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ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

English only

CCJ statement on Europe Day 2026

May 5th marks Europe Day in the Council of Europe as a commemoration of the 1949 signing of the Statute of the Council of Europe. This document laid the foundations for the political post-war reconstruction of our continent, to be built around a set of common values: human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

For 77 years the Council of Europe has pursued a constructive effort of European unity in spite of the many threats and challenges that we have had to face. Some of those threats are more tangible, like the militaristic expansionism by the Russian Federation for which Council of Europe member states like Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, continue to pay the price. Other threats like democratic backsliding and erosion of the rule of law, undermine trust and feed polarisation.

These threats are not the only ones that our European democracies are facing, nor are they isolated. Growing trends in intolerance and discrimination towards minorities, and the ascension of authoritarian tendencies within our societies, boosted by a polarising digital environment, endanger our system of rights and protections. A system that, if taken for granted, risks erosion through complacency, ultimately weakening the values that it was created to protect and promote.

Of particular concern is the ongoing discussion around the reform of the system of the European Convention on Human Rights, as in recent years voices have risen calling on its provisions to be watered down, with a risk of undoing decades of human rights protections in Europe. We reaffirm our profound belief in fundamental freedoms as the foundation of justice and peace, which can only be maintained by an effective observance of the European Convention on Human Rights through national courts and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

On this historic day, the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) reaffirms its belief in the need for a strong stance in support of the core founding values of the Council of Europe. An inclusive and comprehensive approach to democracy, human rights and the rule of law need to remain the focus of the Council of Europe's work. We believe that upholding these values needs to translate into continued support for youth civil society and the implementation of the youth perspective. In this regard, the New Democratic Pact shines a light of hope in tomorrow, where we will do our best to see a clear presence of contributions by Europe's youth.

This day should be more than the day of the year when we tick the box on talking about our values. Thus, we also call on member states to show meaningful commitment to the Council of Europe's values through practice and take action to uphold these values at home. Not just on 5 May but every day of the year.

The statements of the Advisory Council are published for the purpose of informing the public about the activities of the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector. The statements reflect the opinions and positions of the Advisory Council and its members. The views expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Europe.