



Report

Meaningful Participation of New Europeans in Policymaking

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About the New Europeans Initiative

In a vibrant democracy everyone can take part in political and social life. People with diverse origins and cultural backgrounds are an inseparable part of European society. But these New Europeans face many barriers that hinder their ability to have a say in decisions that affect them daily.

The New Europeans Initiative is a programme of the Migration Policy Group aimed at making European democracy fit for an increasingly diverse and internationally mobile society. We research policies, identify best practices, and promote evidence-based solutions.



About the Migration Policy Group

The Migration Policy Group is an independent Brussels-based think-and-do tank. We conduct evidence-based projects, research and campaigns in the areas of integration, migration and anti-discrimination.

1. Summary

Based on analysis of interviews conducted with new European leaders from across the EU, this report illustrates key obstacles to the civic and political participation of new Europeans and presents policy recommendations/options for closing the participation gap, aiming to promote the meaningful, comprehensive participation of migrant stakeholders in policy making.

The report highlights arguments made by new European leaders for mainstreamed, inclusive and meaningful stakeholder involvement, which engages specifically the target groups of policies, in order to render the policy cycle more effective and democratic. It then presents obstacles to participation, including in particular the lack of resources, information, networks and funding faced by migrant-led organisations, which are structurally disadvantaged in comparison with more established, well-resourced stakeholder groups that are in the position to influence policy making.

Policy recommendations made in the report stress the need to foster a migrant-led civic space and set up consultative bodies while remaining sensitive to the specific needs of new European leaders and migrant-led organisations. This includes comprehensive and inclusive representation of migrant stakeholders in consultation/engagement processes, targeted information sharing on policy and legislative agendas and the decision-making process, involvement in policy needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation of legislation and policies, and co-production of draft legislation and policies.

2. Introduction

The political, civic and societal participation of New Europeans is rapidly emerging as key challenge for the EU and the functioning of European democracy in diversifying societies: European democracies are undermined by excluding significant parts of their population from civic and political participation.

Migration has led to 23.8 million non-EU citizens living in the EU as of 2022, with another 13.7 million EU citizens living in another member state (Eurostat). While electoral participation in national politics of their country of residence is not possible for these people, only in seven EU countries can non-EU nationals stand as candidates and vote in local elections (MIPEX 2020). EU mobile citizens enjoy voting rights merely at local and European levels. High barriers to obtaining citizenship of the country of immigration often mean that residents remain without active or passive voting rights, and therefore without democratic representation, for decades. Further, for various reasons, when immigrants naturalise they tend to participate less in elections and regular political decision-making through engagement in parties and the winning of democratic mandates.

While inclusive citizenship policies and measures to facilitate and encourage electoral participation remain crucial to close the participation gap, deliberative forms of political participation offer alternative ways for migrants to influence political decision-making and represent their interests as residents.

Early possibilities for civic and political participation, based on an emerging sense of belonging to the new country, arguably reinforce the integration process and long-term inclusion. Even more, developing truly effective integration policies require the active involvement of the beneficiaries of these policies. It does not come as a surprise, then, that migrant leaders and representatives of migrant-led initiatives mostly refer to forms of deliberative participation when asked what constitutes 'meaningful participation', as evident from this report.

But deliberative, participatory democracy is far from being a substitute form of political participation for immigrant populations lacking full citizenship rights. On the contrary, open government, democratic governance and direct citizen involvement are crucial for reviving democracies that suffer from decreasing electoral participation and falling levels of trust in democratic institutions and political parties. Meaningful stakeholder and citizen engagement in policymaking holds the promise to make public governance in general more legitimate, accountable and transparent (e.g. OECD 2022, UNDP 2018).

Through participatory processes, political decisions can be based on stronger social support and an empowered citizenry, thus enhancing their democratic quality and (re-)building trust in government. In particular, decision-making can become more inclusive by consciously involving underrepresented groups and strengthening their representation in the policy-making process and the substance of policies. Especially in a diversifying society, any process of consulting and engaging with stakeholders in the policy cycle has to be inclusive in order to be effective and to better target policies. An intersectional approach with focus on diversity and inclusion would provide migrant groups and individuals – of all national and ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual identities, ages, and abilities – the opportunity for constructive feedback based on their own professional expertise and lived experiences and allow for the incorporation of a variety of viewpoints.

New Europeans – people of diverse migrant backgrounds residing in Europe – therefore have much to offer decision and policy making processes, not only those that relate directly to migrants but others as well. These individuals can provide input based on first-hand experiences and their own expertise, gather feedback directly from and develop links with those within their communities, and identify gaps and priorities that policymakers should be aware of.

At present, however, many New European communities remain underrepresented in decision-making processes (e.g. EPIM 2019, EMAB 2019, VOICIFY 2021). In order to make the most of what New Europeans have to offer, their participation needs to be properly promoted: appropriate space should be made for their input, consolidation of their skills and knowledge must be supported where needed, and efforts must be made to celebrate their integration and overcome harmful narratives and structural inequalities, ensuring that newcomers are received as equals.

Despite the development of numerous initiatives that aim to facilitate and promote the involvement of migrant stakeholders in policymaking at local, regional, national and European levels many of these individuals continue to face barriers that hinder their ability to have a say in decisions that affect them on a daily basis. These barriers range from very practical obstacles, including inaccessible funding and a lack of information, to issues of trust and transparency at decision making levels, all contributing to the participation gap.

Based on analysis of a series of in-depth interviews conducted with New European leaders across the EU, this report illustrates the main obstacles to the meaningful inclusion of New Europeans in policy and decision-making processes as outlined by those interviewed; and presents their suggested policy recommendations for closing the participation gap. These individuals were identified for their involvement in New European-led initiatives in European countries, and for their knowledge of the context around the involvement of New Europeans – or lack thereof – in policy and decision making.



The report feeds into a toolkit on participatory policymaking – aimed at public authorities and policymakers on the one hand and New European advocates on the other – for the promotion of meaningful, comprehensive participation of New European stakeholders in policy and decision making. Electoral participation was also discussed with participants, and feedback on this specific issue has contributed to a separate policy brief on enhancing the electoral participation of migrant and mobile voters with a particular view to the 2024 European Parliament elections.

The report's first chapter discusses what is meant by 'meaningful participation'. According to those interviewed, participating meaningfully means having the opportunity for equal participation and exchange, being able to provide input that is demonstrably listened to and acted upon by relevant decision makers, and substantial involvement at all levels of the decision-making process, with relevant pathways for tracking their impact.

In the second chapter, key obstacles and challenges to meaningful participation are presented. Almost all the obstacles listed here were identified several times across the interviews, highlighting their prevalence and the many shared experiences and frustrations of New Europeans. Particularly significant obstacles to meaningful participation identified by those interviewed include a lack of information and resources – including inaccessible funding – for migrant-led organisations, feelings of tokenism among those invited to participate in decision-making processes and a lack of accountability for those making these invitations, difficulties in forming and accessing relevant networks, and the persistence of harmful narratives that serve to victimise and perpetuate the disempowerment of those with a migration background.



The third chapter highlights strategies and good practices in promoting the meaningful participation of New Europeans, on the part of both New European leaders themselves and policy makers. Key themes here include strengthening the capacity of New European-led organisations to better tackle practical issues – such as registration and fundraising – in order to free up space for them to focus on advocacy, as well as strengthening the advocacy skills of migrant leaders and promoting collaboration and trust between policymakers and New European communities.

Finally, the report concludes with the presentation of recommendations for policy makers. Split into three thematic sections, these recommendations focus on recognising the strengths of New Europeans and dismantling the harmful narratives that exist around diverse communities in the public and policy making environments, on promoting New Europeans' knowledge and self-empowerment, and on ensuring better connection between policy makers and New European leaders and communities.

3. Meaningful participation in policy making

Interview participants argued for mainstreamed, inclusive and meaningful stakeholder involvement, which engages specifically and as a priority the target groups of policies, in order to render the policy cycle more effective and democratic.

To these leaders, participating meaningfully means having the opportunity for equal participation and exchange, during which they provide input that is demonstrably listened to and acted upon by relevant decision makers.

It also means involvement at all levels of the decision-making process, with clear systems for follow-up and impact tracking to demonstrate that their inclusion is not merely symbolic.

3.1 Equal Participation and exchange

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It isn't enough to just be invited to an important meeting: migrants need to know that their voices are truly being heard and that their advice is being taken seriously.

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Interview Participant in Belgium

Many of those interviewed described feeling that their presence during decision making processes is merely the result of box ticking, as authorities and institutions attempt to demonstrate greater focus on inclusion and diversity. They often have the impression that their inclusion is tokenistic, and that their input is not given as much weight as that of other stakeholders. Meaningful participation, those interviewed said, would involve consideration of their feedback to the same extent as that of other target groups and stakeholders, with clear efforts to understand that while their perspectives may be different, unexpected, or perceived as inconvenient, they are equally important.

Truly meaningful participation would mean to go beyond mere information sharing and consultative feedback to already formulated draft policies. Joint deliberation on policy needs and gaps with policymakers, leading to co-designed policy agendas and collaborative development of concrete policies and programmes, is at the core of what migrant leaders generally understand as meaningful participation in policymaking.

3.2 Mainstreamed involvement

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Overcoming silos and mainstreaming the involvement of migrants in expert groups across all policy areas is needed, rather than involving them only within areas that relate directly to migrants.

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Interview Participant in Belgium

Several interview participants said that their involvement in expert groups and decision-making processes had been so far confined to those relating to policies concerning New Europeans directly. While acknowledging that this is a positive step, those interviewed indicated that meaningful participation requires the inclusion of New Europeans across all policy areas, in the same way that consultation would include other minority groups, in order to ensure that their perspectives are fully taken into account.

3.3 Involvement at all stages

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Sometimes migrants are consulted by local authorities, but only when the policy is already on its way to happening. So they give this feedback but in reality it is too late to make changes.

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Interview Participant in Greece

Additionally, for participation to feel truly meaningful it needs to be sustained across every stage of the decision-making process, at all stages. Even when they are consulted, research participants said, they find that their involvement often tends to be confined to one stage of the decision-making process.

Some described feeling included at the local level, through the sharing of feedback on proposed policies with local councillors for example, but being shut out of discussion further down the line when policies are finalised. To become meaningful, many pointed out, the entire policy cycle must be open to participatory involvement, including the policy monitoring, impact assessment and further development stages.

3.4 Accountability and follow-up

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Meaningful participation is a practice of equal participation. We are still missing that element: we cannot track the impact of our input so we do not know if it has been heard.

Interview Participant in Belgium

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Finally, follow-up on input from New European experts and mechanisms to ensure the accountability of decisionmakers were identified by participants as being essential to meaningful participation. Several said that although they had been regularly offered and taken up the opportunity to participate in policy discussions, expert groups, and individual consultations, there was no feedback on the part of policy makers as to what this participation had led to.

To feel their input is truly valued, and indeed taken on board, individuals need to be able to see what has come as a result of it. Those interviewed expressed a desire for ongoing, transparent communication with those who had sought their input in the first place, in order to know whether or not their feedback has been acted upon and to be able to comment on this action in a constructive way, if necessary.

4. Key obstacles to meaningful participation

New Europeans and New European-led organisations experience several obstacles to meaningful participation, in the form of a lack of resources, limited information, difficulties in forming and accessing relevant networks, and prejudice. These organisations are structurally disadvantaged in comparison with those more established, well-resourced stakeholder groups that are in a stronger position to influence policy making. A number of obstacles were highlighted by those interviewed in particular and are presented here.

4.1 Administrative barriers

Administrative obstacles can significantly hinder the functioning of New European-led entities. Information on registration, tax processes and regulatory requirements is not often readily available, for example, leading to difficulties with organisation registration and formalisation.

Further, there are often high fees associated with these processes, which New European-led organisations can struggle to afford. Access to public spaces – essential for volunteer-run organisations – for meetings and activities can also be difficult: many are only open during traditional working hours, when organisation members are at their places of employment, or charge high rental costs. Interviewees also reported experiencing discrimination in the venue rental process.



Interview Participant in Spain

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It is almost impossible to set up an organisation without the help of locals here... It's a frustrating circle: we can't receive funding until we open a bank account, and we can't open a bank account until we have an official address, and we can't rent a space with an address unless we have funding to pay for it.

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'It took so long to secure our organisation status that we almost gave up. We had to start again so many times and there was no-one to help us.'

Interview Participant in Spain

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Interview Participant in Italy

“

The system is not designed for outsiders. There was no information available, not in our languages and very difficult to find in the host language. We were lost.

”

“

For the early years we all had to volunteer outside our normal jobs to start the organisation, in public places or in our houses. It's difficult to focus on changing policy when you're still trying to find an office space.

Interview Participant in Greece

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4.2 Inaccessible funding

New European-led organisations can face challenges in securing access to funding, which affects their longer-term sustainability. They often start out with very little funding, relying on volunteer work, donations, sponsorship, and – when members can afford to pay – membership fees. Additionally, funding made available at the local, regional or national level can be unreliable in that it is dependent on fluctuating political focus and priorities.

Interviewees reported that when funding opportunities are available, they are often inaccessible and complicated, with unmeetable or inflexible criteria, and do not take into account the specific needs of and challenges faced by New European-led organisations. Several of those interviewed described feeling that decision makers did not understand the realities of the grassroots environment and the related barriers that exist for New European-led initiatives.

Migrant leaders spoke of difficulties in accessing and understanding funding opportunities:

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If you are a new organisation, you don't know where to look for funding. Even if you know where to look, it is usually so complicated that you miss the deadline or you avoid applying altogether, because you do not have enough resources to dedicate.

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Interview Participant in Belgium

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Sometimes we wish that funding announcements were available in our languages, or in the host language but worded in a more simple way. We can understand the concepts, but sometimes the language stops us at the first step of the way.

Interview Participant in the Netherlands

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Interview Participant in Ireland

The timelines and the requirements are so complicated, especially for people that are not yet used to the European way of doing things.

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4.3 A lack of transparency

Participants also reported unclear and inconsistent approaches within the policy making process overall, rendering the impact of their involvement unclear. Obstacles are often encountered when attempting to communicate with policy makers at local or regional level, for example, and even when this communication is secured it is not certain that input given at the local level will reach the relevant policy makers at national or EU level.

Local authorities are often more keen to collaborate with New European leaders and New European-led organisations, setting up focus groups and conducting interviews and surveys, but often fail to progress the feedback and ideas given by New Europeans at this stage to higher levels of decision and policy making later on.

One New European leader in the Netherlands described the *'nothing about us without us'* advocacy approach of their organisation, summing up the need for decision making bodies and individuals to take the perspective of New Europeans into account at every stage of the policy development process.

Another interview participant, based in Belgium, spoke of 'tokenism' as an obstacle to their involvement in the policy making process, feeling that although they had been given the opportunity to participate and share an opinion, no real attention was paid to their input:

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We feel that our presence in these feedback meetings is tokenistic, and that our voices are not really being heard or taken seriously.

Interview Participant in Belgium

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This research participant was not the only one to mention the issue of tokenism: many described feeling as if the participation invitations they received represented little more than diversity-related 'box-ticking'.

Some expressed frustration at being consulted only in the final stages of the process, when a policy is all but ready to be implemented and it is too late to take suggestions for amendment on board; similarly others added that while they appreciate being invited to focus groups and participating in feedback sessions, they don't feel that their ideas are taken into account further down the line or that there is effort to include them in the entire process:



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I have been invited to give feedback on policies many times by local organisations but I have never been told if my ideas were shared with local authorities to contribute to change. We are not allowed into the later stages of implementing these policies.

Interview Participant in Greece

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Interview Participant in Belgium

It isn't enough to just be invited to and be present at an important meeting: migrants need to know that their voices are truly being heard and that their advice is being heeded. When this does not happen they often feel that their presence is merely the result of tokenism and box-ticking.

”

“

*Where is our input going and how can we track it?
How can we be sure that we are being heard?*

Interview Participant in Belgium

”

4.4 A lack of trust

In relation to – indeed, as a result of - this lack of transparency, research participants spoke of a lack of trust among New Europeans in decision and policy making processes, as well as on the part of decision makers in the capabilities of New Europeans themselves. Persistence of the ‘migrant as victim’ narrative serves to limit potential for the involvement of New Europeans: many of those interviewed feel that policy makers do not see past, for example, their refugee background and associated vulnerabilities to value the strength, resilience and knowledge that such a background can foster.

Further, several migrant leaders spoke of failure on the part of decision makers to see beyond their ‘otherness’ and the lack of trust this engenders. They felt that their engagement was consistently consigned to later stages of the decision or policy making process – such as providing feedback on actions that will likely be carried out as planned regardless of their input – with little follow-up or evidence of what activity has been carried out as a result of their involvement.

Several of those interviewed described similar feelings of being seen as little more than ‘refugee’, or as someone with little agency:

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The continuation of colonial narratives and perspectives means that we as foreigners are often seen as less capable or critical than native citizens.

”

Interview Participant in Italy



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People in the position to make decisions often assume that we do not understand the realities of policymaking enough to contribute to it because we come from countries where the system is different. So teach us, don't exclude us!

Interview Participant in Italy

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Speaking about the experience of migrant women leaders specifically, one participant in Belgium described in their interview a tendency on the part of decision makers to see migrant women as fitting into certain opposing categories, both of which serve to minimise their legitimacy:

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We need to teach decision makers to understand that migrant and refugee women are more diverse than fitting into the boxes of being a) vulnerable and agreeable (leading to efforts to protect or overlook them, disregarding their capacities as independent thinkers), or b) loud and assertive (leading to assumptions that they are exaggerating or being overly dramatic, and therefore they and the issues they raise are not taken seriously).

Interview Participant in Belgium

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4.5 Limited collaboration

Several research participants raised the issue of limited opportunities for networking outside migrant spaces, for example with organisations and advocates promoting topics beyond those directly related to migrants. One participant based in Finland highlighted how a lack of opportunities for the promotion of mutual understanding between New Europeans and the host society can lead to missed opportunities for strong network building, even if – in theory – the necessary resources are available to facilitate it.

Another participant, based in Spain, similarly highlighted how this lack of collaboration can lead to ‘a circle of repetition’, with different migrant-led organisations repeating campaigns on the same issues in the absence of effective pathways for promoting these campaigns to decision making levels.

4.6 Realities of participation

In the experience of some research participants, although a certain level of participation has been secured for (some) New Europeans in many host societies, including through election to local offices, this participation is not without limitations and complications.

As one participant pointed out, a lack of experience of the practical realities of the political landscape in the host society can lead to misunderstandings and disillusionment in social and political activism. It can also require – in order to ensure fully informed, effective, and sustained campaigning – the commitment of significant additional time and energy.

Further, it could be the case that an individual is successful in, for example, being elected to stand for a particular political party, but then finds themselves restricted in what they are able to focus on because of the current agenda of that party.



Other participants spoke of newly elected New Europeans facing overwhelming expectation on the part of some migrant communities to focus solely on promoting migrant-related issues – leading to disappointment and calls of misrepresentation when this is not possible – , as well as assumptions on the part of other, non-migrant politicians that they have no input to give on issues that do not relate to migrants.

5. Strategies and good practices

Those interviewed were asked to share examples of existing activities or strategies they are aware of that they see as successful or promising in increasing the participation of New Europeans. They also shared ideas for initiatives aimed at public authorities and policymakers on the one hand, and New European leaders on the other:

5.1 For New European Leaders

- Develop strategies to encourage New Europeans to celebrate and have faith in their own skills and knowledge, highlighting the contributions they already make to society, and demonstrate – through the use of good practice examples - how these strengths can best be utilised to affect policy and decision making processes. This will encourage leaders to seek out participation opportunities for themselves, and to demand or develop them where they do not already exist.
- Strive for systematic training for migrant leaders to develop their advocacy and public speaking skills, including personal story telling, to learn how best to use their existing knowledge and experience to influence policy. As an interview participant in Italy observed, ‘more established migrants can pass information on to new arrivals: they already know the best ways to distribute information and the things these new arrivals will want or need to know to make progress’.

- Seek out partnerships and collaboration with native or well-established local actors to strengthen the impact of advocacy campaigns and to develop mechanisms that are inclusive and representative. Locals do not have the immediate, first-hand knowledge that New European leaders do, but may have direct contact with high-level decision makers, and can use this contact to facilitate activities to influence policy decisions. Further, as one interview participant based in Spain pointed out, 'locals have been in contact with local and national systems for a long time and know all the necessary pathways and shortcuts'.
- Forge collaborative links between migrant-focused movements and other social movements, in particular those coordinated by the host society and those advocating around issues that are already high on the political agenda. This would strengthen the impact of both, building comprehensive alliances with the knowledge and connections needed to effect real change.
- Build online and offline spaces for the exchange of information and resources on legal frameworks and on the practicalities involved in influencing policy and decision making. Here New Europeans leaders can consolidate their knowledge of policy infrastructure at local, national and EU level, and develop relevant partnerships and networks, as well as the policy expertise leading to concrete policy and legislative proposals which policymakers can take up and around which the grassroots support base can rally in campaigns.
- Build online and offline spaces for the exchange of information and resources on the practicalities involved in setting up, professionalise and sustain New European-led organisations, such as registration and renting processes, management skills, staff development, capacities for project acquisition and project management.

- Provide comprehensive instruction on funding: how to find opportunities; common requirements; how to meet certain criteria; 'inside' information on what funding bodies or institutions seek, and so on. As a participant in Italy highlighted, 'it is very difficult to know exactly what funders are looking for unless you have the necessary 'inside' information, which migrants usually do not. It takes time to find this'.
- Develop strategies for overcoming stereotypes, xenophobia and racism in public discourse, in order to facilitate the effective running of New European-led organisations (e.g. through increased trust on the part of banks; landlords; funding bodies) and to reduce the chance of biases among community decision and policy makers. The promotion of storytelling and effective communication skills will be useful here, in order to create a joint narrative on European migration – the starting point for future collaboration and consultation.

5.2 For policy makers

- Adopt a holistic approach to the participation of New Europeans, promoting mutual trust and creating opportunities for collaboration and togetherness across areas not necessarily related to political participation. As one research participant in Germany pointed out, 'social, cultural and economic participation is a precondition for political participation to succeed'.
- Proactively and confidently engage New European stakeholders in policy making processes based on trust, respect and appreciation for their expertise, ensuring that they are involved at all stages of design, implementation and evaluation of policies and across all relevant policy areas.

- Introduce flexibility for New European-led initiatives in funding application and implementation processes and adjust funding criteria accordingly. This could involve making language or time frame adjustments, for example. Instead of requiring actions to fit within rigid frameworks, conduct research into the kind of flexibility New European-led organisations need and engage more on a personal level to better understand the ongoing change they are already achieving at grassroots level and how funding can more effectively support the work.
- Develop strategies for overcoming the ‘migrants as victims’ narrative. This should be carried out in collaboration with New Europeans themselves, who will be able to share their own experiences of being portrayed as helpless or problematic, and to demonstrate the kinds of strengths and skills they have to offer. This will help, as an interview participant based in the Netherlands put it, to ‘promote an individual sense of agency and control over the individual’s own life, enabling them to better express themselves’.
- Provide opportunities for exchange between decision makers and New European communities, wherein New Europeans will be able to speak to the real-life effects of their exclusion from policy making processes, and both parties will be able to exchange ideas and develop mutual trust. This could involve discussion of the structure of the political landscape, and the ways in which it could be better adapted to facilitate not only the participation but also the political progression of New Europeans.
- Develop strategies for avoiding tokenism and strengthen co-decision and accountability in participatory processes, by ensuring the representation of different migrant groups across all stages and at all levels. As above, use consultative mechanisms to work with New Europeans themselves to ensure that these strategies are appropriate and adaptable to individuals’ different requirements, and that they will lead to meaningful participation.

6. Policy recommendations

All interview participants outlined the importance of participatory and deliberative policy making, consultative involvement in decision making, self-representation, and electoral participation.

They stressed the need to foster a New European-led civic space and set up consultative mechanisms while remaining sensitive to the specific needs of New European leaders and New European-led organisations. This would lead to comprehensive and inclusive representation of stakeholders in consultation/engagement processes, targeted information sharing on policy and legislative agendas and the decision-making process, involvement in policy needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation of legislation and policies and consultation on draft legislation and policies.

Overall, the practice and strategy suggestions of those interviewed can be summarised into a set of policy recommendations that focus on the promotion of New Europeans' self-empowerment, advocacy skills, and understanding of relevant policy frameworks, the recognition of New Europeans' capabilities and strengths and the dismantling of biased and racialised narratives, and improving links between the policy and decision making world and the 'real world' experiences of New Europeans.

6.1 Promoting New Europeans' knowledge and self-empowerment

- Facilitate, via an intersectional approach, the development of a strong New European-led civic space that creates new and strengthens existing organisations capable of contributing meaningfully to policy making, helping to overcome major obstacles and fostering a culture of equal participation.
- Increase engagement with New European-led initiatives to build an understanding of their community-based work and how funding can be used to promote it. This can include creating spaces in which such initiatives can present their own work to funders and are involved equally in discussions preceding the development of grant-making processes and strategies. Strategies for evaluation, follow-up and accountability should be built into these engagement processes.
- Increase financing of New European participation and New European-led initiatives, in particular to cover organisations' core costs, ensuring their longer-term sustainability and capacity to focus on advocacy and participation issues rather than on more practical concerns such as paying rent.
- Issue calls for proposals for actions to be led by New Europeans, in collaboration with other such initiatives and organisations. This will provide resources to enable New European-led initiatives to flourish, and support the development of equal, sustainable partnerships with civil society.
- Establish a model of systematic remuneration – including evaluation and adjustment mechanisms - for those sharing their expertise in consultation processes, recognising the importance of their time and knowledge and ensuring they would have the means – and indeed the inclination – to give their valuable input again in the future.

6.2 Recognising strengths and dismantling harmful narratives

- Encourage, through media policies, journalists and media outlets that work with New European-led initiatives to amplify the voices of New Europeans and ensure their fair representation and inclusion in public and media discourse. Public service broadcasting can lead the way here.
- Enable systematic training for New Europeans - in, for example, public speaking and media appearances - in order to promote their self-empowerment and advocacy skills where needed. As well as furthering the goal of equal participation and inclusion, this could help to dismantle internalised feelings of helplessness or victimhood at the individual and community levels.
- Conduct or enable awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives aimed at ensuring that actors at local, regional and national levels do not perpetuate discriminatory or victimising narratives. Co-design and deliver such programmes together with New Europeans.

6.3 Stronger participatory processes

- Create standards and guidelines for achieving, throughout the policy cycle, meaningful and equal stakeholder participation which is sensitive to the situation of New European-led organisations. Ideally, inclusive stakeholder participation should be based on a binding legal framework. Decision making parties should examine their own internal workings to ensure that every effort is being made to ensure the equal participation of New Europeans, and that discriminatory practices hindering their participation are halted as a priority.



- Provide guidelines on how to set up and make the most of formalised consultative bodies within processes of participatory policy making (e.g. using them as platforms for the sharing and mobilisation of expertise; information sharing; coordination of input to consultations across various policy fields). Ensure clear commitment to acting upon participant input, and that follow-up is conducted in a transparent and timely manner.
- Systematically evaluate participation processes, improving accordingly, in order to ensure they are functioning well and are trusted by all stakeholders. Allow for anonymous evaluation on the part of participants where necessary.

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