

DDP-YD/ ETCD (2026)10

Strasbourg, 22 January 2026

Study session

“SLIDE - Student Leadership Initiatives for Democratic Engagement”

Study session organised within the [Youth for Democracy programme](#)
in cooperation with the European Students' Union (ESU)

European Youth Centre

Room 3.1

Strasbourg, France

16-20 February 2026

Draft Programme

Sunday, 15 February 2026

Arrival of participants

19:00 Dinner

21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 16 February 2026

09:30 Introduction to the study session

Introduction to the aim & objectives,

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

11:00 Break

11:30 Team building activity - to get to know each other

Expectations, programme and safe space building – *to explore the agenda of the week and create an inclusive and productive working atmosphere*

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Introduction to the core topics of the session and to the work of ESU – *to build a common understanding of the main concepts (academic freedom, student participation) of the study session and of mission/activities of the leading organisation*

16:00 Break

16:30 Exploring challenges in participants' realities, related to student participation

18:00 Reflection groups, facilitated

19:00 Dinner

21:00 self-organised evening programme

Tuesday, 17 February 2026

09:30 Fundamental values in Higher Education and EHEA - *to dive into fundamental values, their objectives and consider them from students' perspectives*

11:00 Break

11:30 How to promote and integrate fundamental values and human rights in student participation, and preparations for the afternoon visit to the European Court of Human Rights.

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Visit to the European Court of Human Rights, exchange with a representative of the Court and critical reflection on the jurisprudence relating to academic freedom

18:00 Reflection groups, self-facilitated

19:00 Dinner

21:00 movie night

Wednesday, 18 February 2026

09:30 History of the student movement - *to review and reflect on how the student movement has shaped our societies.*

11:00 Break

11:30 Student participation, representation and university alliances - *exploring together existing practices from different national contexts*

13:00 Lunch

Free Afternoon in the city

Dinner out in the city and free time

Thursday, 19 February 2026

09:30 Call for action for student participation: part 1 - *reflecting on how student representation is shaping today's reality, and what kind of change we need the student movement nowadays*

11:00 Break

11:30 Call for action for student participation: part 2 - *to make student representation active and meaningful in different contexts*

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Capacity building for stronger impact - *to explore and critically discuss existing resources and current barriers*

16:00 Break

16:30 Creating collaborative toolkits to empower participants, students' unions and alliances - *to build and improve resources to respond to participants' needs*

18:00 Reflection groups, self-facilitated

19:00 Dinner

Free Evening

Friday, 20 February 2026

09:30 The role of media and critical reflection on disinformation

10:45 Break

11:15 Campaigning 101 - *to have in mind key principles, stories of success and practice how campaigning can lead to achieve change*

13:00 Lunch break

14:30 Funding opportunities within the European Youth Foundation and other resources from the Youth Department - *to find synergies with other initiatives and explore relevant funding opportunities for youth organisations.*

16:00 Break

16:30 Evaluation session and preparations for farewell evening.

19:00 Dinner

21:00 Farewell evening

Saturday 21 February 2026

Departure of team and participants

Aim and objectives of the study session

“SLIDE - Student Leadership Initiatives for Democratic Engagement”

Aim: in line with the organisation's efforts, the main aim of this activity is to promote fundamental values in higher education and strengthen student participation in policymaking.

Objectives:

1. To provide a deeper understanding of the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Policy and their implications for student participation, particularly in relation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
2. To equip student representatives with knowledge and strategies to defend, promote and advocate for fundamental values in Higher Education, such as safeguarding academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and student rights;
3. To strengthen the capacity of student representatives to influence reforms and hold institutions accountable to their commitments, by enhancing their knowledge on policy mechanisms;
4. To facilitate capacity building for student representatives and students' unions, developing advocacy and leadership skills of participants, ensuring that national students unions can engage effectively at national, and European levels.