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Mayor Sybrand van Haersma Buma

Municipality of Leeuwarden

Brussels, 2 December 2025

Dear Mayor,

The European Youth Forum would like to thank Leeuwarden for participating in the European Youth Capital (EYC) 2028 Selection Process and congratulate the city once again for being shortlisted among the finalists.

Throughout the selection process, we were pleased to work with the engaged team from Leeuwarden, and the Jury was delighted to meet Mr Abel Reitsma, Deputy Major, Municipality of Leeuwarden and Else Hofstra, Youth Representative and editor-in-chief of Leeuwarden final bid, at the EYC 2028 Jury meeting on 19 November 2025 in Brussels.

This year, the Jury was composed of representatives of European institutions, networks and NGOs, including the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe, the OECD, and more. They carefully analysed and debated the applications during the year.

In the course of the competition, your team demonstrated an exceptionally strong and coherent commitment to youth participation, with well-designed participatory processes embedded throughout bid development, programme design, implementation, and legacy. Despite the small size of the city, you presented a transparent, high-quality bottom-up framework that is likely to be implemented effectively and sustainably. All these peculiarities were very well received by the Jury.

Further to the recommendations already provided, below is the final feedback from the EYC 2028 final round of applications and the EYC 2028 Jury meeting.

We hope that the feedback provided here will serve to boost the ongoing work, strengthening and improving the relations between the Municipality and young people.

FEEDBACK FROM THE JURY

The application presents a strong and consistent commitment to youth participation, which is clearly embedded throughout the bid and

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represents one of its most significant strengths. Despite coming from a relatively small city, the applicant demonstrates a high level of ambition in terms of participatory practice, clearly outlining how young people have been and will continue to be actively involved in bid development, programme design, implementation, and legacy structures. Transparent and well-articulated participatory processes underpin the entire application, and there is a credible intention to sustain these mechanisms beyond the European Youth Capital year. The description of the situation of young people is well grounded, having been established through a combination of participatory and research-based approaches, and provides a solid contextual basis for the bid.

At the same time, the application would benefit from a clearer articulation of an overarching programme vision. While bid themes and goals are identified and show a reasonable degree of coherence with the situation of young people, they are broadly defined and operate more as guiding principles or branding elements than as concrete, outcome-oriented objectives. As a result, they do not consistently provide a strong strategic framework to drive programme design or to ensure a clear red line from needs to goals, activities, impact, and legacy. The programme chapter places a strong emphasis on participatory methods, with much of the content intentionally left to be developed through future proposals from young people and partner organisations. While this bottom-up approach is a positive and credible choice, it also means that concrete details about programme activities and delivery remain limited at this stage, making it difficult to fully assess the scale, focus, and ambition of the final programme.

Several chapters stand out positively, particularly the communication and outreach section, which is exceptionally well developed and provides a clear, segmented, and practical strategy for reaching diverse audiences. The chapter on information about the applicant city is also comprehensive and coherent, successfully linking local youth policies to EU Youth Goals and clearly identifying young people's needs. The preparation, evaluation, contingency, and infrastructure chapters present reasonable and generally sound approaches, though they tend to prioritise methodology and participatory principles over detailed operational planning and would benefit from greater specificity, clearer milestones, and more concrete descriptions of activities. Importantly, the application does not appear underprepared; rather, it prioritises flexibility and participation over early programme definition.

The governance and co-decision-making arrangements show good intentions but reflect some limitations. While young people are involved

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throughout the management structure, the model relies heavily on young municipal employees, which may constrain independent youth-led decision-making and accountability. Similarly, although some connections to European policies, networks, and other European Youth Capitals are described, the European dimension of the programme and its content remains relatively underdeveloped and could be more substantively integrated.

Overall, the application offers a coherent and credible framework for a high-quality, bottom-up European Youth Capital process, with youth participation embedded as its core strength. To further strengthen the bid, clearer strategic direction, more concrete programme definition, a stronger European dimension, and a more impact-oriented framework would be beneficial, particularly in ensuring that the extensive participatory work translates into clearly defined outcomes and sustainable change for young people.

The European Youth Forum would like to thank you for your support for this process, and commend the Leeuwarden EYC team on your application, which shows clear motivation to boost youth participation and empower young people in your city.

We sincerely hope your city will apply to the European Youth Capital 2029 call, which is now open until 17 February 2026.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the European Youth Forum Secretariat at 5.1.2e@youthforum.org.

We remain at your disposal to discuss the notes above. Thank you for running for the European Youth Capital.

Yours sincerely,

5.1.2e

Milosh Ristovski
Secretary-General
European Youth Forum

Legenda toegepaste uitzonderingsgrondslagen

In dit document zijn gegevens geanonimiseerd op grond van:

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