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DDP-YD/ETD (2024)32 Strasbourg, 5 February 2024

**Study on the accessibility and inclusiveness of youth activities**

held at the European Youth Centres

**Call for Expressions of Interest by consultants**

Deadline: 20 February 2024

**Background: The European Youth Centres accessible to all young people**

The [Council of Europe youth sector](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/about-us) is committed to promoting youth engagement and social inclusion across Europe. The [youth sector strategy 2030](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030) aims at enabling young people throughout the continent to actively uphold, defend, promote, and benefit from the Council of Europe’s core values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. One of the objectives of this strategy is to strengthen young people’s access to rights so that they can rely on an enabling environment to fully enjoy their human rights and freedom.

The activities carried out in the framework of the [Youth for Democracy programme](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/programme) put into practice the Council of Europe youth policy objectives and approaches. Providing an accessible and inclusive environment for all young people to be able to take part in all activities, regardless of their ability status, notably by removing organisational, environmental, and attitudinal barriers, is necessary to secure the fundamental equality of access and participation.

The Youth Department has an important record of supporting the work of European networks and federations of young people with disabilities, notably through study sessions at the [European Youth Centres](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/mission-and-mandate), the co-funding of activities by the [European Youth Foundation](https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation) activities, and the support to youth led civil society organisations working for equality and independent living. Youth organisations advocating for the rights of young people with disabilities are regularly represented in the [Advisory Council on Youth](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/advisory-council-on-youth) and, consequently, in the [co-management system](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management) of decision-making of the youth sector. This is also reflected in the decision of the [Joint Council on Youth](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/joint-council-on-youth) to have a Rapporteur on Mainstreaming Disability Issues to support and monitor developments in this area.

The [European Youth Centres](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/mission-and-mandate), in [Budapest](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/eyc-budapest) and [Strasbourg](https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/eyc-strasbourg), are educational establishments of the Council of Europe and *instruments for the participation of European youth in the building of Europe*. They are the home of most of the activities in the Youth for Democracy programme and are or aspire to be centres of excellence and innovation for non-formal educational activities with an intercultural dimension. As the venue of activities dedicated to citizenship and human rights education and democratic youth participation, they must be safe and accessible spaces for all young people who want or aspire to take part in their activities.

The concern for accessibility of the centres, and of the activities that they host, has been present ever since the centres were set up. Accessibility has notably been at the heart of the major renovations made in the centres in Budapest (2005) and Strasbourg (2008).

The logistical and environmental framework of the youth centres plays an important part in the accessibility of the activities, but other factors are equally important, including the attitudes of all those involved in activities and the way that the activities are designed and implemented (content, approach, formats…).

To address this, a manual on [Promoting Accessibility of the Training and Education Programme](https://rm.coe.int/manual-promoting-accessibility-of-educational-programme-eycs-2015-/168092d04f)  provides essential information and tips for staff members of the Youth Department, as well as experts consultants working with the activities, to ensure that programme and methodology are designed taking into account the access needs of each participant, including participants with disabilities. This is also reflected in the [Quality standards of education and training activities of the Council of Europe Youth Department](https://rm.coe.int/1680703013), which specifically acknowledges the importance of needs assessment in the preparatory phase of each activity. This implies, for example, identifying participants access needs prior to an activity and finding ways to tailor-make the programme considering specific access needs of participants.

Ableism as a challenge to human rights, is also reflected in the [Compass – the manual on Human Rights Education with Young People](https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/home) which serves as a resource for educators and trainers and includes [practical activities and background information on Disability and Disablism](https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/disability-and-disablism).

In the recent years, the programme of activities of the European Youth Centres has included activities about participation of young deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, visually impaired, with mobility challenges or mental disability. Those young people often take the lead in organising and facilitating the activities and this is beneficial to those young people as well as to the whole youth sector of the Council of Europe.

Yet, this is not enough and is far from being understood and applied across the whole programme, both by the Council of Europe Youth Department as such and by the various stakeholders involved in the activities. Equality in access to all human rights is a permanent task that requires action and the policy, educational and practical levels.

**A project to enhance inclusion and accessibility**

The Youth Department is currently implementing a project to further enhance the inclusion, and active and effective participation of young people with disabilities in all activities by developing accessible facilities, services, publications and information to all young people.

Central to the project is a **consultative meeting** thatwill be organised to collect information and build a comprehensive understanding of the needs of young people with disabilities. This meeting, to be held from 19 to 21 June in Strasbourg 5EYC), will bring together a variety stakeholders and youth experts to:

* reflect together on the needs of young people with disabilities or impairments and the barriers and issues they may face when interacting and engaging with the Council of Europe youth sector, be it through participation in activities (including online or hybrid activities), use of publications or the website, or other means,
* make proposals on how to ensure fully inclusive, supportive and accessible environments for young people to be able to take a full and active part in the activities of the European Youth Centres,
* identify policy measures and action to further enhance and promote the equal access to rights for young people with disabilities in European youth activities and programmes.

The meeting should, in particular, address the following issues:

* mapping of the needs of young people with disabilities,
* inclusive language/terminology and its role in supporting inclusion and equality,
* assessing existing barriers for in-person and online activities, and explore the tools that can support overcoming them (assistive technology devices/applications for learning purposes interpreting, captioning, translation, accessible media, equipment, loop system, etc.),
* assessing existing barriers for accessing publications, websites, and identify the tools to overcome them (translation, software, accessible digital content, equipment, etc.);
* review and update the manual “[Promoting accessibility of the Training and Education Programme at the European Youth Centres](https://rm.coe.int/manual-promoting-accessibility-of-educational-programme-eycs-2015-/168092d04f)”,
* reviewing the recommendations of the [Consultative Meeting on Inclusion of Young People with Disabilities in Youth Activities of the Council of Europe](https://rm.coe.int/168070236c) and update as necessary,
* discussing possible content of an action plan to achieve accessibility of the Youth Department’s programme of activities.

**The study on the accessibility of youth activities**

In the context above described, the Council of Europe is looking for consultant(s) to carry out a study and prepare a report about the accessibility of the programme activities for young people with disabilities held at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest.

The study should focus on the way that the activities are planned, organised and delivered – including educational approaches and methods, technologies of education and communication, preparedness and preparation of educational teams and staff of the centres, etc.

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| The study should **not** cover the structure, design, facilities or equipment of the European Youth Centres related to access and mobility to/in the centres, accommodation, work and recreation facilities, catering, safety and security in the centres.  In parallel with the study that is the object of this call, the Council of Europe is also commissioning two other studies:   * on the accessibility of the youth centres, especially access and mobility to/in the centres, accommodation, work and recreation facilities, catering, safety and security in the centres, * on the accessibility of online publications, Internet sites and other online educational resources. |

The current study, and ensuing report, should cover the points and follow a structure similar to the one presented in appendix 1.

The consultant(s) are expected to participate in the consultative meeting in June, present the main findings and proposals of the report and contribute to the programme of the meeting.

The report is to be written in English (UK) and not exceed 20 pages (excluding appendices).

1. **Methodology and sources of information**

The report should be based on the analysis of the following documents:

1. Evaluation reports by the preparatory teams and by the educational advisors (to be made available by the Secretariat of the Youth Department).
2. The application and assessment forms for activities to be held at the European Youth Centres.
3. Reports of study sessions about accessibility and inclusion of young people with disabilities.
4. The reports of the Rapporteurs of the Joint Council on Youth on Mainstreaming Disability issues.
5. Guidelines and policy documents of youth and other civil society organisations and bodies advocating for inclusion and accessibility (especially in the education and youth work sectors) and, where available, “best practices” of other youth centres and educational institutions committed to equality and inclusion.

The consultants are also expected to conduct interviews, individually or in the form of focus groups, with:

* Current and former Rapporteurs of the Joint Council on Youth on Mainstream Disability Issues.
* Policy officers and course directors of youth organisations that regularly hold activities on accessibility and inclusion at the European Youth Centres.
* Trainers and facilitators of the Trainers pool that provide support to activities on accessibility.
* Educational staff of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.
* Other relevant stakeholders or experts.

The study should take into account, among others, the existing standards and approaches:

1. the [European Convention on Human Rights](https://www.echr.coe.int/european-convention-on-human-rights), the [European Social Charter](https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter/the-revised-european-social-charter), the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-Persons-with-disabilities.html) and other relevant international treaties,
2. the Council of Europe [Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities – human rights: a reality for all (2017-2023)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/disability),
3. the manual [Promoting accessibility of the Training and Education Programme at the European Youth Centres](https://rm.coe.int/manual-promoting-accessibility-of-educational-programme-eycs-2015-/168092d04f),
4. the report on the [Consultative Meeting on Inclusion of Young People with Disabilities in Youth Activities of the Council of Europe](https://rm.coe.int/168070236c).
5. **Indicative calendar for implementation**

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| Deadline | Activity/Deliverable |
| 26 February 2024 | Selection of the consultant(s) |
| March- April 2024 | Collection and analysis of information by the experts (desk research, interviews) |
| 2 May 2024 | Submission of the draft report |
| 1 June 2024 | Submission of the final report, incorporating up to two rounds of feedback by the secretariat of the Youth Department |
| 19-21 June | Consultative Meeting |

This timeline is indicative; adjustments are possible if negotiated with the secretariat.

1. **Competences of the consultant/s**
2. Thorough experience of non-formal education in intercultural contexts, preferably including in international activities involving young people with disabilities.
3. Knowledge of standards and practices regarding accessibility and inclusion in education activities.
4. Knowledge and experience of the Council of Europe youth policy and non-formal education standards and approaches.
5. Knowledge of the Council of Europe mission and instruments in the areas of human rights and democracy (and the possible connections with disability/accessibility standards and youth policy).
6. Very good analytical and writing skills.
7. Very good command of English, knowledge of French will be an advantage.
8. Ability to work autonomously and to respect deadlines.
9. Experience of similar studies or works will be particularly valued.
10. **Procedure for submission of expression of interest**

Experts interested in replying to this call should do so by filling in the appended Form for expressions of interest (appendix 2) and returning it to [youth.trainers@coe.int](mailto:youth.trainers@coe.int) by **20 February 2023** at **23:59** CET. Consultants may apply individually or as a consortium.

1. **Criteria for selection**

* Experience of non-formal education in intercultural contexts, preferably including in international activities involving young people with disabilities – 35%
* Knowledge/experience of standards and practices regarding accessibility and inclusion in education activities – 30%
* Knowledge and experience of the Council of Europe youth policy and non-formal education standards and approaches and human rights standards – 20%
* Price: 15%

The Council of Europe welcomes tenders from all experts who fulfil the above-mentioned competences and conditions, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

1. **Documents to submit:**
2. The completed for expression of interest
3. A recent Curriculum Vitae of all the consultants involved in the study
4. Examples of, or links to, relevant similar work and evidence of the experiences and knowledge expected.

**Appendix 1**

SUGGESTED **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

(with the possibility for adjustments)

## Introduction (scope and methodology used)

## Executive summary – with main findings, conclusions and recommendations

## Review/evaluation of current practices and experiences, with a concern to “map” positive and negative experiences, recent developments, and recurring obstacles (to be developed, possibly following the same points as under chapter V)

## Existing standards and codes of good practice (possibly the basis for benchmarks)

## Proposals for a “plan” for enhancing the accessibility of the activities, including:

## Criteria and forms for applying to participate

1. Communication and information about and during the activities
2. Assessing and taking into account needs of participants
3. Assuring autonomy and participation throughout the activity
4. Managing individual needs and constrains and while pursuing collective aims and objectives
5. Support and access of working sessions and leisure/free time
6. Reporting results
7. Participatory approaches and working methods
8. Role of personal assistants and other support staff
9. Preparation of facilitators and staff of the European Youth Centres
10. Administrative and financial issues
11. Language and terminology
12. Creating a supportive human and administrative environment for enhancing accessibility and inclusion
13. (Possible) Calendar and Guidelines for the implementation of the proposals

## Conclusions and evaluation of the study

**Appendix 2**

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| FORM FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST | |
| **Call** | Study on the accessibility and inclusiveness of the youth activities held at the European Youth Centres |
| **Name(s) and SURNAME(s):** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| **Telephone/s:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Nationality:** |  |
| **Working languages:** | English  French  Other: |
| If applying as a consortium or team, please indicate the name of the contact person for further contact or information | |

**NB:** It is in the interest of the consultants to provide links to, or append copies of, documents or other products that provide evidence of previous work or expertise.

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1. **Please provide information about your experience and expertise regarding:**
2. Non-formal education in intercultural contexts, preferably including in international activities involving young people with disabilities

1. Standards and practices regarding accessibility and inclusion in education activities

1. The Council of Europe youth policy and non-formal education standards and approaches

1. The Council of Europe mission and instruments in the areas of human rights and democracy (and the possible connections with disability/accessibility standards and youth policy)

1. **How do you envisage preparing the report?** Please propose a list of specific activities to be undertaken as well as an indicative timeline/time necessary for completion of tasks.

1. **What is your motivation to carry out this study?**

1. **Do you have any comments to the proposed content of the study?** If yes, please reflect them here.

1. **Financial offer in Euros**

Please provide the total price of your honoraria for carrying out this work, including the participation in the Consultative Meeting in June (3 days) but excluding travel or subsistence costs related to the meeting.

1. **Any other relevant information**

Please provide copies or links to any relevant previous work of yours as well as a recent CV.

**Deadline: 20 February 2023, 23:59 CET**

Form to be returned to: [youth.trainers@coe.int](mailto:youth.trainers@coe.int)

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**Exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interests**

By submitting this expression of interest, the consultant(s) declare on their honour not being any of the below situations, failing which, in accordance with the procurement rules of the Council of Europe, they will be excluded from participating in this call if they:

* have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
* are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
* have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or serious professional misconduct;
* do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of their country of incorporation, establishment or residence;
* are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
* have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
* are or appear to be in a situation of conflict of interest;
* are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;
* are currently employed by the Council of Europe or were employed by the Council of Europe on the date of the launch of the procurement procedure.