



## STEP dialogue on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

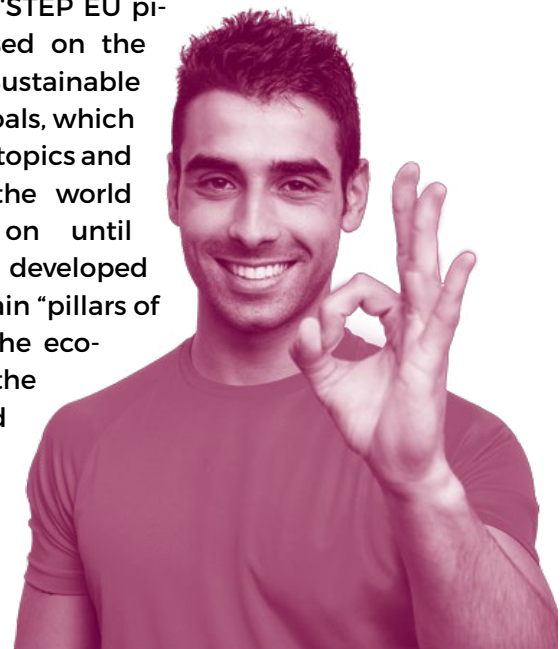
### Youth and their role in the achievement of the goals

Europe's future depends on its youth. Promoting youth participation is fundamental in the EU policy. Especially for environmental issues, the participation of young people in decision making is extremely important, as decisions taken now on matters such as climate change, the depletion of resources, and the loss of biodiversity will have long-term consequences that will affect the future generations. Young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current decisions, and have special concerns and responsibilities in relation to the environment. [1]

In this context, the STEP project aims to open up information and participative decision-making processes on environmental issues within a region or municipality, or at a wider European level. The STEP project (step.green platform) specifically targets young European citizens to increase their participation in decision-making procedures, policy process, collaborating with others, and reaching consensus to bring about positive and effective

responses to environmental related issues.[2] This is done through e-participation tools such as dialogues, roundtables, calls for e-petitions or public consultations etc.

One dialogue conducted at the European level ('STEP EU pilot' page) focused on the topic of UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which define the main topics and priorities that the world should focus on until 2030. They were developed around three main "pillars of development": the economic pillar, the social pillar and the environmental pillar. [3]



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# What is the current role of young people in the SDGs

Events and articles have been showing that, even if the goals are not making any reference to youth, young people play a very important part in making the SDGs reach their targets. Some of the goals could be involving them more – such as the strive for quality education, good health and well-being, reduced inequalities, or decent work and economic work.

In the informal summary of the ECOSOC Youth Forum, which took place in January 2017, it is mentioned that “all governments perform better when they take their youth population’s concerns seriously; embracing new media, technology and scientific breakthroughs. Young people, therefore, need to be empowered as innovators in the development process, not just beneficiaries or consumers.”

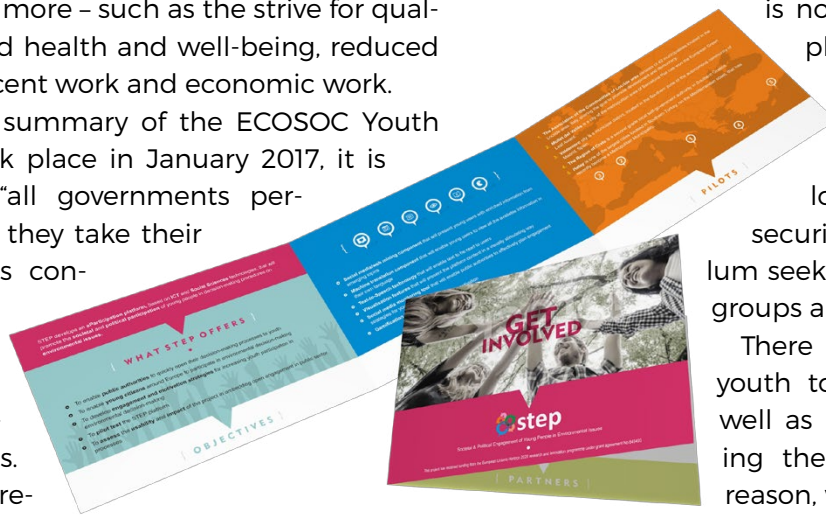
In the same time, by analyzing the data from Europe and North America, it showed that “young peo-

ple were very aware of issues related to sustainable development, but did not specifically know about the SDGs. Young people were not accessing their rights, including political rights, and the social model

is not protecting young people anymore. Too many young people lived in poverty with precarious employment, low-paid jobs and no job security; especially Roma, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups are most affected.” [4]

There is a great potential for youth to be the beneficiary, as well as a driving force in reaching the SDGs targets. For this reason, we conducted the online dialogue on the STEP platform (step.green) which asked young people to have a look at the 17 SDGs and choose the 5 most important in their opinion.

Next we are presenting the results of the dialogue.





# Dialogue results and analysis

The online dialogue was open on the STEP platform between August 1st and August 31st 2017 and it involved 182 participants. A total of 792 'responses' were given to the 17 SDGs. The goal with the highest number of votes was Goal 4, "Quality education"

(90), followed by Goal 6, "Clean water and sanitation" (84) and Goal 13, "Climate Action" (74). The last goals in young people's prioritization were "Industry, innovation and infrastructure" (20), "Life on land" (12) and "Life below water" (10):

	Quality education	90
	Clean water and sanitation	84
	Climate action	74
	Zero hunger	74
	Good health and well-being	68
	Peace, justice and strong institutions	56
	Responsible consumption and production	53
	No poverty	44
	Affordable and clean energy	41
	Gender equality	41
	Reduced inequalities	37
	Decent work and economic growth	33
	Sustainable cities and communities	32
	Partnership for the goals	23
	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	20
	Life on land	12
	Life below water	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>792</b>

Based on our assumptions, we believe that participants opted mostly for the Goals 4, 6 and 13 because, possibly, they can relate more easily to topics such as education, water and climate change. Education can be considered something that would directly impact and 'speak' particularly to young people. From discussions of the network Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) with young people who participated in the dialogue at the NGO Island during Sziget festival on 9-15 August 2017, we gathered that educa-

tion should be at the base of everything and the lack of education can impact negatively other developments in the political, economic, social or environmental fields.

Furthermore, climate change is a topic that is becoming more and more present among young people. It is also a very significant environmental topic addressed by YEE, the partner organisation who disseminated the dialogue among its members. As many of the respondents are connected with the

YEE network, they are already aware of the topic and, some of them are aware of its increasing importance nowadays.

We also analyzed the data based on the age range of participants, by creating four groups of age: 16-20; 21-24; 25-29; 30+. The results were as following:

What is your age group?	16-20	21-24	25-29	30+
Quality education	19%	29%	22%	30%
Clean water and sanitation	14%	22%	26%	38%
Climate action	25%	19%	25%	32%
Zero hunger	22%	20%	23%	35%
Good health and well-being	16%	25%	22%	36%
Peace, justice and strong institutions	26%	17%	21%	36%
Responsible consumption and production	13%	38%	26%	23%
No poverty	19%	14%	19%	47%
Affordable and clean energy	24%	21%	7%	48%
Gender equality	20%	26%	20%	34%
Reduced inequalities	17%	24%	21%	38%
Decent work and economic growth	18%	25%	21%	36%
Sustainable cities and communities	10%	20%	10%	60%
Partnership for the goals	26%	26%	16%	32%
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	0%	23%	15%	62%
Life on land	0%	22%	22%	56%
Life below water	0%	43%	29%	29%

	16-20
Climate action	12%
Quality education	12%
Zero hunger	11%
Peace, justice and strong institutions	10%
Clean water and sanitation	8%
Good health and well-being	8%
Affordable and clean energy	6%
Gender equality	6%
No poverty	6%
Decent work and economic growth	4%
Partnership for the goals	4%
Reduced inequalities	4%
Responsible consumption and production	4%
Sustainable cities and communities	3%
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	0%
Life below water	0%
Life on land	0%

		21-24
	Quality education	14%
	Responsible consumption and production	10%
	Clean water and sanitation	10%
	Good health and well-being	10%
	Zero hunger	8%
	Climate action	7%
	Gender equality	6%
	Peace, justice and strong institutions	5%
	Reduced inequalities	5%
	Decent work and economic growth	5%
	Affordable and clean energy	4%
	Sustainable cities and communities	4%
	No poverty	3%
	Partnership for the goals	3%
	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	2%
	Life below water	2%
	Life on land	1%

		25-29
	Clean water and sanitation	13%
	Quality education	12%
	Climate action	11%
	Zero hunger	11%
	Good health and well-being	9%
	Responsible consumption and production	8%
	Peace, justice and strong institutions	7%
	No poverty	5%
	Gender equality	5%
	Reduced inequalities	5%
	Decent work and economic growth	5%
	Sustainable cities and communities	2%
	Partnership for the goals	2%
	Affordable and clean energy	2%
	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	2%
	Life on land	2%
	Life below water	2%

		30+
	Clean water and sanitation	11%
	Quality education	9%
	Zero hunger	9%
	Good health and well-being	9%
	Climate action	8%
	Sustainable cities and communities	8%
	No poverty	7%
	Peace, justice and strong institutions	6%
	Affordable and clean energy	6%
	Gender equality	5%
	Reduced inequalities	5%
	Decent work and economic growth	4%
	Responsible consumption and production	4%
	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	3%
	Partnership for the goals	3%
	Life on land	2%
	Life below water	1%

Based on our assumptions, the highest percentage of people aged 16-20 chose “Climate action” among their 5 options because climate change trending topic among younger people interested in environmental protection and because it is a topic widely promoted within the youth network of YEE. People aged 21-24 chose “Quality education” the most among their 5 options because, we believe, they are those who might have already spent many years in education and they have a clearer view about what

is important/what should be improved in education systems. Furthermore, most people aged over 25 chose “Clean water and sanitation” among their 5 options. We believe that this could be based on the fact that they, even if maybe it is not an issue in their immediate reality, are aware of it and could still relate to its importance, globally speaking, and that they consider it as a significant aim to fulfil for as many communities and municipalities as possible.

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## Further suggestions and recommendations

In our opinion, young people are interested to share their opinions regarding the SDGs; however, some of them were not familiar with the 17 SDGs per se, but rather with the topics on which the goals are focusing. All 17 goals were mentioned in the participants’, to a bigger or smaller extent (as seen in the tables above). In this context, we believe that young

people could and should have an important role in addressing the completion of the SDGs until 2030.

Below are few recommendations on how this can further take place:

- inform young people or provide informational material about the SDGs in educational spaces, youth centres etc.

- outline the ways in which youth is directly impacted by each of the goals
- encourage youth to share their opinions regarding the goals, progress done towards completion (e.g. via e-participation tools, discussions within youth organisations etc.)
- encourage youth to spread the knowledge further (help them act as multipliers)
- organise events/workshops/work groups for young people that will enable them to work together to generate ideas and solutions for a better achievement of the SDGs.

[1] <http://step4youth.eu/>

[2] STEP deliverables - D2.4 Report on coproduction of services (September 2017)

[3] <http://www.mn.undp.org/content/mongolia/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2017/02/22/role-of-youth-in-making-the-sustainable-development-goals-a-reality-in-mongolia.html>

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be consulted here: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

[4] <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2017doc/2017-youth-forum-summary.pdf>

## Learn more about STEP

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## Contact details

**Dr. Machi Simeonidou** / Project Coordinator - DRAXIS Environmental S.A.

[msimeonidou@draxis.gr](mailto:msimeonidou@draxis.gr)

+30 2310 274566