



THE MILLENNIAL
DIALOGUE



Romania

Bucharest, 26th February 2016

(...) I'd like to believe that we will have the brains to vote for simple people, like ourselves, for young open-minded people who are eager for novelty and change. The main changes will result from this particular eagerness of theirs and their being fed up with what is going on today.

Quote from a Romanian Millennial

**FEPS
Activity
Report**

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The **Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)** together with the **Democratic Left Foundation (FSD)** launched on the 26th of February 2016 the **Romanian Millennial Dialogue report**, included in the **Millennial Dialogue initiative**. The online survey and dialogue were conducted in February 2016 on the attitude and perceptions of the Romanian youth towards Romania's political system, processes and actors. The final report containing the findings of the research was presented and debated in a large public event which gathered progressive young leaders, politicians, NGO representatives and academics.



The report revealed that, despite the fact that most Romanian young people are generally happy with their lives (82%) and optimistic about their future (85%), **the interest in politics is extremely low** (only **10%** of the answers pointing towards a high interest in this area) and **perceived as continuingly declining trend**. Moreover, even for active persons, attending political meetings comes after taking part in different forms of civic protests. This situation could be explained by the fact that

a large share of the Romanian millennials (84%) is convinced that the political representatives generally ignore their views as they are not seen as a main target in the electoral campaigns. With this **lack of trust in the political spectrum**, the Romanian young generation would rather follow an entrepreneurial path as business owner or founder (35%) than a political one (3%).

Despite the data presented above, the findings of the research also revealed that **political participation and voting could be improved** as 76% of the Millennials would go to vote and their interest in politics would raise if they would feel that their vote would really count and if politicians would develop agendas more focused on young people; Romanian young generation is also strongly in favour of online voting (85%) and with more than a half of the respondents declared also in favour of compulsory vote.

Outstanding in the report conclusions are the data related to the **high priorities Romanian millennials would set for the state officials - education (96%), healthcare, and job creation (both with 95%)** -, in a context considered to be affected by corruption (81%) and inefficient and distorted economic performance (75%). One contradictory element could be the 70% agreement when tackling a general gender equality in society, in comparison with 22% opinions in favour of a greater proportion of women in politics.



The aim of the public event was also to debate on the **major issues Millennials are considering they are facing** and to point out a list of main strategies meant **to raise young Romanians' participation in domestic political life**:

1. Investing in areas prioritized by young people

Young people do not get involved in politics because the state does not promote public policies of interest to this segment. As there is an increasing trend of hollowing out the state, young people are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with political outcomes; a more active role of the state in alleviating social inequalities would be a signal to young people to become more involved. For example, more financial and managerial attention to educational and health services (desired by youth regardless of their background), should prove that their interests are important for the political class and would increase the interest for more involvement in politics.

2. Wise and empathic design of political programmes

A significant part of the participants admitted they would not vote according to ideology or candidates, but considering their political programme and analyzing to what extent it contains provisions related to their interests (eg. for people with disabilities). In this way, providing more consistency for too utopian programs and more attention to policies desired by young people (and further an online visibility for such programmes, as Internet is the primary means of communication & information source for this segment), would determine more youth involvement in politics.

3. Politics – an end in itself or a tool for managing social life?

Young people declare themselves not interested in politics, but willing to participate in elections. This is a distinction they operate between apathy towards politics and interest in issues that affect their lives. In other words, young people are disenchanted with the traditional approach to politics (politics as an end in itself). Therefore, if it would be stimulated the perception of politics as a tool for the management of the society where we live together, there could (re)appear young people's interest in politics as a tool for managing life in common.

In brief, **(a)** key areas investments, **(b)** youth oriented political programmes design and **(c)** politics as a tool for societal management, would be **three strategies** Romanian millenials promote in order to stimulate the political participation of their generation.

