

Discussion with representatives of the youth organizations of the parties represented in the local parliament

On Saturday, October 2nd, 2021, as part of the project, representatives of the youth organizations of the 4 parties elected to the municipal parliament were invited to discuss the topic with each other but also with the project participants present. Jakob Hamalega, deputy chairman of the Young Socialists (JUSOS / SPD) in Hesse and Paul Weiske for the Young Liberals Bergstrasse (JULIS / FDP) accepted the invitation. The promise of a representative of the greenhorns (Die GRÜNEN) was withdrawn on the morning of the event due to illness. In the first round, both of them introduced themselves personally to the project participants.

They then explained their respective positions on the importance that Europe in general and solidarity as a value in connection with the further development of Europe have for them. It turned out that both - but also the organizations they spoke for - are big supporters of the European idea and the values that underlie it.

Both were of the opinion that solidarity was indeed a key to the future development of Europe. However, they all criticized the lack of transparency in the processes and decisions at European level. This leads to young people in particular not paying much attention to Europe, as it seems too complex to them.

They therefore called for much more direct participation, above all an upgrading of the EU Parliament. Since it is directly elected by the European citizens, this should be the decisive body, similar to that at the national level. There, the laws and projects should be discussed, passed with a majority of votes and put into motion. The constellation with the EU Parliament, the European Council and the EU Commission is cumbersome and difficult to understand for young people.

The discussion with younger participants, especially from the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, then showed that the interest in Europe in these countries leaves much to be desired, mainly because one has to deal with much more fundamental matters on site. Young people are particularly interested in high youth unemployment, low incomes, economic hardship and fears for the future. In addition, the rights of minorities are sometimes disregarded and corruption is very high in some of the countries. Some thought that there was a lot to do in your own country before you could deal more intensively with Europe.