

PRESS INFORMATION

Youth engagement group to the Group of Seven (G7) a success

Bonn, 9 January 2023. In a particularly challenging year that initially sought to focus on the economic and social recovery from the repercussions of the Covid19-pandemic, on an ambitious climate diplomacy agenda and the resilience of civil society and democracy, the youth engagement process Youth7 realigned its work programme in early spring: Escalating violence in the war of aggression against Ukraine, severe economic uncertainties for the public and private sector and a looming global hunger crisis posed additional challenges to the cooperation within the G7 and the youth policy dialogue that accompanied it.

Thanks to the extensive commitment of a group of young adult volunteers from Germany, Youth7 2022 succeeded in securing a firm position among the established engagement processes with civil society. The youth-led process was implemented according to needs of the participating young people and their collective vision and took place in close cooperation with international partners.

The preamble of the Youth7 Communiqué 2022 outlined the ambitions to engage with the German G7 Presidency: “We strive for a world that is stronger together and call for the strengthening of multilateral cooperation based on shared values, mutual respect and justice.” This further served as a mission statement for the collaboration of the young representatives throughout the process. Delegates, four representatives per G7 member, closely accompanied the G7 dialogue with their own policy recommendations and political demands, by participating in high-level events and in exchange with fellow engagement groups. In addition, Delegations from Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa and Ukraine also participated in this year’s youth engagement process.

The highlight of the year was the Youth7 Summit in Berlin from May 16 to 20, 2022. Delegates convened in person, to finalise the negotiations on the Youth7 Communiqué, their central policy document and joint position. A high-level exchange with Federal Minister for Youth, Ms Lisa Paus, meetings across the capital’s political scene as well as an extensive conference programme, set further impulses for the deliberations. Finally, the unanimously adopted Communiqué was handed over to Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who joined the Summit for an exchange with Delegates.

In the run-up to the Summit, Delegates regularly met online and discussed over the course of three months their areas of focus for their own policy deliberations as well as potential responses to the priorities of the G7 Presidency. Their work in the preliminary negotiations and the exchanges with external experts and researchers as well as guests from Federal Ministries, swiftly formed the basis for the final debates to be held in Berlin. United in the goal to present their joint demands as expressed in the Youth7 Communiqué to heads of state and government as well as decision-makers in governments and parliaments, Youth7 Delegates pursued appointments throughout the year and contributed to numerous debates on panels and with interventions. Highlights included the participation at the G7 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, the G7 Climate, Environment and Energy Ministers Meeting and the Gala Evening of the G7 Gender Equality Ministers, at the invitation of Federal Minister Lisa Paus.

In parallel to the dialogue structure among the G7 members, the working groups in Youth7 were coordinated by Sherpa, who guided the international Delegations on their path towards the Youth7 Summit in May 2022. Co-Chairs Carolina Claus and Benjamin Günther have led eight young adults, who volunteered to serve as Track Sherpa. All young leaders involved, contributed their experience and knowledge from previous roles and forms of engagement in international youth work and youth participation processes.



Even though the G7 Leaders' Communiqué fell short of Youth7's expectations and failed to reference young people altogether, Youth7 nevertheless succeeded in placing key concerns such as support for the mental health of young people on the political agenda. Further, the advocacy efforts pushed for a broader discourse on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

In concluding the youth engagement process, **Parliamentary State Secretary Sven Lehmann**, highlighted the relevance of Youth7 beyond the G7 Presidency:

"Young people are leading drivers of peace, security and democracy worldwide. Under the German G7 Presidency, a group of committed young people developed strong recommendations that provide an important impulse for multilateral cooperation. I was delighted to accompany the youth engagement process from start to finish and was impressed by the commitment and expertise that came together in Youth7. The Youth7 Summit in Berlin, with the participation of Federal Minister Lisa Paus and Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz, was a particular highlight for all involved and has a wide-reaching signal effect for international youth participation. My special thanks go to all volunteers who made this success possible!"

As of January 1, Japan holds the Presidency of the G7 and will host the youth engagement process. The youth organisation G7 / G20 Youth Japan invites young people to the Youth7 Summit in Tokyo and Hiroshima on April 9 to 13, 2023. Both sides have been working closely together since the fall, to share lessons learnt and best practice, in order to ensure that the young generation will be granted access to comprehensive political participation and that the shared demands are sustained continuously. On December 3, the Co-Chairs formally passed the baton to their Japanese partners during their final meeting with Delegates.

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Background

IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany was mandated to coordinate the Youth7 process under the German G7 Presidency and supported the youth-led activities, the Youth7 Summit 2022 and youth advocacy efforts. Previously, IJAB has coordinated the Youth7 Summit 2015 and the Youth20 Summit 2017.

Co-Chairs and Track Sherpa have been selected by the German National Committee for International Youth Work (DNK), the coordinating body for European and international youth work in Germany, representing the German Federal Youth Association (DBJR), the German Sports Youth (dsj) and the Ring of Political Youth (RPJ). Youth7 Germany 2022 was funded by the **Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)** as part of the German G7 Presidency. Contributing to all organisational tasks, the Youth7 Summit 2022 was supported by the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (BAFZA).

Funded by:

