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Workshop on artificial intelligence, young people and democratic resilience

14-15 April 2026
(2 working days)

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg

Background and context

Artificial intelligence systems have been influencing democratic societies, public institutions, and everyday life for decades. However, since the public release of large-scale generative AI systems—particularly large language models (LLMs)—a new phase has emerged. Generative AI systems are directly interface with and influence citizens, learners, workers, public officials, and young people.

In a rapidly evolving technological landscape, AI systems increasingly shape public sphere, access to rights, civic participation and democratic processes. Young people are both particularly exposed to these transformations and uniquely positioned to influence them. Strengthening their capacity to navigate, question and influence AI systems is therefore a matter of democratic resilience.

In 2024, the Council of Europe adopted the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the first legally binding international instrument of its kind. The Convention establishes common standards to ensure that AI systems uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and it introduces a risk-based approach to the design, development, deployment and decommissioning of AI systems. In addition, the Council of Europe's Education Department is currently developing a new Recommendation aimed at promoting AI literacy across member states.

Building on this, the Youth Department organised in January 2025 a consultative meeting entitled “How confident? – Artificial Intelligence, Young People and Youth Work”. A key outcome was the development of a **Roadmap on Artificial Intelligence, Youth Policy and Youth Work**, elaborated through a bottom-up process centred on young people’s concerns, reflections and proposals. Subsequently, in June 2025, a training course on “Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights and Democracy” brought together youth workers and young people active in youth organisations to examine the implications of AI for youth work from a human rights and democratic perspective.

Moreover, in line with the **Youth Sector Strategy 2030 of the Council of Europe**, digital transformation, internet governance and AI must be addressed in relation to their impact on democracy and young people. The Strategy recognises digital democracy and digital literacy as central challenges for ensuring full and meaningful youth participation. Moreover, the youth perspective, as highlighted in the recently adopted Council of Europe **Reference Framework on youth perspectives** in October 2025, constitute vital sources of legitimacy and guidance for policy responses to emerging technological challenges.

Description of the workshop

This workshop will provide a structured space for participants to critically engage with the **democratic implications of AI** and strengthen the capacity of youth actors to understand, reflect on, and address AI-related issues in line with Council of Europe standards. It is conceived as a strategic contribution to the areas of capacity-building and educational activities set out in the **Roadmap on AI, Young Policy and Youth Work**, adopted by the Joint Council on Youth in 2025.

The workshop is based on the **upcoming publication of a resource** designed to enhance AI literacy among young people and those who work with them. It provides accessible, educational resources to understand AI and AI literacy for young people.

The workshop will create a space to explore how AI literacy can reinforce democratic culture, critical thinking and meaningful youth participation. Drawing on the framework proposed in this upcoming publication, participants will examine how AI literacy can serve as a democratic safeguard by equipping young people with competences to understand their implications, challenge their risks and advocate for democratic governance.

The workshop will also provide an opportunity to reflect collectively on its relevance and responsiveness to current AI developments and youth realities. This validation component, however, is embedded within a broader objective: strengthening democratic resilience in the age of AI.

The workshop will furthermore **explore the intersection of artificial intelligence, youth participation and democratic resilience**. It will examine how AI influences democratic processes, youth participation and youth work practices.

The meeting will focus on three interconnected dimensions:

1. Taking stock: from governance discussions to youth realities

The workshop will begin with a concise stocktaking exercise where participants will briefly identify key insights and unresolved questions related to AI-literacy. The focus will be on translating governance-level debates into practical implications for young people and youth work. This session will clarify what democratic resilience means in concrete terms for youth in AI-mediated environments and identify priority challenges that require practical responses.

2. AI literacy as a capability for democratic resilience

AI literacy must go beyond technical knowledge. It should enable young people to develop the capabilities to critically assess AI systems, understand their societal implications, and advocate for ethical and inclusive approaches and alternatives. The workshop will explore how youth work can foster such literacy, empowering young people to move from passive consumption of AI tools to active participation in shaping digital spaces and policies. AI literacy should serve as an essential component of democratic citizenship and social justice and should be aligned with the human dimension of AI, meaning its impact on human rights.

3. Practical lab: testing AI literacy

Participants will engage directly with selected educational activities from the forthcoming publication, working in groups to assess how these activities foster critical thinking and democratic awareness, and whether they address current technological developments and youth realities. Feedback will focus on usability, clarity, and adaptability, providing an opportunity to reflect on emerging AI trends that may require additional attention and to consider how AI literacy initiatives can remain responsive. The workshop will conclude by identifying concrete adjustments, enhancements, or complementary actions that can reinforce the effectiveness and relevance of educational resources such as the publication referenced.

Objectives of the workshop

The overall objective of the workshop is to strengthen the role of young people and youth actors in promoting democratic resilience in the age of artificial intelligence.

More specifically, the workshop aims to:

- Deepen participants' understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with AI, particularly regarding democratic participation, human rights and social inclusion.
- Strengthen AI literacy as a democratic competence.
- Equip youth workers and young people with competences to critically and ethically engage with AI.
- Identify strategies to mitigate risks such as bias, discrimination, exclusion, misinformation and erosion of civic space.
- Ensure that educational resources remain responsive to emerging AI developments and youth needs.
- Offer a capacity-building opportunity to equip youth actors to engage meaningfully in AI governance processes.