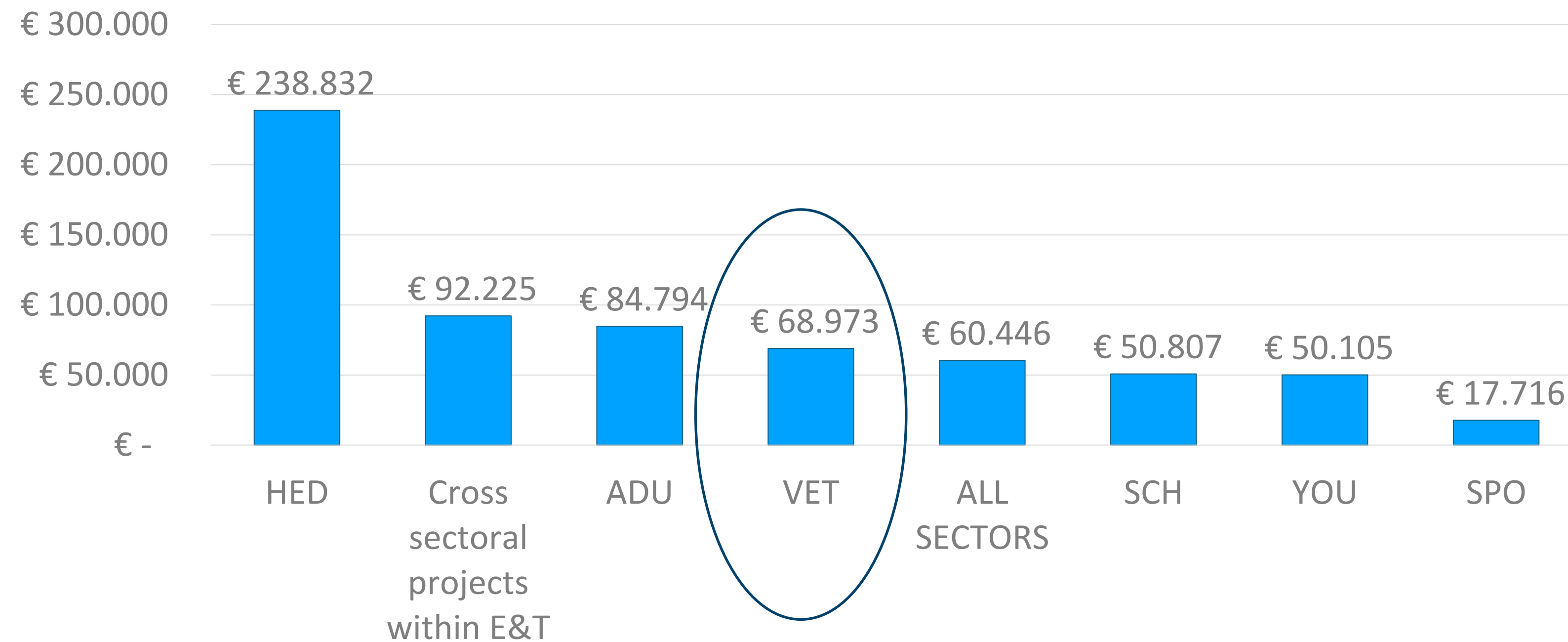


# MAIN TOPICS IN ERASMUS+ VET PROJECTS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Topic	All	VET
<b>European identity, citizenship and values*</b>	<b>45.26%</b>	<b>56.02%</b>
<b>Awareness about the European Union*</b>	<b>20.14%</b>	<b>38.12%</b>
Work-based learning	1.67%	19.14%
Teaching and learning of foreign languages	6.41%	15.12%
Employability	1.62%	14.04%
Cooperation between educational institutions and business	1.81%	13.27%
Digital skills and competences	8.16%	10.80%
Key competences development	6.62%	10.80%
<b>Inclusion, promoting equality and non-discrimination</b>	<b>7.15%</b>	<b>10.19%</b>
<b>Democracy and inclusive democratic participation*</b>	<b>35.97%</b>	<b>9.88%</b>
New learning and teaching methods and approaches	7.57%	8.49%
Overcoming skills mismatch and addressing the needs of the labour market	0.59%	5.71%
Digital content, technologies and practices	4.32%	5.71%
Equal access and transition to labour market	0.96%	5.56%

# BUDGET FOR ERASMUS+ VET PROJECTS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Average Budget per Project in Erasmus+ 2021-2023 Funded Initiatives  
by Sub-sector

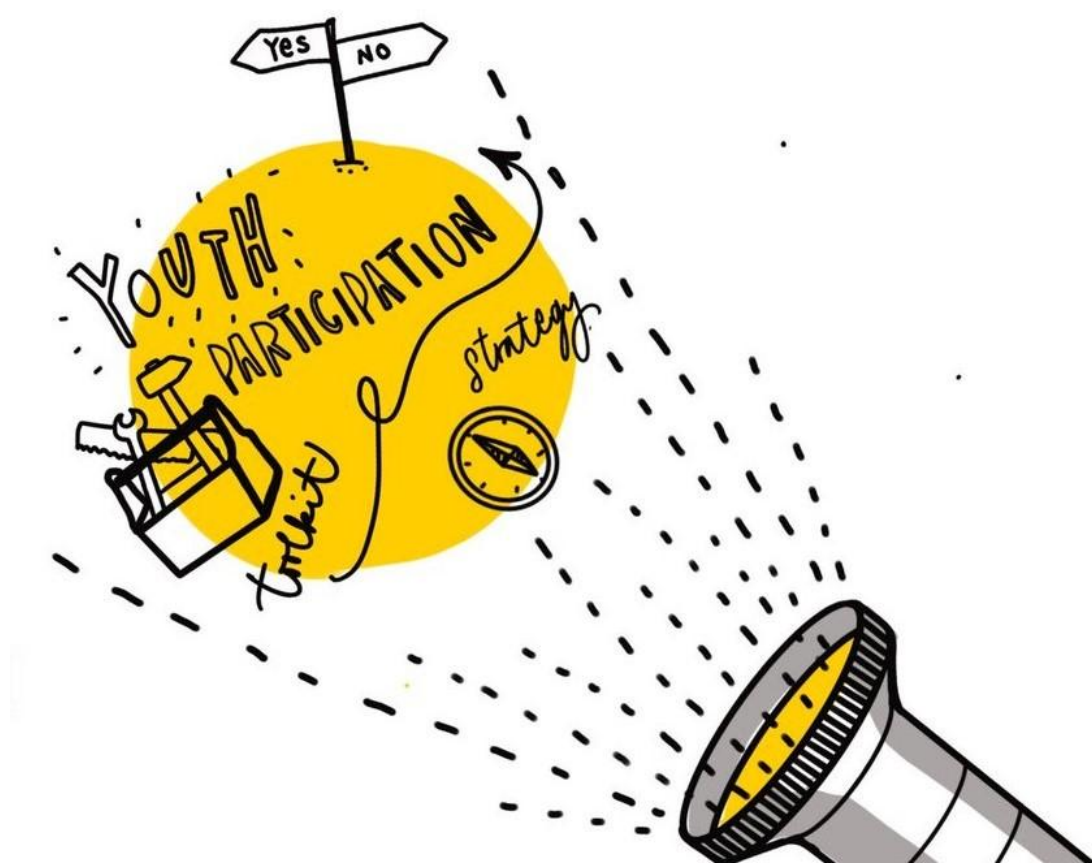




## GET STARTED: WALK THE TALK!

Develop a participatory culture in your organisation:

- **Create organisational democratic processes** such as school councils, stakeholder boards, or workplace meetings where decisions are shared with the participants
- **Inform, encourage and prepare the VET learners to partake in democratic processes in their professional life** (joining organisations, unions and enterprises involved in their specific trade)
- **Moderate spaces** (forums, citizenship education classes, written reflections in internship reports) to discuss inequalities at the VET institution and/or workplace as a starting point to promote interest in democratic principles.
- **Allow learners and staff to lead projects and activities**



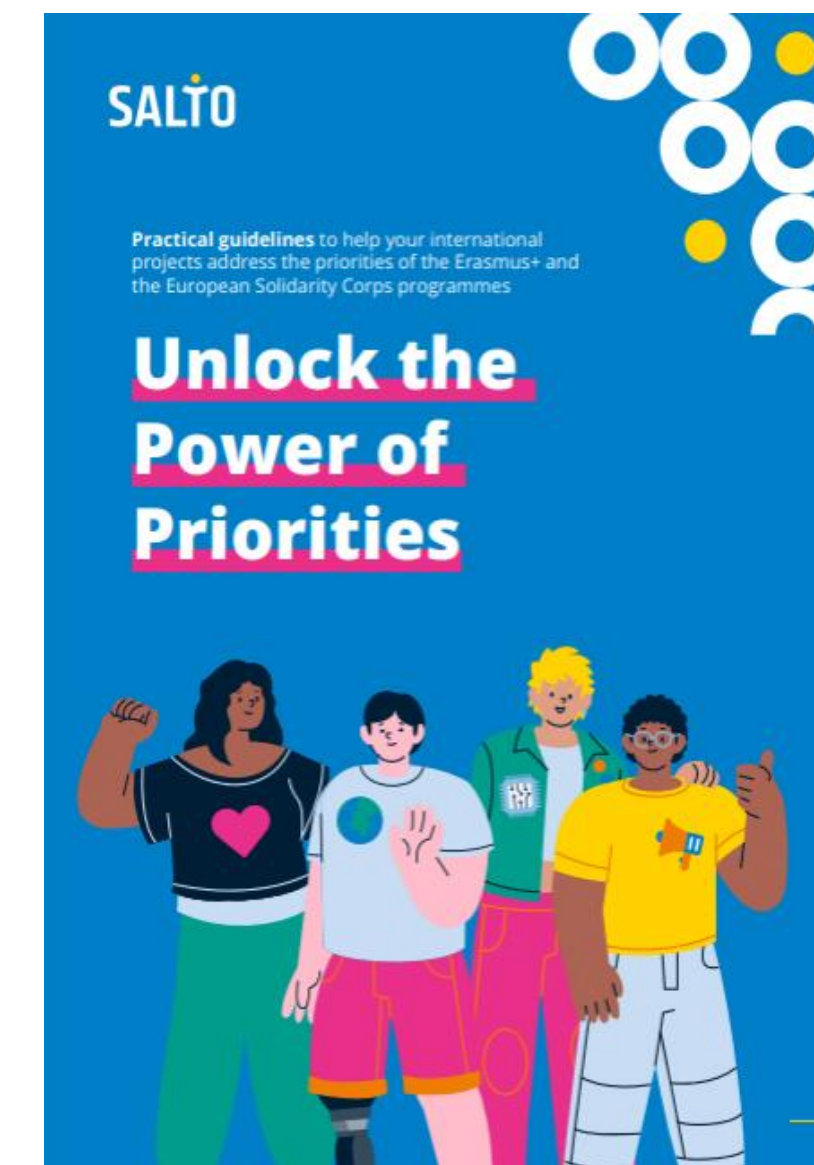
# EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES



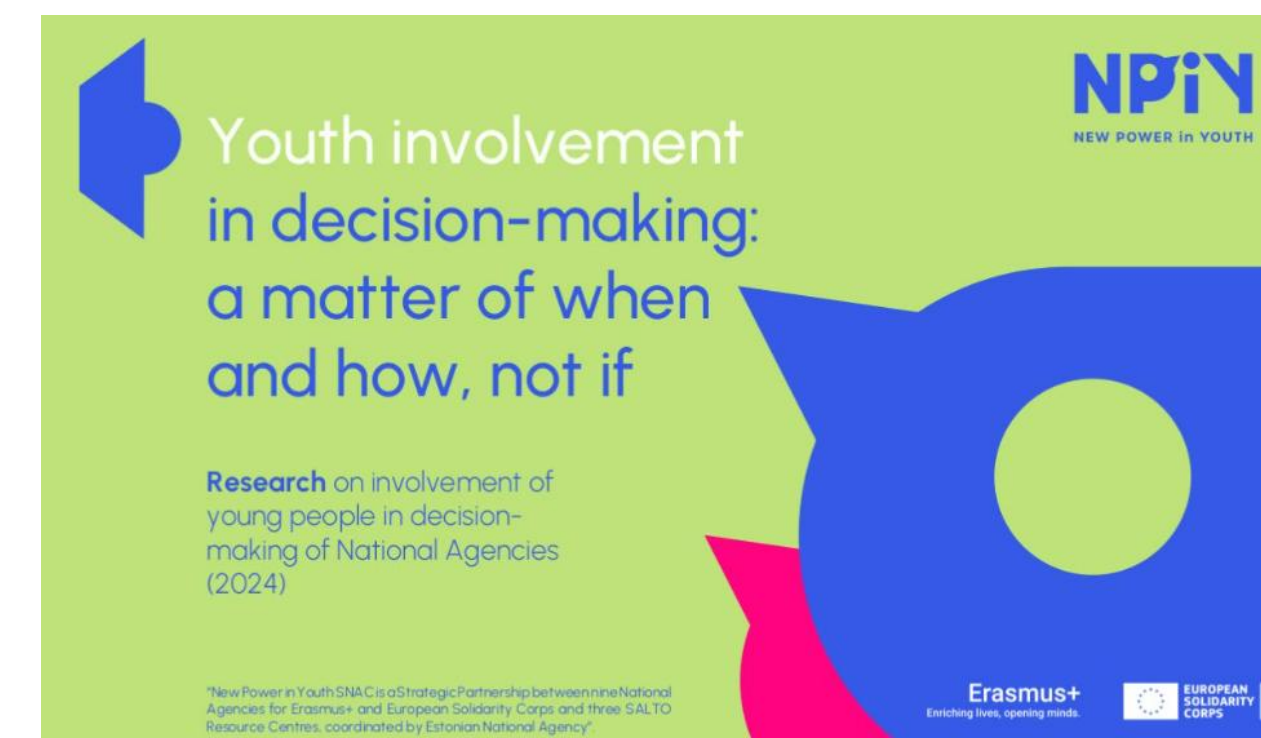
Explore further: [Module 12 Planning for Participation](#)  
[Module 04 Learning by Doing](#) and [Module 05 Young people leading projects](#) of the  
Youth Participation Toolkit



**Check out this inspiring project on:**  
<https://participationpool.eu/project/greenveters-vocational-education-and-training-on-environmental-protection/>



Explore the priority in Erasmus+ projects:  
<https://participationpool.eu/resource/handout-on-transversal-programme-priorities/>



Tips for involving young people on decision-making:  
<https://participationpool.eu/resource/a-matter-of-when-and-how-not-if-research-on-involvement-of-young-people-in-decision-making-of-national-agencies/>



# DIVE INTO PARTICIPATION!



## Find SALTO PI on:

- PARTICIPATION RESOURCE POOL (participationpool.eu)
  - Tools and methods
  - Articles
  - Reports and mappings
  - Inspiring projects (new VET project!)
  - Training and thematic events
  - Participation Toolkit (<https://participationpool.eu/toolkit/>)
- **Social media** (LinkedIn, Facebook, @saltoparticipation on Instagram)
- **Share your materials, send any questions/request for physical materials** to participation@salto-youth.net

# SALTO



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## Thank you!

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HARIDUS- JA NOORTEAMET