

The event at the Schwarzkopf-Stiftung in Mitte started around 17:30, where ca. 21 people came together. The age range of the attendees was roughly between 15 and 50. It started with a little introduction to the two speakers/guests, which were the UN Youth Delegates in Germany. First they told us what they do, how they got to being a UN delegate, what their perspective on youth-involvement is, and what they actually do in their day-to-day life.

What I found interesting was that they mentioned that they were currently on a Germany-tour, visiting all kinds of schools and institutions to engage with the youth, as they want to gain insight in the diversity of perspective and opinion. They also mentioned that as UN-delegates they have to understand and show that there is not "one German youth" which shares the same frustrations, but that there is a large diversity in this generation.

Their aim as UN-delegates is not to represent the UN in Germany, but to represent Germany and its young people in the UN (They go to visit New York, I believe once or twice a year). This interview sparked a short discussion about Germany's current placement in the UN, specifically their lack of representation in the UN security council.

We then moved on from a more interview-based discussion to an open conversation where all participants were able to share insights on the following topics; "How effective is the participation of the youth?", "Where are there limits to representation of younger generations/ When are young people only invited to make it seem more inclusive?", "When do we recognize expertise?", "Is the youth taken seriously in high-stakes political decisions?", and more.

Different individuals from different ages, backgrounds and regions of Germany had time here to share their experiences with involvement in politics and democracy, and their frustrations regarding lack of support or recognition, as well as ideas for change.

One key aspect I remember is that of the UN-delegates mentioned, that in order for frustration to turn into action, one must dare to speak up and with people of authority such as associations or political representatives (so-called "Abgeordnete") of the region. However oftentimes the issue is that people do not know how to approach this or where to start.

Finally the discussion broadened to democracy in general, and the fact that involvement doesn't always have to be political in order to promote democracy. Some final acknowledgements included the role of social media in social engagement, and that the access to debates and participation in politics must be simplified in order to represent younger generations ("If you want to represent the youth, let them be on site and active!").

Overall this whole event took about 1.5 hours, as afterwards there was a small reception with food and beverages, and the opportunity to talk with other participants. I thought this was a very interesting event that provided a lot of insight into what opportunities young people already have in politics, what change we want, and how we can make this change happen.

