



On 18 February, UNRIC had the chance to join scout leaders from all over Europe at their gathering on a picturesque farm in Morbecque, Hauts-de-France. The scouts, most of whom were university students, devoted a week to discuss the new campaign “My Europe My Say”, an initiative aiming to mobilize scouts and youth in general for the European Elections in May 2019.

In Morbecque, UNRIC had the opportunity to hold a workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals, a topic that resonated strongly with the participants. Not only were they already well-informed on Agenda 2030, they also had innovative ideas on how to further spread the word, especially to the younger members of their scout groups.

During the workshop, the young leaders picked SDGs 4, 6, 13 and 16 as their priorities. The ensuing group sessions discuss the topics of “Education”, “Clean Water and Sanitation”, “Climate Action” and “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”. One group proposed to introduce a learning moment during summer water games, pointing out that too often drinking water is being used for games that could easily be played with non-purified water. They also invented fun challenges and competitions that would make them aware of how much water they consume every day and teach them how to save water.

The group working on climate action suggested building activities with sustainable material. “We can also supply non-sustainable materials, but each time the kids use these materials, some of the sustainable resources will be taken away by us”, one participant explained, outlining a simple way of introducing children to the concept of the circular economy. A scout leader from Macedonia had also developed his own boardgame around the topic of sustainable consumption and production.

The education group pointed out that they, as scout leaders, play a big role in teaching the next generation. “We already know what comes after school and can provide guidance to younger people who might need advice during their school time”, they explained. “And we want to propose our scouting methods to school teachers, because the best way of learning is learning by practice. Then you will have a much easier time understanding the theory behind it.”

The scouts discussing SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, made perhaps the most radical proposal. They want to organize a weekend camp for young scouts that teaches them about social injustice in the form of a simulation. For example, half of the participants would not get sauce with their pasta or have no sleeping mat. The children would learn hands-on how to battle or foster social injustice by sharing or not sharing their resources – and by making wise decisions in their very own “parliament”.

The overwhelming creativity of the scout leaders shows once again that young people are ready and committed to assume leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals.

“I was pleased to see that the group of scouts embrace the fact that these goals are not the “UN Goals” per se but rather the “people’s goals”. It helped them to realize why it is important to own them and share them with the kids,” Caroline Petit, Deputy Director of UNRIC said.

With the immense motivation and great ideas of the scouts leaders, the chances are good that they will inspire a whole new generation of SDG champions.

