

**DEMOCRACY
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DDP-YD/ ETCD (2026)138

26 September 2026

Training Course Youth Advocacy for Democracy and Human Rights

European Youth Centre Strasbourg

28 September- 3 October 2026

DRFAT PROGRAMME

Sunday, 27 September 2026

Arrivals

- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:30 Welcome evening (dinning area of EYCS)

Monday, 28 September 2026

- 8:30 Registration of participants (dinning area of EYCS)
- 9:30 Welcome and opening with **Sophie KWASNY**, Head of the Education and Training Division
- 10:20 Introduction to the aim and objectives, programme and methodology of the training course
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Us, our organisations and our advocacy experiences
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 The values framework for advocacy: democracy, human rights and the rule of law
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Understanding the Council of Europe
Opportunities of advocacy with the Council of Europe with **Tobias FLESSENKEMPER**, Head of the Youth Department
- 18:30 Dinner
- 21:00 Social night

Tuesday, 29 September 2026

- 9:30 Advocacy ABC
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Experiencing and experimenting with advocacy
- 13:00 The lunch of advocates
- 14:30 Experiencing and experimenting with advocacy (continued)
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Human rights-based advocacy
- 17:30 Daily evaluation
- Space for meetings
- 18:30 Dinner

Wednesday, 30 September 2026

- 9:00 Exchange with youth rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)
- 9:45 Preparation for the meetings with Council of Europe institutions and services
- 10:45 Break and departure to Agora building of the Council of Europe
- 12:00 Side event to the [Conference of INGOs Plenary Session](#): [Deeyah KAHN](#) in dialogue with young people (AGORA - room G.03)
- 13:00 Lunch in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg
- Free afternoon and self-organised dinner

Thursday, 1 October 2026

- 9:00 Departure for the "Palace of Europe"
- 10:00 Attending the PACE plenary session:
On the agenda

General policy debate:

Europe, the fastest-warming continent: accelerating climate action with young people

Statements by:

Ms Diana-Anda BUZOIANU Minister of the Environment, Water and Forests of Romania

Mr Kamal KISHORE Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Ms Emilie TAMO KAMGUIA Member of the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth

Mr Benjamin VAN BUNDEREN ROBBERECHTS Founder of the NGO Climate Justice for Rosa

Debate

Address

H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco

13:00 Departure from Palace of Europe to European Youth Centre Strasbourg

13:30 Lunch

15:00 Debriefing the PACE session

15:30 Youth participation at the core of our work: the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, with **Maren LAMBRECHT** and **Judith KAAK**, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

16:15 Break

16:45 Youth perspective: understanding the Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective and the role of youth civil society, with: **Nina GRMUSA**, Advisor on the Youth Perspective and **Yael OHANA**, Programme manager, Youth Policy Division, Youth Department

18:00 Departure from European Youth Centre

18:30 Dinner with [Klimasenioren Schweiz](#) and [Greenpeace](#)

20:00 Movie screening [Beat the Heat](#), director Benjamin Weiss, [Cinema Vox](#)

Friday, 2 October 2026

9:30 The Committee of Ministers and the youth perspective, an exchange with:
Ambassador Andreu JORDI, Permanent Representative of Andorra, President of the Group of Rapporteurs on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment of the Committee of Ministers

Emma WEDNER, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth

Xesc MAINZER, Vice-chair of the Advisory Council on Youth

10:15 Meeting with the Advisory Council on Youth: understanding co-management, ways to advocate together

11:00 Break

11:30 The repertoire of actions in advocacy for democracy and human rights

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Developing our advocacy plans

16:00 Break

16:30 Developing our advocacy plans

18:00 Daily evaluation

18:30 Dinner

Learning space evening

Saturday, 3 October 2026

9:30 Advocacy plans finalisation, further learning needs identification
11:00 Break
11:30 Advocacy plans presentations and feedback
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Open space
16:30 Next steps in the training course
Evaluation
Closure of the training course
18:30 Farewell barbeque
Farewell party

Sunday, 4 October 2026

Departures

About the training course

Aim and objectives:

The training course aims to develop the competences of youth civil society and young activists to advocate for human rights and democracy, including implementation and expansion of Council of Europe standards at national and local level.

Objectives of the course:

- To familiarise participants with the Council of Europe, its institutions and standards for democracy, human rights and youth participation;
- To develop participants' competences in human rights-based advocacy and strengthen their capacity to develop and implement advocacy strategies and practices;
- To create a space for sharing and learning from each other, as well as from examples of good practice;
- To associate participants with the Youth Department's work, notably the project Youth revitalising democracy;
- To develop advocacy initiatives, including collective/cooperative ones.

Background information

The Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavik held in May 2023, the Heads of State and Government of the organisation's 46 member states decided to establish to strengthen the Council of Europe and its work in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law by adopting a declaration on democracy principles ¹ which emphasizes the importance of investing in a democratic future for all:

"Priority will be given to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes, including through education about human rights and core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability."

¹ The Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values, Appendix 3 Reykjavik Principles for Democracy is available [here](#).

The Reykjavik Declaration, entitled United around our values, also sets a high standard, rooted in the values of human rights and democracy, for the Council of Europe work:

“... a youth perspective in the Organisation’s intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.”

At the initiative of the Joint Council on Youth, the Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective has been adopted by the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Malta, 8-9 October 2025). The Reference Framework provides guidance to the Council of Europe on how to integrate and operationalise the youth perspective, as well as to the member states on how to follow up at national level.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted Resolution 2553 “Strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly” in June 2024, introducing measures such as the Youth Participation Mechanism and the function of youth rapporteurs in the work of all its Committees (except the Committee for the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights).

On 12 March 2026, the Committee of Ministers joined the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in adopting the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life as a recommendation to member States of the Council of Europe. The Charter is the key European standard in respect to youth participation.

These developments, together with other efforts undertaken by the Council of Europe to make institutions youth friendly and support the involvement of civil society open possibilities for advocacy for youth organisations and young people.

To translate into reality the promise of the Reykjavik, young people and youth civil society need both the political will and effort into the creation of relevant structures for participation in decision making, as well as the capacity and competences to meaningfully take part in these structures and processes. For young people to be successfully and meaningfully participating in the Council of Europe work, their capacity needs to be developed starting with knowledge about the work done by the institution beyond its youth sector, and competences to engage with decision makers in various fields.