

Press Release

New Energy for Europe

The initiative Young Ideas for Europe is inspiring young people for the European Idea.

Youth from across the European Union – from Portugal and Italy to Sweden and Estonia – are developing their own visions for a common future – and in the process bringing a new energy to Europe. *Young Ideas for Europe*, an initiative of the Robert Bosch Foundation, is the largest participatory youth project in Europe. More than 1,000 European young people are working to create an “Action Plan: New Energy for Europe” by 2010, which will be personally delivered to the Swedish and Spanish European Council Presidencies. “*Young Ideas for Europe* anchors a new political culture in Europe” said Dieter Berg, Chairman of the Robert Bosch Foundation Executive Board. “The initiative creates a new space for political discussions – for youth between themselves as well as for established politics.”

At the heart of *Young Ideas for Europe* is a unique innovation workshop: over the course of four days, youth participants are brought up to speed on the latest developments in the area of energy technology and energy, and are challenged to create forward-looking solutions for sustainable energy supplies for Europe. In the process, they establish mock political parties, formulate party manifestos and debate their ideas with actual European politicians and members of parliament. Concurrent to the innovation workshops in Germany are workshops in European partner countries.

Young Ideas for Europe places a special emphasis on the online community: “YouTube, StudiVZ and Twitter – it is particularly young people that increasingly organize outside of the established political systems. They discuss on online forums and connect with each other

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through internet platforms,” said Berg. “With *Young Ideas for Europe*, young people share their experiences via online forums and hold a Europe-wide dialogue about the future of the EU. In this way, the initiative becomes a meeting space for European youth.”

During the 2008 pilot phase, 600 youth from six European countries discussed over 25 project weeks the future of Europe. The response was tremendous: “It is impressive to see the development of young people in the course of a week,” said Dr. Klaus Hänsch, Member of the European Parliament and former President of the European Parliament, “Youth, who had just been thinking about the football results of the European Championships, suddenly took a stand at the podium as engaged European politicians and advocated their manifestos with blazing speeches. Through this engagement, it’s clear: the future of Europe is in good hands!”

Young Ideas for Europe is an initiative of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, realized by IFOK, which inspires young people to actively shape Europe’s political, economic and social future by giving them not only a forum, but a true voice in European politics.

In 2008, the project’s first year of implementation, over 600 young people in 6 countries participated in a dialogue over the course of 25 weeks.

The core of the initiative is a 4-day workshop, during which young people will debate and develop their ideas for energy policy and climate change together with guidance from experts from across the political spectrum, as well as participants in other European countries. On the final day of the workshop, the students will present their ideas to a group including high-ranking guests and media representatives. In November/December 2009, a joint, European “Action Plan: New Energy for Europe” will be handed over to the Swedish EU-presidency.

www.young-ideas-for-europe.eu