Report

This hybrid workshop led by ALDA's Project Manager Dafne Sgarra, coordinating and representing the Thematic Hub on Youth empowerment and education, and Andreea Belu, head of Communication and Campaigns at EDRi, was dedicated to Youth and Digital and was focused on four fundamental pillars:

- Accessibility
- Safety and security
- Employability
- Democratic participation

At the start of the workshop, Ms Sgarra took the opportunity to present ALDA, its involvement in the fields of youth participation and digitalisation, and the main ongoing projects in these areas: PACIFY-D, H.E.Y!, and P-CUBE. The projects focus on helping young people have an active role in their society and in shaping their future, and learn about the decision making process in the public sphere.

This was followed by Ms Belu who presented EDRi and the impressive, impactful work they have been doing for more than 20 years. Ms Belu's intervention focused on the digital side of democratic participation, with specific attention on the impact of digital platforms regulation and secure messaging for young people, as this segment of citizens play an increasingly acknowledged key role in the democratic processes.

Then, ALDA and EDRi hosted a panel discussion during Workshop 6, inviting three relevant speakers: Judit Lantai from Young European Federalists (JEF Europe), Lauren Mason from

European Youth Forum (EYF) and Philippe Von Brocksdorff, a board member of the European Economic and Social committee. Multiple interesting questions were asked on the four pillars of youth participation and digitalisation: accessibility; safety and security; employability; democratic participation. The discussion was focused on accessibility matters for youngsters with fewer opportunities, and civil society and institutions' role in ensuring education opportunities to enhance digital skills; on the employability opportunities that are brought by digital rights of young people; on the need of empowering youngsters to use safe and secure communication services when participating in the democratic processes; on the new digital tools used by youngsters to express their participation online; and on the interaction between institutions and youth, to be facilitated by online forms of engagement.

All the panelists gave inspiring answers and provided the audience with compelling insights. This formed a great basis for the interactive workshop that followed on how we can articulate a shared vision with the ultimate goal to have a better, more inclusive and sustainable future, taking advantage of digital opportunities and preventing potential risks for youngsters. The four fundamental pillars mentioned above were the key themes of the facilitated dynamic exercise.

As a result, the following recommendations have been elaborated as a conclusion from the panel discussion and workshop:

Recommendation 1: In the digitalised society, EU institutions must ensure just access to the internet, devices and skills which are the foundation for equal education and employment opportunities. EU legislators must make sure that new technologies do not undermine quality, dignifying jobs or human-centric workplaces, and do not exacerbate existing exploitative and oppressive practices in recruitment, HR, management.

Recommendation 2: In the digitalised society, EU institutions must guarantee through legal and non-legal means the preconditions for young people's empowering, meaningful, secure and proactive participation in the democratic processes. These preconditions include: a protected civic space, access to safe and secure communication, equitable and inclusive processes for participation, assurance of our physical and mental health.