

HEY online course on Environment

From 3 to 30 November 2025



Call for participants

In partnership with:



With the support of:



Deadline for applications: 19 October 2025 (23:59 UTC – Lisbon time)

Online application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/gyWUJswi9n>

The HEY course on Environment is part of *iLEGEND III: Intercultural Learning Exchange through Global Education, Networking and Dialogue (2023-2026)*, Joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe: co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. The overall objective of the project is to increase the active engagement of EU member States, candidates and potential candidate countries' citizens (in particular young people) in safeguarding sustainable development and confronting global challenges and inequalities at local and global level.

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Introduction

HEY (Human Rights Education for Youth), is a programme implemented by the North South Centre (NSC) of the Council of Europe, aimed at building youth capacity on human rights through a series of online tutored courses on relevant topics for young people in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Human rights education is part of SDG 4.7. to ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and to contribute, among other, to promote a culture of global citizenship.

The HEY Programme is designed to strengthen young people's capacities to act for human rights, by raising their knowledge and understanding of European standards and other international legal frameworks for human rights protection, such as specific United Nations, League of Arab States and African Union treaties, conventions, protocols and charters.

Implemented in the framework of the [iLEGEND III](#) project, this training course on Environment has been developed by the NSC, in collaboration with [UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#), with the financial and logistic support of [AECID the Spanish Agency for Development Aid and Cooperation](#), [FIAP - Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas](#), and [Casa Mediterráneo | Institución pública para el conocimiento mutuo entre España los países mediterráneos](#). The training course aims at providing young people - members of Civil Society Organisations, youth leaders and young people from communities affected by climate change and environmental degradation - with new skills and competences on Global Education, Environmental issues and Human Rights.

Rationale of the course

Human Rights and the environment are intertwined. A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations.

Our world has been witnessing the increasingly severe impacts of various environmental threats, the most pressing of which are the threats posed by the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution¹. From flash flooding in Valencia to forest fires in Algeria and Greece, and the imminent threat of water scarcity looming particularly over African countries, people have directly or indirectly experienced the impact of these environmental threats. The latter have had significant spillover effects on the enjoyment of many human rights, including the rights to life and to private and family life, as well as the right to a clean and healthy environment. The United Nations recognized this connection between environmental harm and human rights as early as 1968 in Resolution 2398 (XXIII), expressing concern over how environmental degradation undermines human dignity and basic rights².

In 2023, the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe recognised "the urgency of additional efforts to protect the environment, as well as to counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law". It committed to initiate the Reykjavik process of strengthening work in the field of the environment with the aim of making it a visible priority, promoting cooperation among member States, streamlining activities and coordinating efforts as laid down in Appendix V of the [Reykjavik Declaration](#).

Young people are among the groups most vulnerable to environmental degradation and related human rights violations. At the same time, they are also among the most fervent defenders of the environment. This is evidenced by the International Court of Justice's landmark advisory opinion, which emphasised the obligation of states to curb emissions in line with the commitments set out in the Paris Agreement³. The opinion was prompted by the consistent efforts and advocacy of students from Pacific Island states. At the regional and national levels, we can look to young Egyptians fighting the impact of "chemical and toxic waste" on their

¹ <https://unfccc.int/news/what-is-the-triple-planetary-crisis>

² https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4053783/files/A_CONF.48_PC_WG.1_CRP.4-EN.pdf

³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165475>



human rights⁴, and to young people in Portugal suing their government and 32 others for the impact of climate change on their human rights⁵.

Despite this, there is a notable lack of accessible human rights-based environmental education for young people, whether formal or non-formal. Most courses in this field are not youth-friendly, overlooking the importance of understanding the different legal standards relating to the environment and human rights in various regions. This accordingly limits the ability of existing educational efforts to empower young people to take human rights-based environmental action and enhance their overall resilience when facing human rights - and environment-related violations.

Course objectives

1. To introduce the key concepts and definitions related to the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss), and their contextualisation in a North-South dimension.
2. To develop a critical understanding of the interlinkages between human rights and the triple planetary crisis through the lens of global and regional legal frameworks.
3. To analyse the impact of environmental degradation, on how it especially affects marginalised communities, and to explore community-based solutions to environment and human rights related violations.
4. To empower young people to actively engage in environmental and human rights-related advocacy actions.

Topics covered

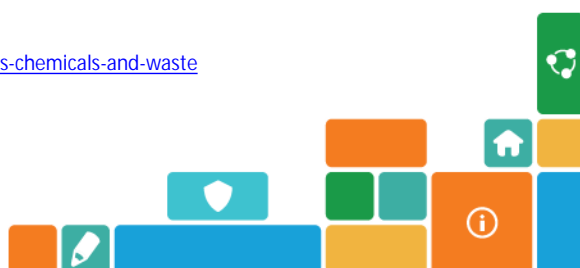
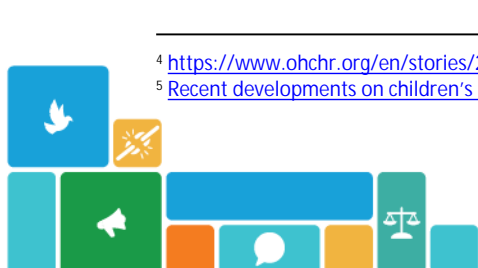
- Global dimension and Global Education approach; Environment, triple planetary crisis and approaches to the protection of environment; Youth and environmental protection; Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC).
- Introduction to Human Rights and Environmental Protection; Interconnection between human rights and the environment; Human Rights approach to Environment; Legal frameworks.
- Vulnerability in environmental contexts; Indigenous Peoples' Right and ecological degradations; fragile contexts and constraint of civic space; international soft law and binding legal instruments to protect vulnerable populations and to promote climate justice.
- Youth-led environmental Litigation; advocacy actions; networking.

Methodology and working methods

The conceptual and methodological framework of the course is based on the [HELP programme](#) and the [Global Education Guidelines](#), systematised by the North-South Centre. Participants' learning process is focused on developing competences related to the main topic of the training course: the [CoE Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture \(RFCDC\)](#) is the main reference in terms of competences. Through a non-formal learning approach, collaborative and interactive activities and exercises allow participants to contribute to their own learning process. The training course is fully online, hosted on [HEY Programme e-learning platform](#), based on MOODLE WORKPLACE. Working methods are structured according to the possibilities offered by the Learning Management System, they include different kinds of activities and exercises that meet the different learning styles of participants. Two tutors accompany participants during the 4-weeks activity, supporting their learning process, providing feedback, moderating discussion, giving inputs, and promoting further reflections on the main topics of the training.

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/05/meet-young-activists-fighting-hazardous-chemicals-and-waste>

⁵ [Recent developments on children's rights and climate litigation — CRIN](#)



The activity programme is structured in 4 modules (one module per week). The expected workload is approximately 30 hours in total. The training course is mainly asynchronous: this means that each participant will learn on their own schedule and pace completing activities and exercises; nevertheless, a certain regularity is required, in order to properly follow the learning process of the group of participants, especially when a group activity is planned (when participants have to self-organise and schedule group work when it is convenient for everyone). Synchronous tutoring sessions are foreseen only to facilitate group activities, and eventually to support the participants' learning process and contribute to the achievement of expected learning outcomes. At the end of the training, participants obtain a certificate of participation.

Follow-up

Upon successful completion of the online training, participants will have the possibility to apply for a residential training for tutors. Successful completion of that training will result in certification as a HEY tutor and enable participants to implement HEY courses in their regions or countries with the support of the North-South Centre and relevant experts. Other networking and participation opportunities will also be available.

Only participants who successfully complete this and/or other HEY courses will have the opportunity to apply for the Trainings of Tutors (ToT) and become certified HEY tutors.

In 2026, two TOT are planned, in the framework of the NSC Summer Youth Universities.

Profile of participants

Young people (18 to 30 years old) with the potential to act as multipliers as:

- Members of Civil Society Organisations (i.e., informal groups; grassroots movements; coalitions; local, national and regional youth organisations, and youth workers; youth women-led groups; young environmental human rights activists and defenders; young journalists and media practitioners; education practitioners in the formal and non-formal sector; etc.)
- Youth leaders (i.e., young human rights violation observers, paralegals and young environmental negotiator; young professionals; young politicians and policy advisors; etc.)
- Young people from communities affected by climate change and environmental degradation (i.e., young indigenous community advocates/members; etc.)

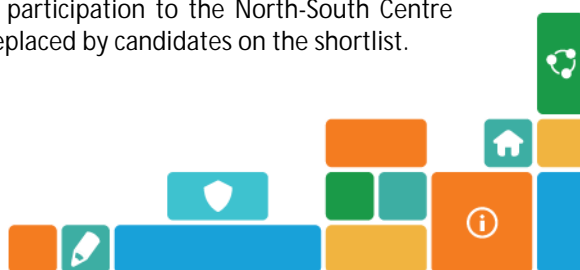
Selection criteria

40 participants will be selected for this activity, application content will be the basis of the selection's procedure. Priority will be given to candidates active in a CSO or a youth organisation/platform/youth-related institution. Candidates should be able to communicate in English, which is the working language of the course.

This activity is open to young people from the 46 Council of Europe Member States (with priority given to [NSC member states](#)), African and the Middle East countries. The selection will be carried out by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, also seeking gender and geographical balance.

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.

Please note that, due to the large number of applications, only the selected candidates will be contacted. Individual requests and follow-up questions will not be addressed, unless considered as assistance to the application process. The selection results will be announced on 23 October 2025. After the communication of the selection results, the selected participants must confirm their participation to the North-South Centre within the given deadline; failure to do so will result in them being replaced by candidates on the shortlist.



Costs

The activity is fully free of charge.

How to apply

Please submit the [online application](#) form before 19 October 2025 at 23:59 UTC – Lisbon time.

For more information

NSC-CoE Secretariat:

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More information about the HEY programme can be found in the dedicated [webpage](#) on the NSC website.



The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Key instrument of the external dimension of the Council of Europe, the [North-South Centre](#) (NSC) serves as a vector for transmitting its values, standards, and tools beyond the European continent through political dialogue, networking, and the implementation of cooperation projects. As an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, it brings together several European and African countries to exchange ideas and take action on shared issues. With a solid 34-year expertise in the fields of global education, intercultural dialogue, and youth sector cooperation in Europe and beyond, and a broad geographical mandate with a focus on the Southern Neighbourhood and Sub-Saharan Africa, the NSC through its institutionalised “quadrilogue” approach engages high-level representatives from governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities, as well as civil society from different regions of the world to work together on issues of common interest: the forefront role played by civil society, thanks to a robust network of youth organisations, ensures a structured, inclusive and sustainable participation with a multiplier effect.

To support the implementation of the Reykjavik Declaration, the 2024-2027 strategy of the NSC strengthens the external dimension of the Council of Europe to: enhance the impact of the Council of Europe’s Neighbourhood Policy with the Southern Mediterranean by disseminating the values and standards of the Council of Europe among the youth, a cornerstone to ensure the sustainability of democratic reforms; develop further and gradually cooperation with Sub-Saharan African countries that demonstrate an interest in the standards of the Council of Europe; act as a facilitating platform for dialogue between Europe and other regions of the world on the priorities of the Council of Europe.

United Nations Environment Programme UNEP – Law Division

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Nations’ leading global authority on the environment, driving transformational change on the triple planetary crisis: the crisis of climate change, the crisis of nature, land and biodiversity loss, and the crisis of pollution and waste. Since its founding in 1972, UNEP has served as a neutral convener of Member States, civil society, the private sector and UN agencies to address humanity’s most pressing environmental challenges. From protecting species to restoring the ozone layer, UNEP-facilitated international agreements have made global environmental action possible throughout the years. Today, UNEP hosts the United Nations Environment Assembly, the world’s highest-level decision-making body on the environment, with a universal membership of all 193 United Nations’ Member States.

Law Division is the lead Division charged with carrying out the functions of UNEP in the field of environmental law, governance and related policy issues. The Division’s work focuses on: leading the international community in the progressive development of environmental law; supporting States in the development and implementation of legal, institutional and policy measures in response to major environmental challenges; facilitating cooperation and coordination among multilateral environmental agreements and between UNEP and those agreements; working with MEA secretariats to support Parties to the respective MEAs in implementing their treaty obligations; and facilitating policy dialogue among States on issues relating to international environmental law and governance.

