



INSIGHTS INTO EUROPEAN YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN CLIMATE RESILIENCE



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EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT



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YOUTH AND
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Introduction

European cities are increasingly affected by the consequences of climate change, facing more frequent hazards such as extreme temperatures, flash floods, droughts, fires and air pollution, which are already jeopardising the lives of many people across the continent. The climate justice movement has unequivocally highlighted the unequal distribution of these negative effects, with more vulnerable populations being at higher risk of losing their source of income, falling ill, or even dying. Youth is one of these at-risk populations, primarily because young people will live longer with the unexpected consequences of climate change. Moreover, in many cases, they do not yet have the right to participate in political decisions and, even when they do, they often feel that their voices are not heard or taken seriously by the responsible authorities.

Urban Climate Resilience has been put forward as a potential framework to address these challenges, combining climate action with social justice and ensuring that efforts are designed to reach especially those at highest risk. Preparing for these events and especially preventing them from happening in the future requires the coordination of all layers of the urban society. This means both an organised civil society with clear, actionable priorities, and political authorities and businesses that take the challenge seriously and collaborate with the population.

In this report we present first-hand insights from more than 200 young European citizens, reflecting their experiences, concerns, perceived challenges and desired solutions to tackle the climate crisis in their cities (See Appendix 1 for survey specifications). Our findings reveal that **many young people already perceive the negative consequences of climate change in their cities**. However, **many of them do not feel ready or informed enough to take part in Climate Resilience initiatives**.

Even when they do feel ready, they sense that local authorities do not sufficiently consider youth perspectives in climate decision-making and perceive them as inaccessible and unwilling to listen.

About Y-Rescue



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Y-RESCUE is a project that empowers young people to lead transformative climate action in urban areas increasingly threatened by environmental challenges.

Launched in 2025, the project will mobilise 300 young participants (aged 18–30) and youth organisations across several European partner countries to co-create local resilience solutions and strengthen youth entrepreneurship in the climate field. More specifically, throughout Y-RESCUE partners and young participants together will attend workshops, identify challenges, and come up with innovative solutions. By making the most of peer learning, mentorship, and shared resources, the project will build its participants' skills in leadership and project management, while ensuring valuable action is carried out to fight environmental challenges.



How often do climate-related issues affect your daily life?

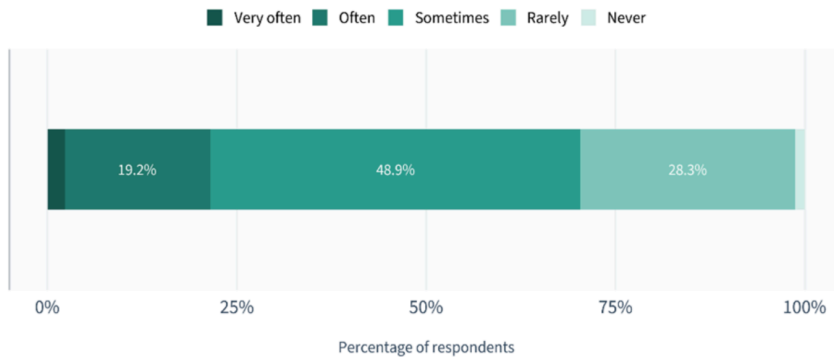


Figure 1: Frequency with which respondents report climate-related issues affecting their daily lives

Climate-related challenges in your city or neighbourhood

Question: Which climate-related challenges have you experienced? (Select all that apply)

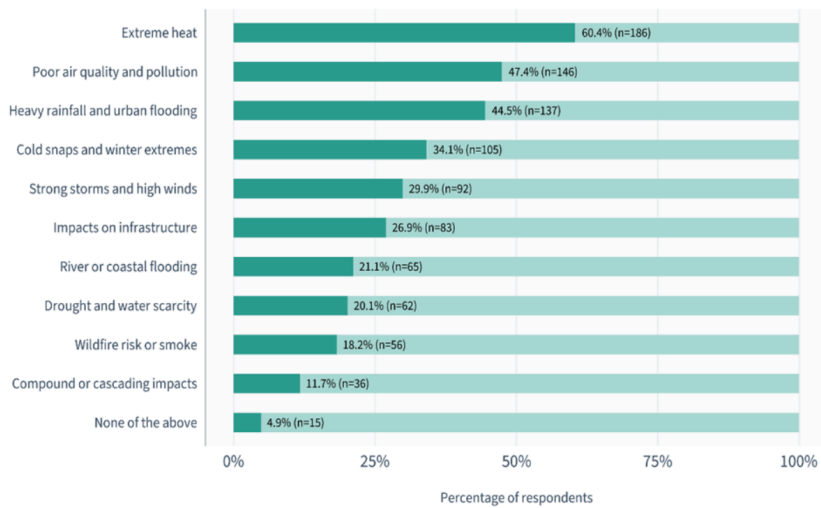


Figure 2: Climate-related challenges experienced by respondents in their city or neighbourhood (multiple responses permitted).

Which actions should cities prioritise to improve climate resilience for young people?

Question: Select your top 3 priorities

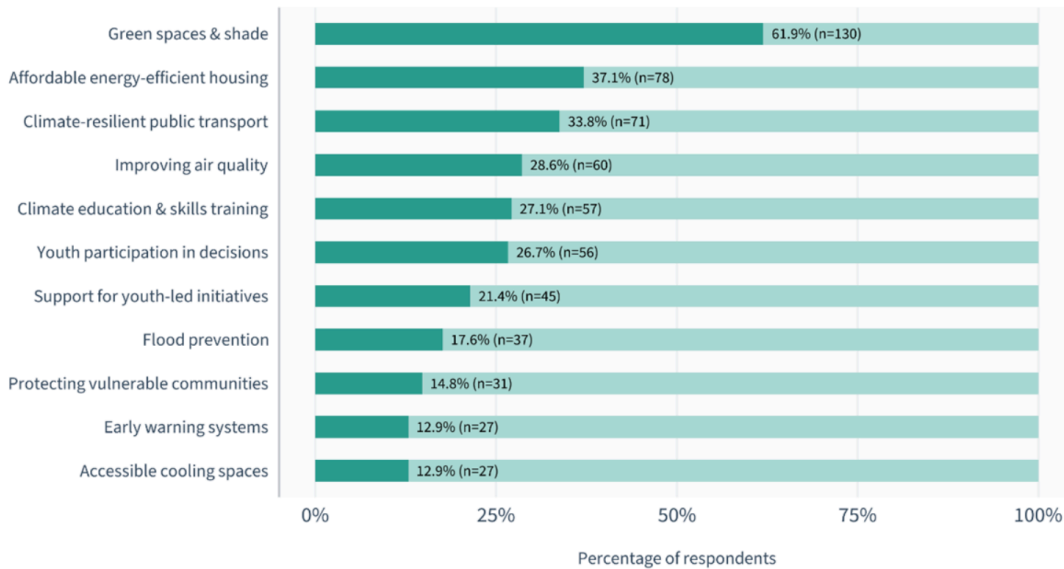


Figure 3 Actions young people believe cities should prioritise to improve climate resilience

How Do Young Europeans Perceive Climate Challenges in Their Cities?

Most respondents of our survey have at some point experienced climate-related challenges in their cities or neighbourhoods. With more than 20% experiencing them often or very often and almost half of them reporting to experience them at least Sometimes in their daily lives (Figure 1). **The most common challenge reported (Figure 2), with more than 60% of respondents is Extreme heat**, defined as abnormally high temperatures for the season and lack of city's preparedness to deal with it (e.g. lack of shaded or cool public spaces or overheated public transport). **Other commonly reported challenges were Air Pollution or Heavy Rainfall and flooding, both reported by almost half of the sample.**

“Urban climate resilience is, at its core, about a city learning how to bend without breaking. It's the ability of an urban community to anticipate climate pressures, absorb shocks when they hit, and adapt in ways that leave it stronger, fairer, and more sustainable than before¹”

To make their cities more climate resilient, **young citizens believe that green spaces and shade should be prioritised above all else**, as selected by nearly two thirds of respondents (Figure 3). Affordable energy-efficient housing and climate-resilient public transport follow as the second and third most cited priorities, reflecting a concern for everyday accessible livability. Notably, youth participation in decisions and climate education and skills training both feature in the top six on the list, which suggest that young people not only want tangible urban improvements but also a meaningful role in shaping them.

¹Selected response to the question "What does Urban Climate Resilience mean to you", answered after respondents were shown the following definition of the term (See Appendix 3)



How prepared is your city to respond to climate impacts?

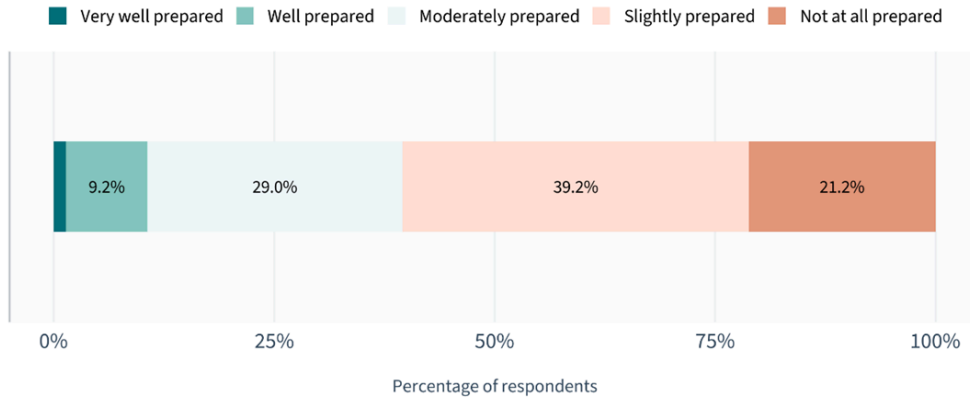


Figure 4: Young people's perceptions of their city's preparedness to respond to climate impacts

How much do you trust the following to address urban climate challenges in your area?

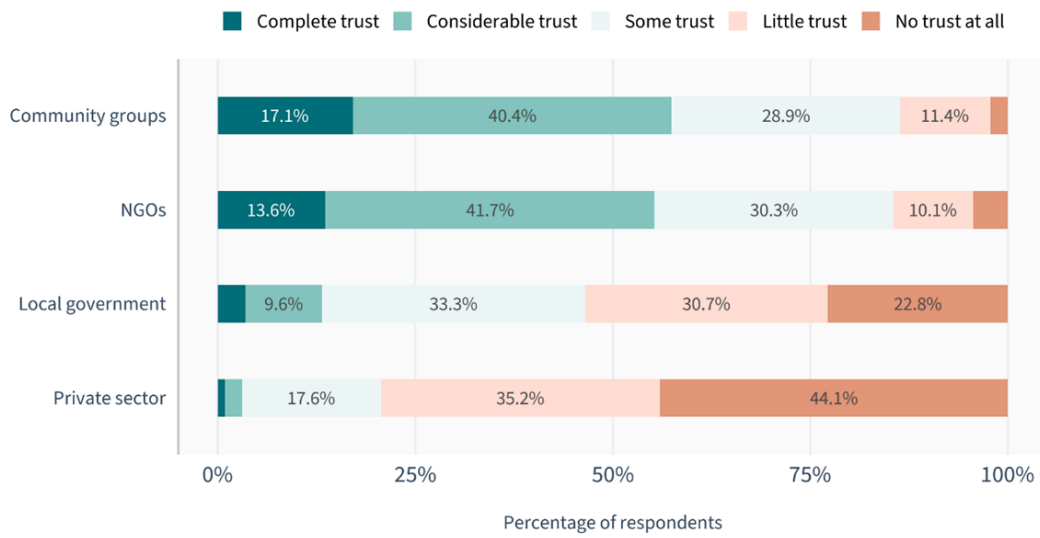


Figure 5: Young people's trust in different actors to address urban climate challenges in their area

Perceptions Authority Responsiveness

Question: How much do you agree with the following statements?

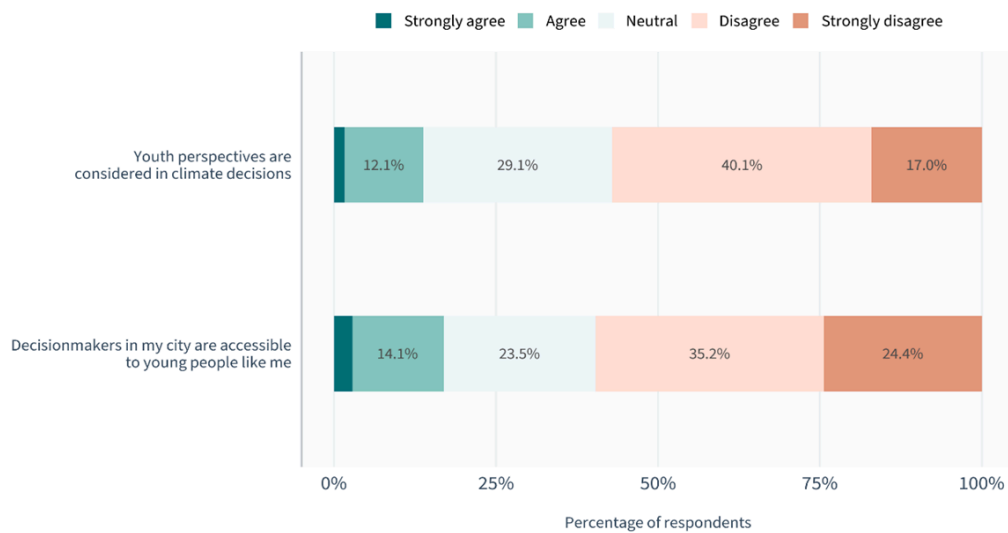


Figure 6 Young people's perceptions of authority responsiveness in urban climate decision-making

Confronted with these challenges, **only a small minority (10%) of respondents feel like their city is already well or very well prepared to respond to the impact of climate change** (Figure 4).

However, not all actors are met with equal levels of scepticism. **When it comes to trust in those responsible for addressing climate impacts and preventing them from occurring, community groups and NGOs rank highest, with over half of respondents expressing complete or considerable trust in each.** Local government receives notably lower trust, with more than half expressing little or no confidence in it. The private sector is the least trusted actor by a significant margin (Figure 5).

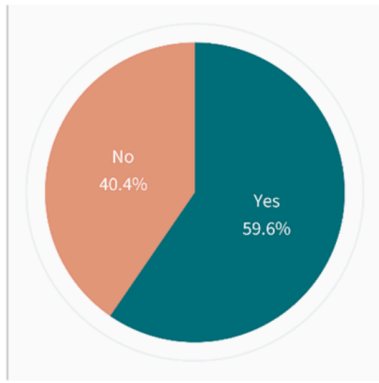
Additionally, many young people feel like their voices do not matter as much as they should to authorities responsible to deal with climate impacts. Over half of respondents disagree that youth perspectives are considered in climate decisions, and nearly three in five find local decisionmakers inaccessible to young people like them (Figure 6).

This feeling of lack of real access to authorities and decision-makers was again echoed when respondents were asked about what would help them feel more empowered to partake in Urban Climate Resilience actions. Young people value genuine and productive conversations with policy makers that are **“beyond 10-min scheduled meetings and that would actually lead us to a concrete working table / taskforce”** and that lead to **“witnessing tangible outcomes, even small ones, reinforces the belief that my efforts matter. Whether it’s reduced carbon emissions, improved community awareness, or a successful climate initiative, results motivate sustained engagement”**.

Beyond elected leaders and politicians, many respondents emphasised the essential role of grass-roots community involvement in Urban Climate Resilience initiatives as **“essential for resilience and for the future of our territory”**. These spaces, they argue, should be accessible and **“make participation easy and welcoming”** and act as spaces of dialogue and learning. **“Working with others – a respondent adds –, like friends or youth groups, would help me stay motivated and make a bigger impact.”²**

²All quotes in **blue** are selected direct quotes from the open-ended question: What would make you feel more empowered to take action?

Have you ever participated in a climate-resilience-related initiative in your city?



Have you received any climate-related education or training?

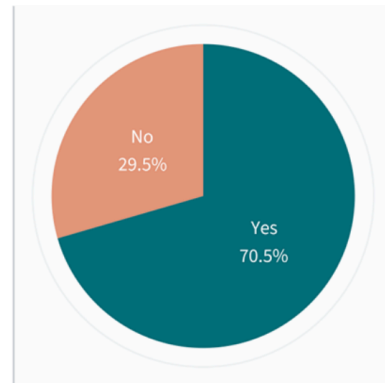


Figure 7: Respondents' participation in climate-resilience initiatives and attendance to climate-related education events or training

Perceptions of Urban Climate Resilience Agency

Question: How much do you agree with the following statements?

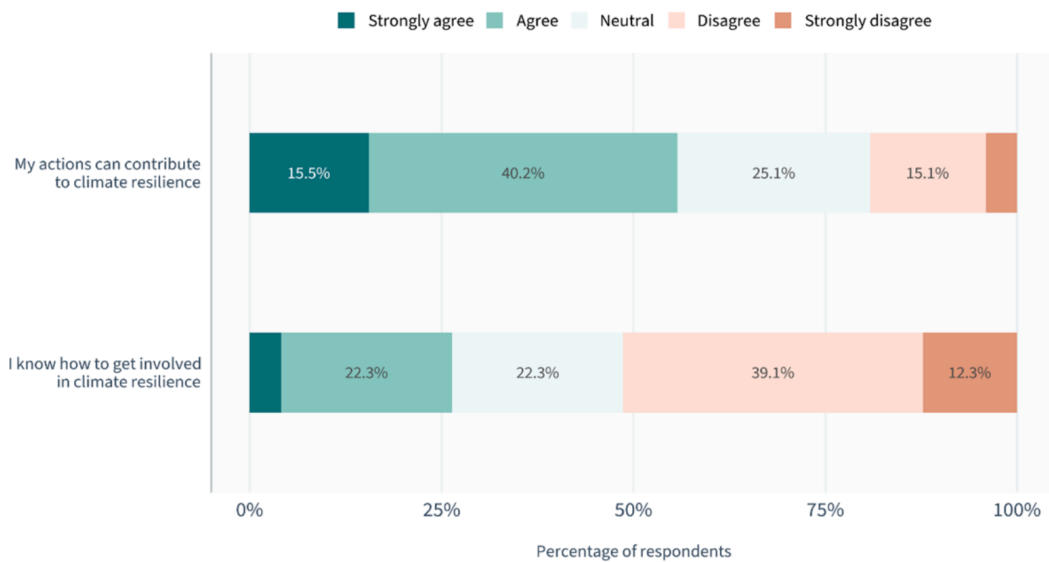


Figure 8: Young people's perceptions of agency in urban climate resilience

Which skills would help you contribute more effectively to urban climate resilience?

Among respondents who indicated lack of knowledge or skills as a barrier to engage in action (n = 45)

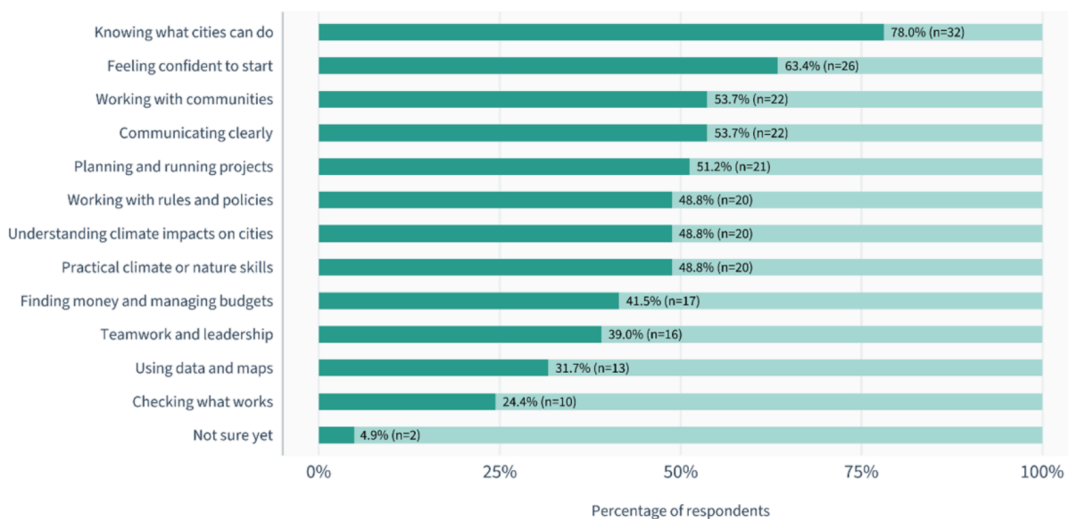


Figure 9 Skills identified as most needed to contribute to urban climate resilience

The perception that city authorities are not responsible and accessible to young people has not stopped them from partaking in urban climate resilience. For instance, the majority of our survey respondents have already taken some action to involve themselves with climate resilience in their cities, either through direct participation in activities (e.g. signing petitions, peaceful protests, reforestation campaigns or urban pollutant cleaning³) or getting specific climate-related training (Figure 7).

On the topic of youth engagement, when asked about which measures should decisionmakers take to make their cities more climate resilient, some respondents said: “[The number one priority should be] **supporting youth-led climate and community initiatives with funding and resources. Making the future generation actually being able to participate**” and “**I would support young people's environmental projects with more funding and resources. Young people are often very motivated to take action on climate issues, but they don't always have the support they need.**” However, another respondent pointed at the need for more resources and information for an effective participation: “[The number one priority should be] **The education about climate change which leads to more informed young people willing to help the city**”⁴. These perceptions are supported by our findings: Although more than half of the sample believe that their actions can contribute to making their cities more climate resilient, only around 25% of respondents knows how to get involved in Climate Resilience initiatives in their cities (Figure 8).

Digging deeper, we asked those who indicated a lack of knowledge or skills as a barrier to engagement which skills they felt would help them contribute more effectively to urban climate resilience. Among this group, **knowing what cities can do emerges as the most valued skill, selected by 78% of respondents, followed by feeling confident to start (63.4%) and working with communities and communicating clearly, each cited by over half** (Figure 9).

³Examples given by respondents in an open-ended question: What kind of activities have you participated in?

⁴Selected direct quotes from the open-ended question: If you could change one thing in your city to improve climate resilience, what would it be?

Concluding Remarks

This report sought to capture first-hand perspectives from young Europeans on Urban Climate Resilience, identifying through their responses and testimonies how they experience climate challenges in their cities and neighbourhoods and what role young people should play in tackling them. Our core finding is that **young people are not indifferent to the climate crisis. They experience its effects directly in their everyday urban environments and they believe their actions can make a real difference.** In response, many of them have already taken steps to get involved.

However, the data reveals an important pattern: **youth lack the community infrastructure, information and, overall, genuine feelings of inclusion, to translate the willingness into sustained participation, a pattern that was already anticipated by stakeholders consulted in the earlier phase of this project.** Whereas our respondents see community groups and NGOs as credible partners in the fight against climate change, the private sector and, most relevantly, public decisionmakers, are seen as unreliable.

Young people want to contribute in meaningful, non-tokenised, ways and see tangible results that keep them inspired to persevere. They want to live in greener cities with accessible housing and public transport, that are ready to prevent and respond to the impacts of climate change. The question however remains whether decision-makers are willing to meet them there.

Appendix 1: Survey specifications

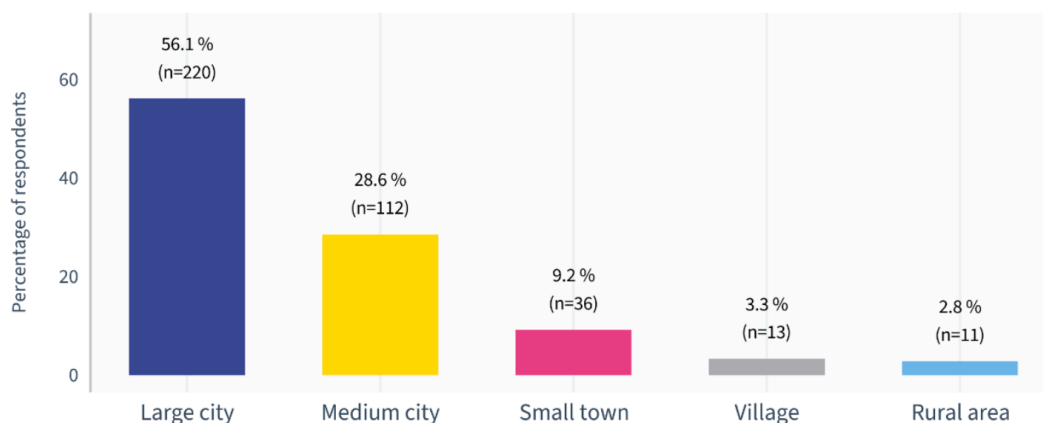
This survey was programmed in the digital platform Limesurvey and distributed by the EYP network and Y-RESCUE partners through social media, email diffusion lists and newsletters.

Fieldwork began the 3rd of March 2026 and ended the 20th of March 2026. The survey was started by N = 479 respondents and fully completed by N = 224 respondents. In the statistics and figures contained in this report, all the responses to each item were kept, regardless of whether the respondent dropped out at some point of its completion.

Respondents who completed the entire survey were compensated with the possibility to opt in a raffle for one of three prizes (1) An Interrail ticket, (2) A €50 voucher for sustainable fashion and beauty brands and (3) A €30 bookstore voucher. The contact details for prize winners remained unlinked to their survey responses, so anonymity was never compromised.

Area of Residence

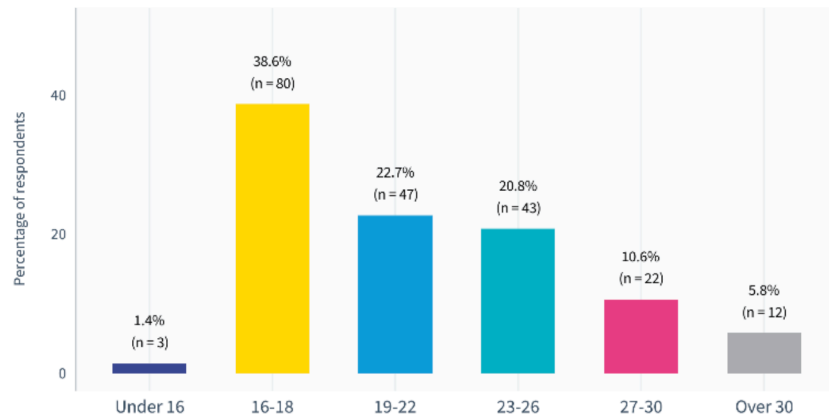
Question: What type of area do you live in?



Appendix 2: Sociodemographic Data of Survey Respondents

Age Distribution

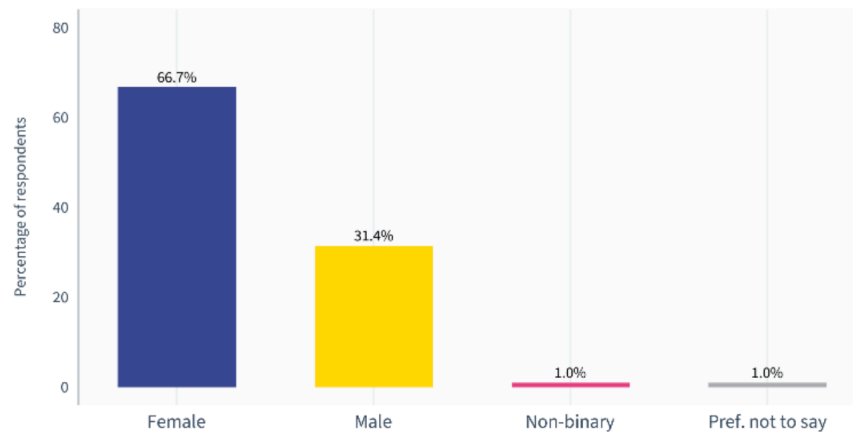
Question: How old are you?



The survey was completed by a female majority (66.7%) and individuals aged between 16 and 18 years old.

Gender Distribution

Question: How do you identify? Total respondents = 207

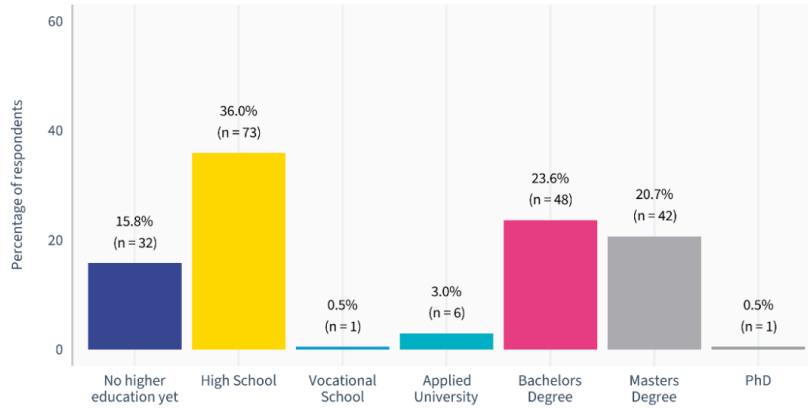


Most survey respondents lived in urban areas (large and medium cities or small towns). Those who indicated that they live in villages or remote and rural areas were excluded from the rest of the survey but were still given the chance to opt in the raffle.



Education Distribution

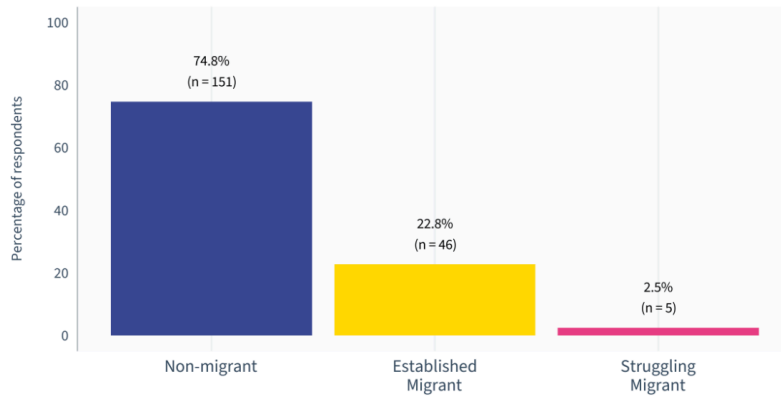
Question: What is the highest level of education that you have attained?



Probably because of the lower median age of respondents, half of them had either just completed high school education or were still in high school. Respondents lean heavily towards academic paths, rather than vocational or applied education.

Migratory Status Distribution

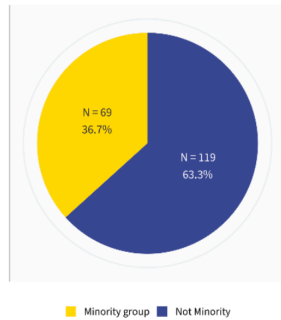
Question: What is your residency status?



Although there is a significant proportion of migrants in the sample (25% vs the 10.4% EU total⁵), almost all of them are established in the country that they migrated to.

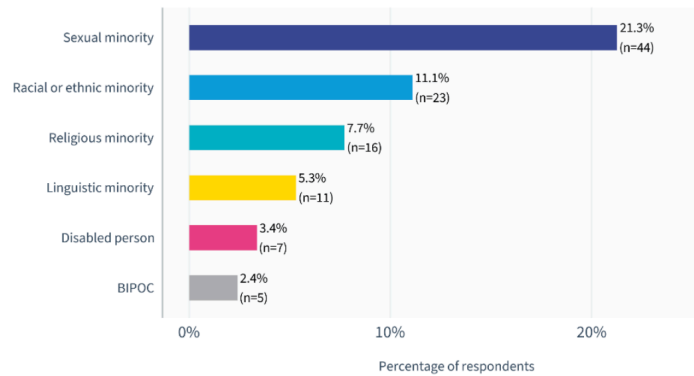
⁵Source: Eurostat, 2026. EU population diversity by citizenship and country of birth - Statistics Explained. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_and_country_of_birth

Proportion of Participants Belonging to Minority Groups



Which minority group do you identify with?

Out of respondents belonging to a minority (select all that apply)



A significant proportion of respondents belong to at least one minority group, with sexual minorities being the most represented in the sample, followed by racial or ethnic minorities and religious minorities.

Appendix 3: Urban Climate Resilience definition

Before respondents answered the question **“What does Urban Climate Resilience mean to you”**, they were shown the following definition of the term: Urban Climate Resilience is a city’s ability to prepare for, cope with, and recover from climate-related shocks and stresses, such as heatwaves, flooding, drought, wildfires, and air pollution, while continuing to function and keep people safe. It includes: - Reducing risks before disasters happen - for example through better planning, green spaces, and early-warning systems. - Responding effectively when extreme events occur, and rebuilding or improving in ways that make the city stronger next time. A core part of urban climate resilience is climate justice- making sure support and resources reach the people and neighbourhoods most at risk, so that adaptation measures protect everyone and do not increase inequality.





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