

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

12 August 2024

English only

International Youth Day

Every year, on 12 August, we celebrate International Youth Day worldwide. The day was initially introduced in 2000 by the United Nations to put a spotlight on young people and the challenges they face. This year's theme, "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development", underscores the pivotal role young people play in digital adoption and innovation. In 2022, three-quarters of young people were found to frequently use the internet, underscoring their significant engagement with digital technologies.¹

This theme provides a rare moment of reflection on the impact digitalisation has on young people's daily lives. Young people use digital tools to stay informed about political, social, and economic issues, express themselves, communicate, share information, and find educational opportunities, employment, and political participation.

While digital tools offer numerous benefits, they also bring challenges such as privacy concerns, online harms (including gender-based violence), and digital fatigue.² Digital exclusion is particularly prevalent in rural areas, low-income countries, and among different genders, where young women have less access to the internet and digital skills compared to young men.³

That said, digital innovations have also brought flexibility and ease. For instance, the rise of digitalisation, including but not limited to remote and hybrid work customs, has also created opportunities for young people regarding their participation in policy-making. During the Coronavirus pandemic, different online tools were introduced, including many online meeting platforms, which made it easier and more financially accessible to contribute to meetings with policymakers and different stakeholders. These online tools were also beneficial to young students by lowering physical barriers to their education.

While the Reykjavik Declaration does not draw a direct connection between young people and artificial intelligence, it does acknowledge both the positive impact and opportunities that can be derived from its use, coupled with the need to recognise and mitigate emerging externalities tied to it. The Declaration focuses on the consequences that digitalisation has on the principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The signatories to the Declaration commit to ensuring a leading role for the Council of Europe to develop standards

¹ [International Youth Day](#), United Nations

² [Making digitalisation work for young people](#), European Youth Forum

³ [International Youth Day](#), United Nations

to safeguard those principles. The Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence is a priority in this field. The Declaration grants an opportunity for youth participation in digitalisation and artificial intelligence with the development of the introduction of a youth perspective into the Organisation's deliberations.

We commend different documents currently being developed within the Council of Europe. In this regard, this year's Arab-European Youth Forum and Asia-Europe Training Seminar both focus on youth, digitalisation and artificial intelligence while the Gender Equality Commission is working on a recommendation on the impact of artificial intelligence systems on equality, including gender equality and non-discrimination.

On this International Youth Day, the Advisory Council on Youth urges the member States to develop further particular measures and standards contained in the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence relating to the challenges that young people in particular face with regard to the rapidly evolving pace of digitalisation and artificial intelligence innovation. The Advisory Council on Youth remains at their disposal for the further meaningful participation of young people in the development of these standards.

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.