

From the Margins to the Center: Real Pathways for Young Migrant Women to Participate in Social and Political Life

Young women with migrant backgrounds face many challenges when trying to engage in the political and social life of the countries they live in. Despite their potential and motivation, they are often left without clear pathways to participate, learn, or make their voices heard.

In this article, we present a series of concrete pathways that can help change that. From existing youth programs and digital platforms to local initiatives and training opportunities, we highlight tools and spaces that support active civic and political engagement. Our goal is to offer a practical starting point—for young women, educators, NGOs, and policymakers alike—to better understand what works and what is still missing.

Current State of Participation

Across Europe, young women with migrant backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in both political and civic life. According to recent findings from the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022)**, migrant youth—especially girls—face systemic barriers such as limited access to information, lack of mentorship, and cultural or institutional exclusion.

While many have strong interest in social justice, community issues, and activism, their participation remains fragmented and often informal. They are more likely to engage through grassroots actions, online platforms, or local volunteering, rather than through formal political structures.

At the same time, new spaces are emerging. Youth councils, feminist collectives, digital storytelling projects, and intercultural networks are offering entry points. However, many of these initiatives remain invisible to those who need them most. Bridging that visibility gap—and providing clear, accessible information—is one of the main aims of this article.

Pathways to Engagement

Since integration is a primary focus of the European Union, numerous programs have been established to support young migrant women. Beyond our own [Voices of Change \(VOC\)](#) project, funded by the EU's CERV programme, there are various avenues available to help young women feel like active, integrated citizens. This section outlines key pathways, offering information on how to access opportunities across different EU countries.

Youth Councils and Local Participation Platforms

Youth councils, **LINK:** [National Youth Councils](#) Youth councils are platforms where young people can voice their concerns, contribute ideas, and participate in shaping policies that affect them. Many exist at the municipal, regional, or national level and welcome diverse voices, including migrants.

European Youth Forum – List of National Youth Councils, **LINK:** [European Youth Forum](#). On the site you will find a complete directory of national youth councils across Europe. You can find the organization representing youth in your country, visit their websites, and learn how to get involved in initiatives, consultations, and events.

European Youth Portal, **LINK:** [European Youth Portal](#) A comprehensive EU-run portal with information about: Volunteering and solidarity projects (like the European Solidarity Corps); Youth exchanges and mobility programs; Calls for participation in EU-wide consultations; Resources about rights, activism, and inclusion. Visit the Youth Forum site to locate your country's youth council. Then go to the Youth Portal to look up specific initiatives (filtered by country or topic). You can also subscribe to newsletters or follow their social media for updates.

Erasmus+ and National Agencies

The Erasmus+ programme provides funding and mobility opportunities for young people to participate in non-formal education, training, and civic engagement projects across Europe. Many of these programs specifically encourage inclusion and diversity, targeting those with fewer opportunities — including migrants.

LINK: [Erasmus+ National Agencies Directory](#) On the link you will find a list of the official National Agencies that manage Erasmus+ in each EU country. These agencies are your first point of contact for: Finding open calls for youth projects; Learning how to apply to training, exchanges, or civic initiatives; Getting support and guidance in your own language. Find your country in the list, then go to your national agency's website. There you'll usually find a section called "Youth" or "Opportunities for Individuals." Many agencies also hold information sessions or offer direct assistance.

Women's Networks and International Forums

Women's networks and international forums provide solidarity, mentorship, training, and platforms to raise awareness. They connect women from different backgrounds — including migrant women — and help them access leadership, advocacy, and decision-making spaces.

ENoMWA, **LINK:** [European Network of Migrant Women](#) is a feminist, migrant-led platform that works on policy advocacy, awareness-raising, and empowerment projects. You can learn about: Gender-based violence and women's rights; Political advocacy work in Brussels and

across Europe; Local grassroots member organizations you can connect with for support or collaboration

EWL, LINK: [European Women's Lobby \(EWL\)](#) is the largest umbrella organization of women's associations in Europe. Their website offers: Policy briefings and research on gender equality; Campaigns related to women's leadership, inclusion, and rights; Opportunities to join events, campaigns, and policy consultations

WIMN, LINK: [Women in Migration Network \(WIMN\)](#) is an international network advocating for the rights of migrant and refugee women. On their site, you'll find: Toolkits and training resources; Global advocacy campaigns; Stories and voices from women on the move. Explore their websites to see which local organizations are part of these networks. Many have contact forms, mailing lists, or social media where you can follow their events and get in touch. Look especially for their "Resources," "Projects," or "Get Involved" pages.

Referenced pages:

European Youth Forum – National Youth Councils Directory

<https://www.youthforum.org/members>

European Youth Portal

https://youth.europa.eu/home_en

Erasmus+ National Agencies Directory

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies>

European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW)

<https://www.migrantwomennetwork.org/about-us/>

European Women's Lobby (EWL)

<https://womenlobby.org/>

Women in Migration Network (WIMN)

<https://womeninmigration.org/>

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