



10 April 2014 – The European elections of 2014 are rapidly approaching. In May, Europe will elect its 751 new Parliamentarians to guide a course for the future.

At a debate organised by [Friends of Europe](#), UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon sent a challenge to the youth of the world. He [urged](#) the young generation to challenge their leaders, senators, parliamentarians and CEO's. The SG encouraged them to act and pointed out the possibilities democracy brings. "You can choose your leaders who are much more committed to environmental issues, or leaders with a much more far-sighted vision", Ban said "We are the leaders of today, but by tomorrow we will hand over the torch to the younger generation".

In Europe the youth today have the chance to take up this challenge. Politics, it seems, do not interest the European youth. This is true in part, but not for the reasons one would expect. Youth voting in the European elections has consistently decreased over the last decade from an 87 percent turnout to less than 65 percent. This is not because the young people are not interested in politics, on the contrary they very much are. Unemployment, climate change, social equity are examples of issues the youth hold close to heart. But the way politicians have approached them and reached out in the past leaves much to be desired.

Parliamentarians are trying a new tactic and battling for the youth vote in a creative way: from behind the microphone. EU40, a group of young parliamentarians addressing voting audiences under forty, are holding a rap battle to inform and invigorate youth voting. The “ [Battle for YOUR Vote](#) ”

will feature six parliamentarians, of different nationalities and parties, who will team up with MC's to battle on topics submitted by youth NGO delegations. This innovative outreach attempt will be broadcast around the EU in cooperation with MTV in an attempt to involve the youth and attract their attention.

Hosted in the Parliament, young people from the 28 EU Member states gathered to listen to a new type of political debate. Chairs and podiums were replaced with turntables and spotlights as MEPs put their message to rhyme. The topics that were given the most attention were youth unemployment and the opening of borders to avoid creating a "Fortress Europe". Through the course of the battle each party rapped about their solutions or changes the victor determined by audience applause.

While the EU calls on its citizens to “Act. React. Impact.” Youth voting organizations are simply aiming to generate involvement at any level. The decisions made now will affect the future, a future where the youth will be the leaders. The sooner young voters are reached out to and provided political choices that speak to them, the better they will be able to shape not only their own future, but that of Europe. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has recognized that, “Europe's leadership [in climate change] is essential for the world.” Reaching out to young voters, and more importantly including them, is an essential part of this leadership.