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### Information providers / counselling structures

Public authorities and bodies disseminating information about democratic rights and values for young people are e.g.:


- the [Federal Agency for Civic Education](https://www.bpb.de/) ([Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung](https://www.bpb.de/)) as a second-tier authority of BMI lobbies for better understanding of political matters, a keener awareness of democracy and greater willingness to get involved in political processes. At regional (Länder) level, the Regional Agencies for Civic Education ([Landeszentrалen für politische Bildung](https://www.bpb.de/)) offer information about civic education and promote local projects.

- Germany's 14 [media authorities](https://www.medienanstalten.de/) ([Landesmedienanstalten](https://www.medienanstalten.de/)) who are in charge of licensing and controlling commercial television and radio in Germany. With their project they promote [media skills](https://www.medienanstalten.de/) among young people and equip them with the tools they need to deal competently with the media and with information. The efforts of the media authorities also
promote youth participation as young people gain a better understanding of political processes as their media skills develop. Information about the projects can be found in the media skills report (Medienkompetenzbericht [14]).

The Joint initiative of providers of political education for youth (Gemeinsame Initiative der Träger Politischer Jugendbildung [15], GEMINI) is an association of national organisations for political education for youth that operates as the national committee for political education (Bundesausschuss politische Bildung e.V., bap). The initiative is designed to get children and young people interested in actively shaping their own realities of life and their communities and to promote participative skills. It represents the concerns of political youth education institutes before politicians, ministries, authorities and other funding providers. GEMINI coordinates professional dialogues, is active in nationwide initiatives, and is committed to professionalising political youth education. The national committee for political education has presented the “bap award for political education” (bap-Preis Politische Bildung) since 2009 (most recently: 2019), with financial and conceptual support from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ).

Contact points

Approx. 70 youth information centres across Germany provide initial consultations for young people on issues that affect them. The youth information centres in southern Germany joined forces in 1997 to form an association (Verbund der Süddeutschen Jugendinformationszentren [16]).

Examples of youth information portals:

- jup! Berlin [17]
- Youth net Baden-Wurttemberg Jugendnetz Baden-Württemberg [18]
- Jugendinfo.de [19] for Bremen und Bremerhaven
- Hamburg youth server (Hamburger Jugendserver [20])
- Youth in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania - Regional youth server (Jugend in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - Landesjugendserver [21])
- Youth server Lower Saxony (Jugendserver Niedersachsen [22])
- JUGEND.RLP.DE - Youth work in Rhineland-Palatinate (JUGEND.RLP.DE - Jugendarbeit in Rheinland-Pfalz [23])
- Youth server Saar (Jugendserver-Saar [24])
- Youth information service Saxony-Anhalt (JugendInfoService Sachsen-Anhalt [25])
- Youth server Schleswig-Holstein (Jugendserver Schleswig-Holstein [26])

Legal framework

Young people have a right to information. This right is anchored in Article 5 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik [27]). For youth information and advice, Book VIII – Children and Youth Services of the Social Code (Sozialgesetzbuch [3] Achte Buch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe [3]) applies. Articles 1 and 11 in particular are understood to anchor legal rights. Article 1 [28] says that every young person has a right to cultivate their personal development and to develop into a responsible and socially competent individual. Child and youth services are to help implement this right, in part by cultivating the personal and social development of young people and by helping to prevent or remove disadvantages. Article 11 [29] says that youth work is part of child and youth services. Youth counselling is a key area of youth work. [German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring), 1997 [30]].

Youth information centres receive financial support from the local authorities.
Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

The competition "Active for democracy and tolerance" (Aktiv für Demokratie und Toleranz [31]) is a competition run every year in July by the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance (Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz), established by the federal government, to promote civic activities that offer practical support of democracy and tolerance. In 2017, 77 projects received awards.

Campaigns to increase the number of young voters

Various campaigns are held in Germany to increase the number of young and first voters, especially in the lead up to elections. Examples:

1. **Wahl-O-Mat** [32] (an election information platform) by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung). Outcome: used over 71 million times since 2002 (as at October 2018).
2. **U18-Wahl** [33]. Offers its own civic education courses ahead of elections to help young people to develop an opinion and learn about the political system.
3. **#jungesnrw** [34] – campaign by North Rhine-Westphalia's regional youth council (Landesjugendring) for the state parliament (Landtag) election in 2017.
4. **neXTvote** [35] – "We are bringers of happiness" (Wir sind GlückbringerXinnen) – campaign by youth organisations and the youth councils in Lower Saxony for more participation by young people in the 2017 parliament (Bundestag) elections and the state parliament (Landtag) elections.
5. "You are politics" (Du bist Politik [36]) – campaign by the Regional Agency for Civic Education of Saxony-Anhalt (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Sachsen-Anhalt) in the lead up to the 2016 state parliament (Landtag) election to encourage first-time and young voters and young families to vote.
6. "Do it from 16!" (Mach's ab 16! [37]) in Brandenburg – campaign by the regional youth council (Landesjugendring) of Brandenburg aimed at first-time voters in the 2014 state parliament (Landtag) elections to reduce the average voting age in Brandenburg.
7. "Make yourself heard: your voice – your choice" (Ton angeben. Deine Stimme – Deine Wahl) – campaign in connection with the 2014 state parliament (Landtag) elections in Thuringia with the aim of making state politics relevant to young and first-time voters and encourage them to vote. **Campaign advert** [38]. Initiated by the Regional Agency for Civic Education of Thuringia (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen) and the Institute of Media and Communication Science at Ilmenau University of Technology (Institut für Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft der TU Ilmenau).
8. "Vote from 16" (Wählen ab 16) – campaign to reach first-time voters in connection with the local elections in Baden-Wurttemberg on 25 May 2014. **Campaign advert** [39]. **Outcome** [40].
9. **JuMP** [41] project– youth, media and participation (Jugend, Medien und Partizipation) in North Rhine-Westphalia – a state-wide campaign that has been running since December 2012 to actively encourage political media literacy among young people. Outcome: over 1 000 young people have participated in various event formats under the project to date.
10. **wahl?weise!jung** [42] – Programme by the Bavarian Youth Council (Bayerischer Jugendring) offering material and tools for democracy education, also in preparation for coordinating Bavaria’s “U18” elections (for young people under the age of 18) on 5 October 2018, ahead of the Bavarian state elections on 14 October 2018.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

Intercultural dialogue between young people from different cultural backgrounds takes place mainly in schools. The resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs
(Kultusministerkonferenz) on 'Intercultural education in schools' (Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule) sets out targets and general principles for systematic intercultural development in schools to help pupils acquire intercultural skills. This includes democracy education and promoting a democratic culture of discussion.

The intercultural openness of youth organisations promotes the inclusion of children and young people with migrant backgrounds in traditional youth organisation programmes and thus dialogue between them. The inclusion of youth-led migrant organisations in child and youth work structures is also encouraged.

The rise in immigration to Germany and the arrival of large numbers of refugees has produced a large range of activities, initiatives and projects (meeting cafes, communal cooking, language mentors, art and culture workshops, integrative residential communities etc.) in cities and communities. These also support dialogue between young refugees and young people living here.

The Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) provides funding to German schools abroad (Deutsche Auslandsschulen) and schools in host countries that offer the German Language Certificate (Deutsches Sprachdiplom, DSD) of the Conference of Education Ministers (Kultusministerkonferenz). At present, funding goes to 140 German schools abroad in 72 countries with some 82 000 pupils. In 2015, 377 000 pupils were taught German at schools offering the German Language Certificate. About 74 000 took the German Language Certificate exams.

The initiative Schools: Partners for the Future (Schulen: Partner der Zukunft, PASCH) was set up in 2008. The Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) coordinates the initiative and implements it together with the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen, ZfA), the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischen Austauschdienst, DAAD) and the Pedagogical Exchange Service Office (Pädagogischer Austauschdienst, PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz). PASCH-Global – the digital school newspaper of the PASCH initiative – gives young people across the globe an insight into cultures in other countries and the opportunity to exchange experiences in German. PASCH alumni can network with other alumni worldwide, stay in contact and exchange experiences using the platform pasch-alumni.de.

International meet-ups funded at federal, regional or local level take place both in Germany and abroad and promote intercultural dialogue among young people.

**Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication**

**Guidelines**

The Guidelines for Successful E-participation by Young People (Guidelines für gelingende ePartizipation Jugendlicher) were produced in the course of youthpart, a multilateral cooperation project (2011-2014) carried out by IJAB - International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany and its European project partners. They should help experts in youth work, policy-makers, young people, youth organisations and public administration bodies to design effective participation processes.

The project youth.participation.now (jugend.beteiligen.jetzt) as part of BMFSFJ's Youth Strategy offers knowledge, tools and training for political decision-makers, local communities, child and youth services organisations and youth initiatives to help in the area of digital youth participation. A
A curriculum called 'Digital youth participation in practice' (Praxis digitale Jugendbeteiligung [51]) was created as part of the project. It also aims to provide help with planning and implementing training schemes independently. It is mainly aimed at process moderators who have already undergone youth participation training or have worked in the field. The content of certain modules is useful for providing further training for stakeholders of community youth participation processes. In addition, WeTeK Berlin offered a 'Digital youth participation in practice' pilot training programme (Qualifizierung: „Praxis digitale Jugendbeteiligung“ [52]) in 2017/2018 in cooperation with 'youth.participate.now' to train up process moderators and experts in child and youth participation.

Further links to information about transparency and public communication

- [govdata.de](http://govdata.de/) [53] – data portal for Germany. Interesting facts about open data, open government and civic participation, and information about the data licence Germany. Target group-specific information for the public and people from industry, academia, public administration and civic organisations and media.
- [abgeordnetenwatch.de](http://abgeordnetenwatch.de/) [54] – independent, party-neutral Internet platform from Parlamentwatch e.V. on which the public can put open questions to members of the German parliament (Deutscher Bundestag), European Parliament and various state parliaments.
- [digitale-agenda.de](http://digitale-agenda.de) [55] – federal government website on the basic principles of digital policy.
- [fragdenstaat.de](http://fragdenstaat.de/) [56] – website of Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland, where members of the public can ask questions about information laws (Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Act and Consumer Information Act).
- [offenerhaushalt.de](http://offenerhaushalt.de/) [57] – volunteer project with no government ties run by Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland to make federal (Bund), regional (Länder) and local revenue and spending more transparent.

Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland is committed to open knowledge, open data, transparency and participation. It hosts hackathons, where young people can use open data to create prototypes, digital tools and concepts of their visions of a better society and produced a practical guide to hosting hackathons for young people (Handbuch Jugend-Hackathons [58]).