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2 June 2020, Strasbourg

Promoting Diversity through Youth Political Participation

Call for participants

Online - Workshop

12 June -10 July

E-learning platform of the Council of Europe's youth sector

29-30 June

Web-conferences (Online meetings)

Youth Participation at the Council of Europe

Participation is an essential element of citizenship in a democratic society and a democratic Europe. Youth participation is not an end in itself, but a means of achieving positive changes in young people's lives and of building a better society. The sustainability of the Council of Europe's core values, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, relies also on the creativity, competencies, social commitment, and contribution of young people as well as on their confidence in the future. Youth policies and youth work practice must support young people to realise their full potential as autonomous members of society, enabling them to develop life plans and exercise their democratic citizenship.

In recent years, there have been a growing number of initiatives promoting and strengthening youth involvement at very different levels – international, regional, national and local. Different policy standards also exist on the level of the Council of Europe, to guide the development and improvement of meaningful youth participation systems. One such standard is the [revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#), adopted in May 2003 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe recommends that its member States facilitate and encourage youth participation in politics and civil societies at both local community and national levels and to make youth participation a priority in public policies. A manual, [Have your say!](#), was also published by the Council of Europe to support the implementation of the recommendation. The manual is a collection of reflections and questions that can help those working at local level to find their own ways of achieving meaningful participation by young people.

In January 2020, the Council of Europe adopted its Youth sector strategy 2030. The new strategy provides policy guidance and a broad political roadmap for the period 2020-30. The strategy defines that the:

“Council of Europe youth sector should aim at enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe’s core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, notably by ... broadening youth participation, so that young people participate meaningfully in decision-making, on the basis of a broad social and political consensus in support of inclusion, participatory governance and accountability.”

The strategy defines that the thematic priority of the Council of Europe’s youth sector for the next 10 years is *“revitalising pluralistic democracy, with special emphasis on:*

- increasing the capacity of youth civil society to advance participatory democracy and democratic citizenship within and beyond their memberships;*
- conducting more policies and governance processes in a meaningful, participatory manner, involving diverse groups of young people and their representatives/organisations;*
- strengthening youth policy and youth work in removing barriers to youth participation.”*

The Online Workshop

The activity was originally planned as a study session applied by LYMEC - European Liberal Youth. Titled “Hear me out, take me in!” the study session run in cooperation with the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg aimed to analyse the social climate, manifested attitudes and facilitation of (new) members in political youth organisations as to be more inclusive and sensitive to diversity. The activity aimed to enable meaningful participation in political processes for all.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activity was replaced by an online workshop consisting of four learning modules, some in the format of an e-learning module, and others in the format of an online meeting. Based on the Council of Europe’s standards and approaches in creating meaningful youth participation and youth policies, the activity intends to keep the idea of exploring how youth political participation can promote and support diversity, and how young people from diverse backgrounds can have spaces for meaningful youth participation. It will also serve as a space to jointly reflect how young people can take an active role in political participation processes and how youth political organisations can be more supportive to diversity.

Aim and Objectives

The online workshop " Promoting Diversity through Youth Political Participation" will explore challenges and good practices from political youth organisations in promoting participation in an inclusive, meaningful and sensitive to diversity approach. The objectives of the activity are:

1. To analyse the connection between diversity, power and rhetoric and see how this impacts young people’s political participation
2. To discuss challenges and issues which prevent young people with diverse backgrounds to take part in the political decision-making process

3. To map good practices in supporting inclusive and meaningful youth participation in political youth organisations
4. To introduce existing Council of Europe approaches for youth participation and explore the instruments of the Youth sector of the Council of Europe.

Content of the Online Workshop

The online workshop will be consisted of modules on the e-learning platform of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, and webinars. The workshop will be facilitated and run on the e-learning platform of the Youth Department which is based on Moodle (<https://e-learning4youth.coe.int/>).

The dates and content of the learning activities is as follows:

Module 1: Youth Participation, realities and practices (open from 12 June- 26 June) includes an introduction of the course and participants, sharing about participants work on youth participation and successful projects, introduction to the Council of Europe's youth sector, introduction to LYMEC, defining and working with diversity and intersectionality. The module will also explore Youth participation and the Council of Europe's work on youth participation including the existing standards and educational approaches.

Meeting 1: Exploring challenges to political youth participation for all young people

Date: Monday, 29 June 2020 from 14-18:00 CET

The e-meeting will provide an introduction to the different practices, challenges and ideas to promote diversity in youth political participation. It will explore intersectionality issues in political participation and motivate participants to use the Council of Europe's standards in their work.

Meeting 2: Good practices to promote political youth participation

Date: Tuesday, 30 June 2020 from 14-18:00 CET

The meeting will analyse good practices to promote diversity and will reflect on existing tools, approaches and possible follow-up projects to promote diversity in political youth participation. Some of the topics for discussion will be focused on promoting youth political participation of young Roma and ethnic minorities, LGBTQI+ youth, youth with disability, young people from rural areas and others.

Module 2: Creating follow-up projects (open from 1 July to 10 July). Following the webinars, the participants will be asked to reflect on possible follow-up projects or initiatives they would like to implement. The module will include a short introduction to project management and funding as well.

Participants Profile

The online learning activity is open to a maximum of 30 participants both from LYMEC and from other organisations working on youth participation and diversity. The interested candidates should be:

- Youth leaders and members of youth organisations
- Human Rights activists, including youth leaders, community leaders and volunteers
- Young political leaders and members of political youth organisations
- Other stakeholders interested in promoting diversity in youth political participation

All participants should be available for the entire duration of the online learning activity, including its Moodle based modules and the two webinars. **The online learning activity will be in English;** therefore the participants are expected to be at least independent users of English.

The selection of the participants will be done jointly by the Council of Europe and the team of LYMEC responsible for the study session.

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific profile of the activities, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Procedure for Expressions of Interest

Candidates interested in this call must apply by filling in the [application form here](#) by **10 June 2020**.

For further information please contact eyc.programme@coe.int