



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Youth Facing Disinformation – Why Journalists Matter
 Youth-led projects under the Council of Europe Journalists Matter Campaign
 in cooperation with the Youth Department
 JM-Youth-2026

Project	Youth Facing Disinformation – Why Journalists Matter
Awarding entity	COUNCIL OF EUROPE Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division
Funding	Voluntary contributions to the Journalists Matter Campaign- PMM 3475;
Duration	Projects shall be implemented by 31 July 2027. Reporting requirements shall be completed by 30 September 2027.
Estimated starting date	30 September 2026
Issuance date	30 April 2026
Deadline for applications	01 July 2026

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APPENDICES:

- Appendix I - Application Form
- Appendix II - Provisional budget (Template)
- Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (for information only)

HOW TO APPLY?

- Complete and sign the Application Form (See Appendix I)
- Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in Appendix II)
- In respect of legal persons only, attach legal entity information, including a list of all owners and executive officers
- Attach the other supporting documents specified in Section V
- Send these documents in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address:
[youth.soj@coe.int]
- Emails should contain the following reference in subject: **JM-Youth-2026 – Grant Application**

Applications must be received before **1 July 2026 at 23:59 CET**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe is launching this call for proposals in the framework of the *Journalists Matter Campaign*, under the Monaco Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, in cooperation with the Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division.

This initiative aims to support projects addressing key challenges related to disinformation, freedom of expression, media literacy and the safety of journalists, with a strong focus on youth engagement and democratic resilience. Projects submitted under this call for proposals must be sufficiently developed, operational and ready for implementation at the time of application. Grants will be awarded on the basis of finalised project proposals.

Applicants may be natural persons, legal persons or consortia of natural and/or legal persons. However, applicants should note that grant management involves significant administrative, financial and reporting obligations. Applications submitted by legal persons or consortia including a legal person are therefore strongly encouraged.

The initiative also includes a European event in Strasbourg on 9–10 November 2026, bringing together selected grantees, young participants and experts. This event is conceived as a platform for presentation, peer exchange and visibility. Selected grantees will present their projects and engage in discussions with other participants and experts. Interactions during the event may provide additional perspectives, feedback and networking opportunities, particularly regarding communication, outreach and impact, but will not affect the ownership, design or implementation responsibilities of the funded projects.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT

The initiative responds to the growing challenges posed by disinformation and the increasing threats faced by journalists in Europe.

It aims to:

- strengthen young people's understanding of the role of journalists
- promote media literacy and critical thinking
- support youth engagement in defending freedom of expression and information integrity

The Strasbourg event will combine a high-level conference and thematic workshops structured around key issues such as disinformation, media literacy, journalist safety and youth engagement. These workshops will provide a space for exchange, critical discussion and peer learning, including structured feedback on the challenges and opportunities faced by the selected projects.

Participation in the event does not form part of the project development phase for the purposes of the grant award procedure.

III. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is €20,000 (twenty thousand euros).

The Council of Europe intends to award 4 grants, as follows:

- 4 grants for projects addressing issues such as disinformation, journalist safety, including investigative journalists, media literacy and freedom of expression, each of a maximum amount of €5,000;

The Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds and/or to adjust allocations depending on the proposals received.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. General objective

The grants will fund projects designed to:

- counter disinformation
- promote media literacy and critical thinking
- raise awareness on journalist safety, including investigative journalists
- strengthen trust in free and quality journalism

2. Means of action

Projects may include (the list is not exhaustive):

- awareness campaigns
- media literacy initiatives
- digital content creation
- youth-led journalism or storytelling initiatives
- educational or community-based activities
- audiovisual investigative reporting and documentary storytelling

3. Implementation period

The implementation period of the projects shall start upon signature of the grant agreement and shall not extend beyond 31 July 2027.

Reporting requirements shall be completed by 30 September 2027 at the latest.

Projects completed prior to the submission of the application will be excluded.

4. Target stakeholders

Projects should target and be carried by, in particular:

- young people (primary target group)
- students, youth organisations and educators
- young media creators and journalists

The above list is not exhaustive and projects may propose to target other relevant stakeholders, while keeping in mind the general objective of the Project.

5. Budgetary requirements

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a detailed and realistic budget (See Template Budget, in Appendix II). The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in light of the activities proposed.

The maximum contribution from the Council of Europe shall not exceed €5,000 per project.

Each grantee shall contribute to the project through its own resources or third-party contributions. Co-financing may take the form of financial contributions, in-kind support or human resources.

6. Further to the general objective, preference will be given to:

- projects demonstrating strong youth leadership
- international or collaborative initiatives

- projects addressing contexts where journalists face increased threats
- projects integrating participatory approaches

7. The following types of action will not be considered:

- Projects/actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes);
- Projects/actions concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Projects/actions supporting political parties;
- Purely academic research projects;
- Projects without clear youth involvement.

8. Funding conditions:

The funds for each grant should in principle be distributed as follows:

- **80%** will be paid upon signature of the grant agreement by all the parties thereto;
- the balance will be paid based on actual expenditures incurred, and after the presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports for the Grant implementation.

9. Reporting requirements:

- **narrative reporting** requires a full narrative report on the use made of the grant and a copy of the register of the persons present during each of the activities, including names and signatures of participants;
- **financial reporting** requires in particular a statement in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (Euros), in English, stating the payments made for the implementation of the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantees, accompanied by “appropriate original supporting documents” (see below). The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask for summary translations of invoices into English. If for legal reasons the original documents must be retained by the Grantees, certified copies must be submitted with the financial statement.

“Appropriate original supporting documents” refers to signed contracts, invoices and acceptances of work (for all transactions), payment authorisation for all transactions should also be provided in case the Grantees use such practice, and reliable evidence of payment (authorised payment order and bank statement).

As regards round tables / conferences, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of a programme indicating the title, dates, venue, and agenda of the event; the names of persons facilitating the event, a signed list of participants, the contracts with the owner of the venue of the event (e.g. hotel) for the rent of premises, food and beverages of participants, invoices from the owner of the venue of the event for the above services, and a report on the results of the event (see narrative reporting above).

As regards consultancy services, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of evidence of the outputs produced, contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices produced after the works have been performed and delivered (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of activities for which they are contracted).

As regards travel fees / lodging of experts and participants, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation, where relevant, of contracts with a travel agency for travel fees and lodging, invoices of the travel agency indicating destinations, dates, ticket costs, and names of the travelling persons, a programme of the event indicating the names of the experts and signed lists of participants.

The above description is not comprehensive. Any doubt regarding the interpretation of the notion of “appropriate original supporting documents” should lead the Grantee or the Lead Grantee in the case of a consortium to consult the Council of Europe.

V. HOW TO APPLY?

1. Documents to be submitted:

Each application shall contain:

- completed and signed Application Form (See **Appendix I**)
- provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**)
- in the case of legal persons only, legal entity information, including a list of all owners and executive officers
- CV (in the case of a natural person, of the applicant or, in the case of a legal person, of the individuals proposed to be assigned to the project)
- relevant examples of previous work (professional or academic) produced within the last 2 years in the fields of journalism, media literacy, investigation journalism, disinformation, freedom of expression and/or youth engagement

Applications must be submitted by email to: [youth.soj@coe.int]

Subject line: JM-Youth-2026 – Grant Application

Deadline: 1 July 2026 – 23:59 CET

Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.

2. Questions

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe: [Journalists Matter : Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists - Freedom of Expression](#)

Other questions regarding this specific call for proposals must be sent at the latest one week before the deadline for the submission of proposals, in English or French, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: soj.campaign@coe.int with the following reference in subject: **Youth SoJ – Question**

3. Deadline for submission

The application form, **completed and signed by all Grantees**, together with the supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (Word and/or PDF) to the following e-mail address: youth.soj@coe.int
Emails should contain the following reference in subject: **JM-Youth-2026 – Grant Application**

Applications must be received **before 01 July 2026 (at 23:59 CET)**. Applications received after the above mentioned date will not be considered.

4. Change, alteration and modification of the application file

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original application file, will cause the immediate rejection of the application concerned.

VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The projects presented will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of one representative of the *Journalists Matter* Campaign Secretariat, one representative of the Youth Department and one representative of the Monaco Presidency to the Committee of Ministers.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with [Rule 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](#).

The applicants, and their projects, shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

1. Exclusion criteria:

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they or, in the case of legal persons, their owner(s) or executive officer(s):

- a) have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- b) are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c) have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
- d) do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
- e) are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f) have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
- g) are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the United Nations Security Council or the European Union.

By signing the Application Form, applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations (See **Appendix I, Item 12**).

The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply the following supporting documents:

- for the items set out in paragraphs a), b), c) and f), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
 - for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment;
1. for the items set out in paragraph e);

1. for natural persons, a scanned copy of a valid photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport)
2. for legal persons, an extract from the companies register or other official document proving ownership and control of the applicant.

2. Eligibility criteria:

Applicants must:

- in the case of natural persons, be aged 18–30 as of the deadline for submission of applications;
- be resident or established in a Council of Europe member State;
- have a bank account;
- demonstrate at least 2 years of experience or engagement in the fields of journalism, media literacy, disinformation, freedom of expression and/or youth engagement;
- have the operational and financial capacity to implement the proposed project.

Applicants must ensure that they are able to comply with all administrative, financial and reporting requirements related to the grant, including the preparation of a detailed budget, monitoring of expenditure and submission of narrative and financial reports.

Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

3. Award criteria

Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Relevance to the objectives of the call – 25%
- Quality and feasibility of the project and capacity of the applicant to implement the project (including experience of the applicant) – 25%
- Impact and sustainability – 20%
- Youth engagement – 15%
- Budget quality and cost-effectiveness – 15%

VII. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process in September 2026.

Selected applicants will be invited to sign a grant agreement and to participate in the Strasbourg event on 9–10 November 2026.

VIII. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Phases	Indicative timing
Publication of the call	30 April 2026
Deadline for submitting applications	1 July 2026
Evaluation	1 July – 15 September 2026
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	15 September 2026
Signature of the grant agreements	30 September 2026
Strasbourg event	9-10 November 2026

Implementation period	30 September 2026 - 31 July 2027
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