DDP-YD/ ETCD (2026)172

Strasbourg, 4 November 2026

Study Session

„Young Refugees Countering The Backsliding of Democracy Through Civic Action"

Study session organised within the Youth for Democracy programme
in cooperation with the Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)

European Youth Centre
Strasbourg, France

15-21 November 2026

Draft Programme

Sunday, 15th of November 2026

Arrival of participants

19:00 Dinner

20:00 **Informal welcome evening**

Non-formal opening

Presentation of the team and of the participants

Monday, 16th of November 2026

09:30 **Official opening and introduction to the study session**

Official opening with Sophie KWASNY, Head of the Education, Training and Cooperation Division, Youth Department, Council of Europe

Opening and presentation of the team

Presentation of the study session

Presentation of the participants

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 **Opening and Introduction part 2 -** Introduction to the non-formal education, presenting the programme, gathering the training expectations and needs from participants, setting up the ground rules.

13:00 Lunch

14:30 **Team building** – Team-building activities and ice-breakers

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 **Why are we here?** - exploring how pressures on democracy affect young people's, especially refugee and migrant youth's, ability to participate, highlighting youth-led action and reasons to work together.

18:00 **Daily Reflection**

19:00 Dinner

20:30 **Movie Night**

Tuesday, 17th of November 2026

09:30 **From Global to Local I** - Exploring Key Terminology

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 **From Global to Local II** - Discussing the Challenges in the Local Contexts

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 **US vs. THEM** - examining different narratives that drive exclusion and polarisation, and exploring counter- and alternative narratives that promote inclusion and human rights.

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 **Polarization and Personal Implications** – exploring the mechanisms of polarisation, its impact and finding constructive ways to respond

18:00 **Daily Reflection**

19:00 Dinner

Wednesday, 18th of November 2026

09:30 **Meeting the Division on Migration and Refugees (DMR), Council of Europe**
11:00 Coffee Break
11:30 **Visiting an international network of AMSED**
13:00 Lunch break
Free Afternoon
Dinner in town

Thursday, 19th of November 2026

09:30 **Discussing the New Democratic Pact for Europe**
11:00 Coffee Break
11:30 **Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFDC)**– experiencing and understanding what is democracy and democratic culture
13:00 Lunch
14:30 **My Sphere of Influence** – Practical implementation of the RFDCD and introduction to Spheres of Influence model
16:00 Coffee Break
16:30 **Good Practices on Combatting Democratic-Backsliding** - exploring real-life civic actions defending rights and democracy, critically examining strategies, results and limits, and identifying good practices
18:00 **Daily Reflection**
19:00 Dinner

Friday, 20th of November 2026

09:30 **Open Space/ NGO Bazaar** – presenting the work of the NGOs and networking
11:00 Coffee Break
11:30 **Opportunities All Around** – presenting further opportunities for partnership, collaboration and financing activities

- European Youth Foundation
- VYRE
- VOICIFY

13:00 Lunch
14:30 **Planning Follow-up Activities** - Planning and presenting follow-up activities: reflections on what participants have learned and what they will take as an action in their daily life and community work
16:00 Coffee Break
16:30 **Evaluation and Closing**
19:00 Dinner
21:00 **Farewell party**

Saturday, 21st of November 2026

Departure of Participants

Aim and Objectives of the Study Session:
"Young Refugees Countering The Backsliding of Democracy Through Civic Action"

Aim:
This study session aims to build the capacity of young refugees and migrants to challenge polarisation, disinformation and hostile narratives; thereby strengthening their civic competences as contributors to and advocates for inclusive democratic European societies.

Objectives:

1. to develop a critical understanding of democratic backsliding, polarisation, shrinking civic space and their implications for human rights and the participation of young refugees.

2. to examine how disinformation, misinformation and "othering" strategies fuel social fragmentation; and create space for sharing experiences, local contexts and challenges faced by young refugees in this regard.

3. to strengthen participants' capacity to mobilise competences for democratic culture (including critical thinking, civic-mindedness, responsibility and co-operation) to develop human rights-based responses to polarisation and democratic backsliding.

4. to facilitate knowledge-sharing and exchange of good practices; fostering collaboration among participants, civil society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.