



Youth facing disinformation – Why Journalists Matter?

Young people today navigate an information space shaped by algorithms, platforms and disinformation, while journalists, essential to verifying information and informing public debate face increasing threats, harassment and intimidation. Where journalists are unsafe, disinformation spreads more easily, public trust declines and democratic participation is weakened.

Supported by the Monaco Presidency to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, this initiative places young people at the centre of efforts to defend freedom of expression, information integrity and democratic resilience. It helps them understand why journalists matter and empowers them to contribute to safer, more trustworthy media environments.

It is a contribution towards the [New Democratic Pact for Europe](#), a political strategic consultation launched by the Council of Europe. It aims to strengthen the foundations of democracy, amplify its benefits, restore trust, and innovate its forms to make it tangible and meaningful for all, especially for younger generations.

Conceived as a multi-year effort, the initiative, announced under the Moldovan Presidency, is launched under the Monaco Presidency, and continued through youth-led projects whose results will be presented under the Dutch Presidency.

Engaging youth in a three-step approach

Phase 1 – Launch of a call for proposals targeting young Europeans

Announced during the *Journalists Matter* Annual Conference (Chisinau, 23 April 2026) under the Moldovan Presidency, a European call for proposals will be launched to support 4 youth-led projects addressing disinformation, media literacy, journalist safety and freedom of expression. A separate call for participation will select around 30 young people to take part in the Strasbourg event.

Phase 2 – Main Youth event (9-10 November 2026, Strasbourg)

Around 30 selected young people, including young journalists and media creators, will be invited to Strasbourg. Through interactive workshops taking place on 10 November, dialogue and creative labs, participants will engage in discussions and exchanges around key themes such as countering disinformation, promoting journalists' safety, and strengthening media literacy, ensuring that youth voices actively contribute to the dialogue.

To place these youth perspectives in constructive dialogue with recognised expertise, the workshops will be preceded by an international conference on 9 November, bringing together journalists, content creators, policymakers and specialists in countering disinformation. Dedicated audiovisual support will further amplify the impact of the initiative, including through short video capsules for social and traditional media.

Phase 3 – Youth projects and final highlight (2026-2027)

Following the Strasbourg event, selected grant recipients will carry their projects forward, benefiting from financial support through the grants, as well as mentoring and administrative guidance. The most outstanding initiatives will be presented at the closing event of the *Journalists Matter* Campaign in 2027.

Contacts: rodica.ciochina@coe.int and srobillard@gouv.mc

