



PRESS

## European Commission calls for #youngleaders worldwide to speak up at the European Development Days 2017

Young people from all corners of the world, aged 21 to 26, are invited by the European Commission to take part in the Young Leaders Programme at this year's European Development Days (EDD 2017). The event is Europe's leading forum on international cooperation and development and it will take place in Brussels on 7 and 8 June.

The Young Leaders Programme will engage young leaders to be part of the debate on the future of international development cooperation.

### Calling all Young Leaders worldwide

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said: *"European Union strongly supports the empowerment of young people, as they are the pillars of tomorrow's world. Our society needs their inspiration and courage to be more peaceful and prosperous. Through the Young Leaders Programme, we want to give voice to them. Their contribution to global development efforts is absolutely invaluable."*

Sixteen youth representatives will be selected based on their exceptional skills, experience and commitment to development issues. Once selected, they will be invited to participate in EDD 2017 high-level panels, share their ideas and experiences and be part of the global debate with key development stakeholders, policymakers and participants.

### Contact

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## Sharing ideas and experience with international decision-makers

### **Nestor Dehouindji, Benin**

*"Taking part in EDD 2016 meant that I felt that all the work I have done at a local level impacted and gave insights to the international development community. It was wonderful to feel that people were interested, concerned and learning from my own development experience. And I also believe that I created a network of other young leaders which became like a little family when we were in Brussels and hopefully we will stay connected for many years to come."*

Nestor is a young journalist specialised in economics and trade, with strong academic background in the contribution of international trade to development, and an extensive knowledge of the World Trade Organisation.

### **Vandinika Shukla, India**

*"Being selected for EDD 2016 was an incredible opportunity for me. I was an equal participant in such a significant international dialogue on inclusive development policy. I was with like-minded peers, I spoke directly to those who decide on policy and I was listened to and even challenged! It was an experience of a lifetime for me and it gave me a global community of young leaders that I will cherish forever."*

Vandinika has been the Head of Project Enable, an initiative aimed at empowering high school children to make their schools more accessible and equal opportunity driven through the implementation of the Indian Right to Education Act, which protects the right to access quality education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The online application for the Young Leaders Programme is open from **2 February until 9 March**. Applicants will need to submit a two-minute video explaining why they should be chosen to speak on one of the **EDD 2017 THEMES AND TOPICS**.

Applications will be received via the EDD 2017 website:  
[www.eudevdays.eu/young-leaders](http://www.eudevdays.eu/young-leaders)

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**Neven Mimica**  
EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development

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## Background - Investing in Development

EDD 2017 will take place in Brussels on 7 and 8 June 2017. They will focus on the international community's strategic response to the most pressing global challenges of the day, as part of the international effort to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event will bring together development actors committed to tackling poverty worldwide, with an emphasis on engaging the private sector as a key and responsible partner in economic development.

This year's forum – Investing in Development – will include three main themes: Investing in People and Planet, Investing in Prosperity, Investing in Peace and Partnerships. Achieving inclusive and sustainable growth, creating decent jobs, particularly for women and young people can be achieved thanks to more investment, in particular with the full engagement of the private sector both as an economic and responsible actor in development.

The European Development Days showcase Europe's commitment to building a sustainable and fairer world. The forum builds on the core belief that cooperation is key to achieve real change towards a poverty-free and sustainable world where everyone has the prospect for a decent life. An essential aim is thus to inspire the desire to work together in a spirit of true partnership through facilitating networking.

Everyone is given a voice in this open, collaborative and inclusive platform. Each year, the global development community is invited to contribute directly to the official EDD programme by proposing activities and sessions.

The forum attracts more than 6,000 participants from over 140 countries, representing +1,200 organisations from the development community. The forum fosters a true spirit of partnership with all development actors. Since its launch in 2006, the forum has been an incubator of new ideas to bring about real change towards a poverty-free, sustainable and fairer world, where everyone has the opportunity for a decent life.

Key topics of the 2017 edition:



### INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND PLANET

Young People  
Gender equality/women empowerment  
Migration and mobility  
Demography and development  
Inequalities  
Sustainable energy and climate action



### INVESTING IN PROSPERITY

Sustainable Investment  
Domestic resource mobilisation  
Trade and fair globalisation  
Decent jobs  
Digitalisation



### INVESTING IN PEACE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Partnering with the Private Sector  
Building global partnerships  
Engaging with Middle Income Countries (MICs)  
Partnerships for CSOs and local actors  
Fragility and resilience

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