

EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION 2023



Annual report

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2023

European Youth Foundation

Youth Department

Directorate for Democracy

Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

Council of Europe

EUROPEAN YOUTH FOUNDATION

Annual report 2023

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Introduction



At their fourth summit on 16-17 May 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland, the Heads of State and Government of the 46 member States decided 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, recommitting to the European Convention on Human Rights and developing tools to tackle emerging challenges in the area of technology and the environment. Warning against democratic backsliding, the Council of Europe adopted the “Reykjavik Principles for Democracy”, a range of principles to be respected by democratic States, such as freedom of expression, assembly and association, independent institutions, impartial and effective judiciaries, the fight against corruption and democratic participation of civil society and of young people. With the Principles for Democracy member States commit to invest in a democratic future by ensuring that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes. Whereby priority will be given by member States 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.

The Reykjavik Declaration and the Principles for Democracy provide a welcome new impetus for the European Youth Foundation, as it celebrated 50 years of grant-making in 2023. The aim of the Foundation is to promote youth co-operation in Europe by providing financial support to European youth activities which serve the promotion of peace, understanding and co-operation between the peoples of Europe and of the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Foundation’s task is to provide financial support in particular for activities carried out by international and national non-governmental youth organisations and networks as well as by other non-governmental structures involved in areas of youth work, relevant to the Council of Europe youth policy.

In 1972, then 17 member States fixed the initial annual endowment of the Foundation at 3 000 000 French Francs and decided that the operations should start on 1 January 1973. The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies estimates that the purchasing power of the initial endowment would equal 3 349 411 Euro in 2023. The membership of the Council of Europe stood at 46 member States in 2023 and the Foundation’s annual budget was 3 476 653 Euro.

2023 was the year of Reykjavik, of moving forward against the negative impact which the global Corona virus pandemic had on youth co-operation at European level, and of the challenges arising for youth in the wake of the war of aggression led by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In this context the European Youth Foundation has stood the test to time by being a highly effective and supportive instrument of the Council of Europe to youth organisations. This annual report pays tribute

to the thematic range of the projects which received financial support and the commitment young people bring through youth-lead projects to problems that concern them and the society in general.

The potential reach of the Foundation increased. At the end of 2023 almost 1500 organisations were registered, an increase of 10% from 2022. Following the launch of a Special Call for Ukraine in November 2022 almost 50 youth organisations registered for the first time as partners in the Foundation's database. This meant that the Foundation could provide financial support to 24 projects, engaging more than 1500 people in Ukraine during 2023, helping to strengthen youth leadership, social cohesion and inclusion, address mental health issues, and empower young women, girls and vulnerable groups.

The year 2023 saw more demand for the Foundation overall, which called for adapting the grants to international non-governmental youth organisations and networks to support them meeting their general administrative and operational costs, as the beneficiaries of those grants are crucial partners for the Council of Europe. We were able to resume in persons briefings, training and capacity-building workshops for youth organisations to nurture high quality project proposals. The Secretariat of the European Youth Foundation played a decisive role in making this 50th year of operation truly pivotal. It was also thank to their dynamism, commitment and initiative that the Joint Council on Youth Questions, the highest statutory organ of the Foundation, seized the momentum in October 2023 to initiate an update of the regulations containing the basic rules governing the manner and conditions of the use of the Foundation's resources. The aim for the Foundation is to remain a unique, agile and relevant donor to youth organisations across Europe, with a key role within the Council of Europe for ensuring the participation of young people reversing democratic backsliding and revitalising democracy in Europe.

Strasbourg, October 2024

Tobias Flessenkemper

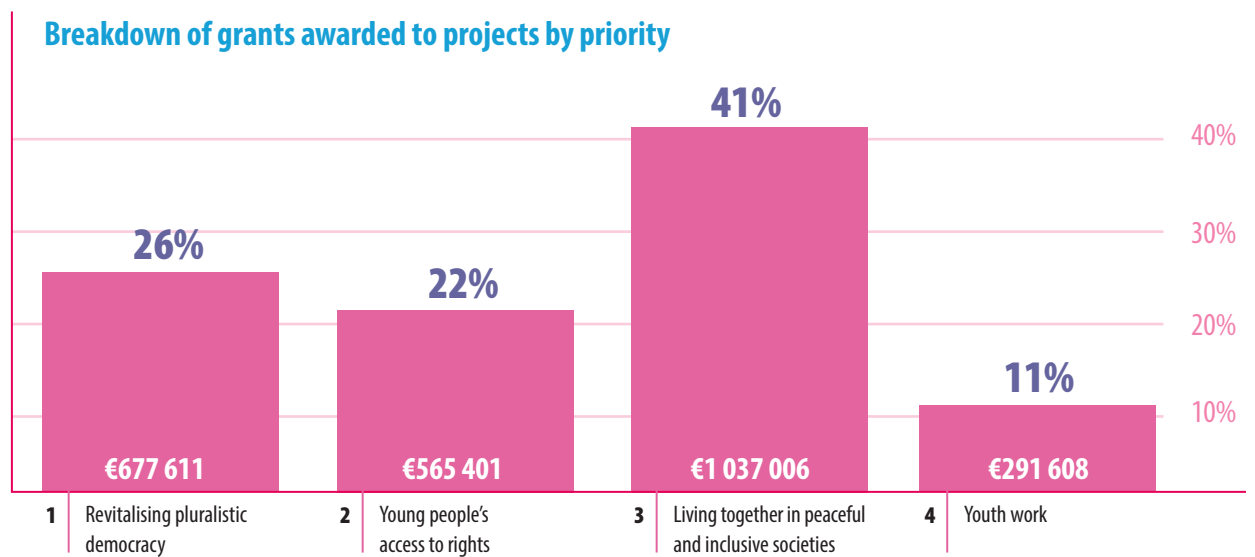
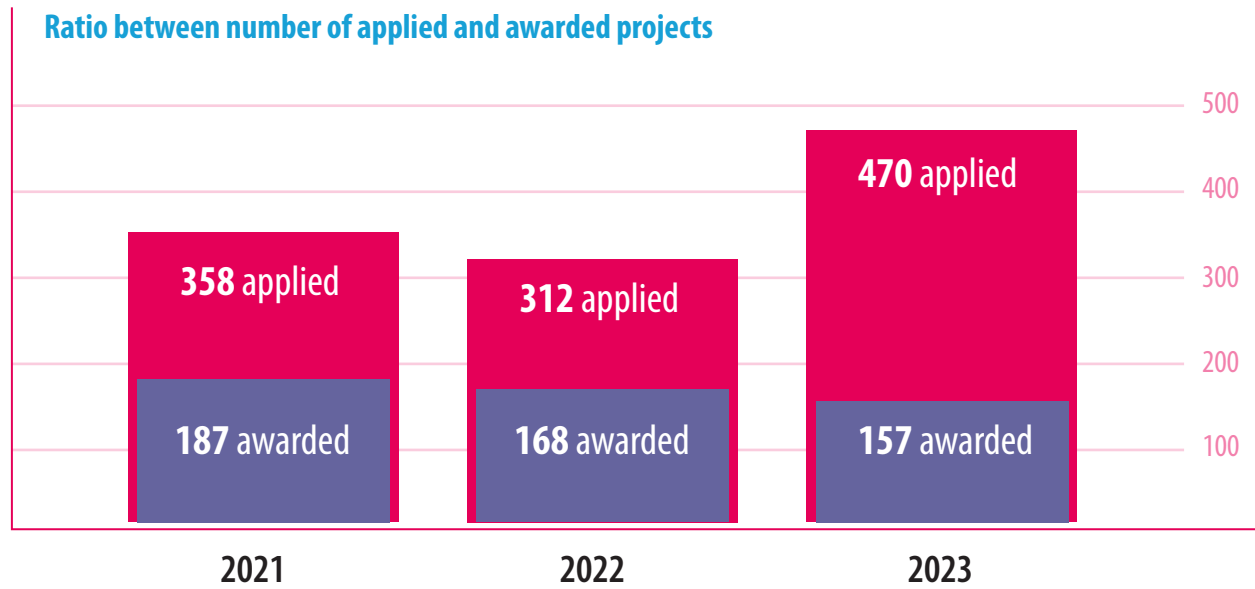
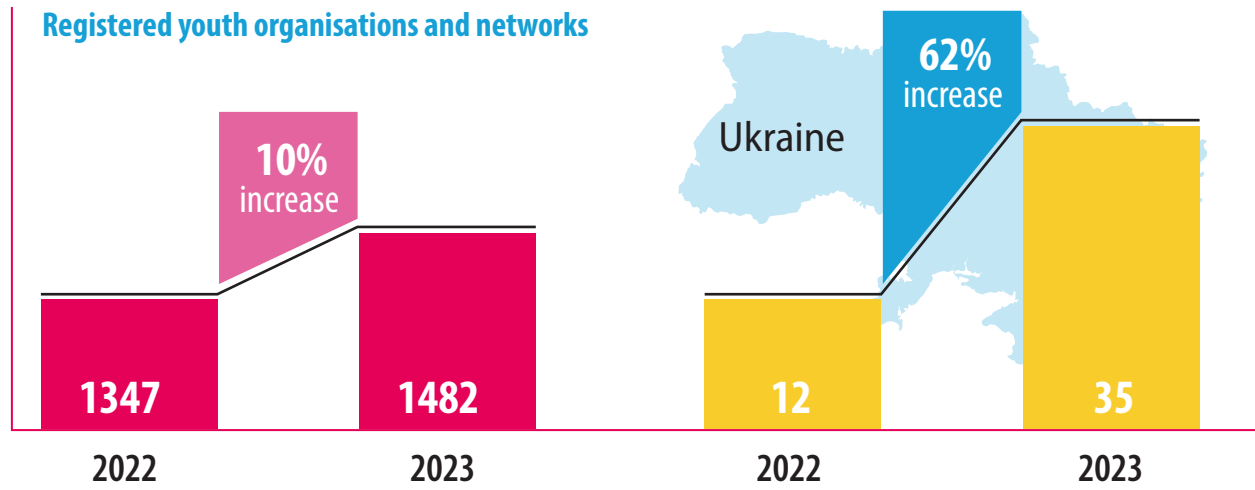
Head of the Council of Europe Youth Department

YOUTH SECTOR STRATEGY 2030

Priorities

- ▶ Revitalising pluralistic democracy, promoting democratic citizenship, participatory policies, removing barriers to participation;
- ▶ Young people's access to rights, supporting the implementation of the Council of Europe's standards in this field, promoting human rights education;
- ▶ Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies, countering discrimination, violence and exclusion, and promoting European unity, global solidarity, peace, diversity, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and environmental sustainability;
- ▶ Youth work, strengthening, recognising and advancing youth work, improving its quality, and extending the access and attractiveness of youth work.

1. The Foundation in 2023 at a glance



Information sessions for international youth organisations and networks and bilateral meetings

- ▶ ahead of grant application deadlines of 1 April and 1 October
- ▶ in co-operation with the European Youth Forum



Training and info sessions in member States for local and national youth, organised in co-operation with the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ)

- ▶ to promote the Council of Europe youth sector
- ▶ to inform participants about the educational opportunities of the Council of Europe Youth for Democracy programme for young people and train youth organisations and networks on project management
- ▶ to promote the EYF grant programmes and international youth co-operation



Training courses and seminars organised in the framework of the Youth for Democracy programme

- ▶ on peace education
- ▶ for the evaluation of the Youth Campaign "Democracy Here. Democracy Now"
- ▶ on the essentials of non-formal education
- ▶ on the added value of the Council of Europe youth sector
- ▶ on the EYF grant application requirements
- ▶ on quality pilot activities



Partner visits to EYF supported projects

- ▶ to engage with implementation of grant agreements
- ▶ to support youth organisations and networks
- ▶ to (re)connect with partner organisations and strengthen co-operation



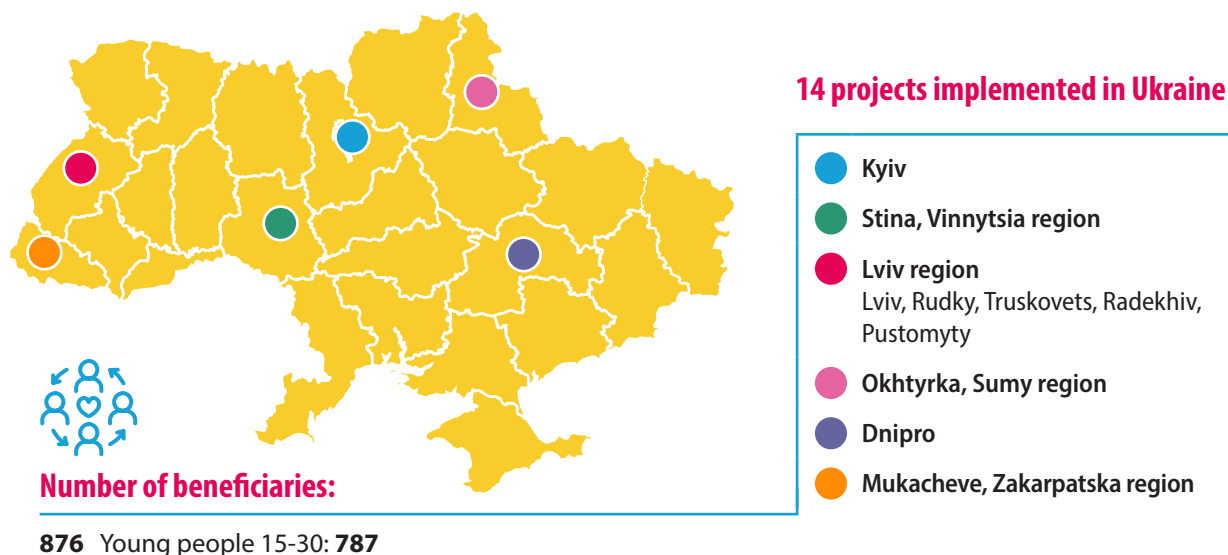
2. Special call for Ukraine

A special call for projects in favour of young people affected by the war in Ukraine was launched following a decision of the Joint Council on Youth at the end of 2022.

The aim of this initiative is to support, through civil society and youth work interventions, young people from Ukraine affected by the war, in line with the values of the Council of Europe. Projects were submitted by youth organisations in Ukraine and youth organisations based in other Council of Europe member States working with young people from Ukraine. Updated information on the special call can be found on the dedicated [EYF website](#).

In 2023, 24 projects received EYF grants for a total amount of €351 654 - 23 pilot activities and one international project. 14 were co-ordinated by Ukrainian civil society organisations and 9 by organisations from other Council of Europe member States (Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic). The international activity was implemented by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM). In total, more than 1100 young people benefited directly from the supported project activities, and the projects as a whole involved around 1500 beneficiaries.

The map below shows the distribution of the 14 projects implemented in Ukraine.



Special call for Ukraine

€351 654

14% of all funds awarded

24 projects

1100 young people involved

Overall
some 1500 beneficiaries

14 projects in Ukraine

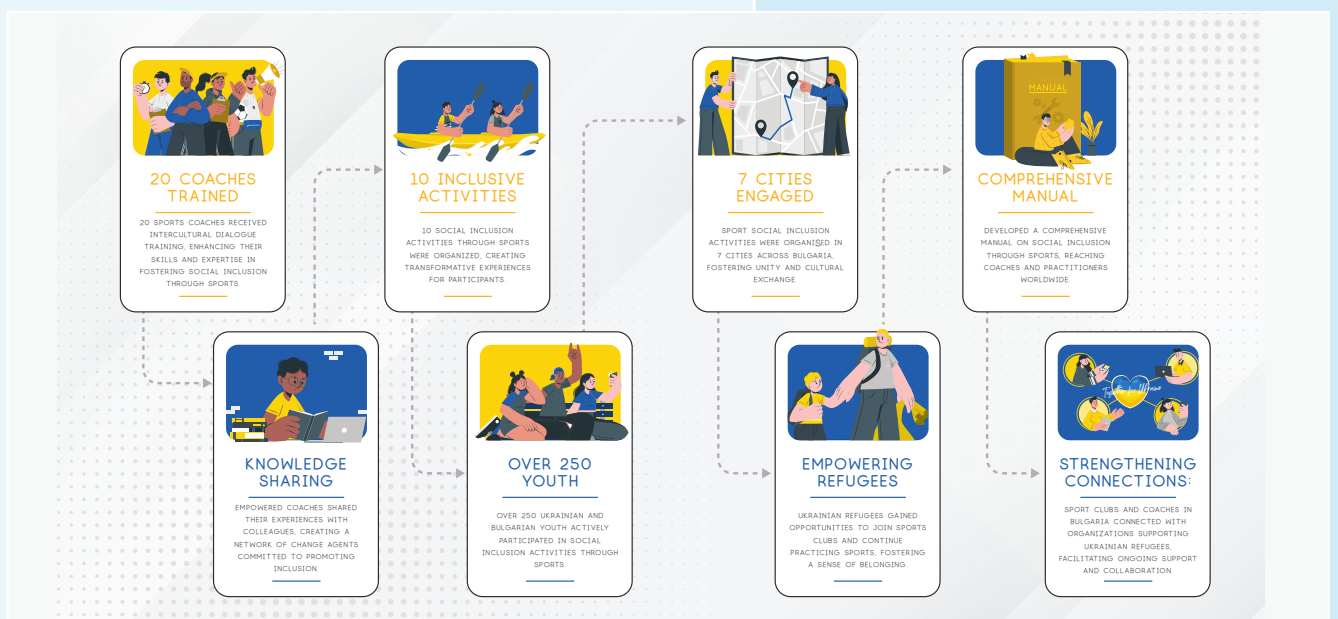
**“Together for Ukraine (Together4U)”,
project by Champions Factory Sports Club, Sofia,
Bulgaria**

“We are deeply grateful to the European Youth Foundation (Council of Europe) for their generous funding and support, which has been instrumental in supporting our ‘Together 4 Ukraine’ programme. This initiative, which addresses the urgent humanitarian crisis of Ukrainian refugees, was recognised as a winner of the European Commission’s 2024 #BeActive Award in the Sport for Peace category. We are proud to continue to promote unity and resilience through sport, thanks to the invaluable support of the EYF”

Shirin Amin, Executive Director of Champions Factory

The project promoted social integration and inclusion of young Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria through sports. It involved training in intercultural communication and social inclusion of 20 Bulgarian and Ukrainian sports coaches. The coaches successfully organised 10 inclusive activities, involving over 250 Ukrainian and Bulgarian youth, across seven cities in Bulgaria. Through the project’s activities, Ukrainian refugees engaged with their Bulgarian peers, which contributed to their well-being and mental health as well as overcoming feelings of isolation and displacement. The opportunity to join sports clubs and actively participate in sports activities helped foster a sense of belonging and community, allowing them to build connections and friendships with both fellow refugees and local youth.

The project resulted in the development of a comprehensive training manual on intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through sport, published (online) in both Bulgarian and English.





Teenage Club “Girls* can!” by NGO “Feminist Workshop”, Lviv, Ukraine

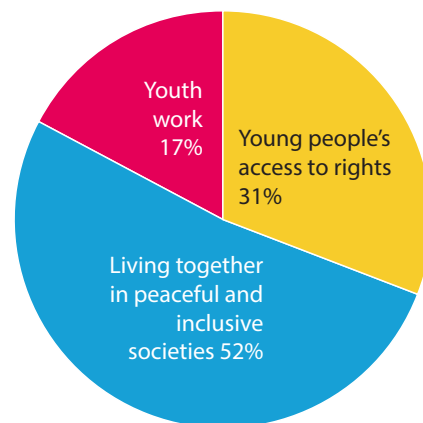
The project, which involved 225 young people, aimed to promote the integration of internally displaced girls into their new communities. Through a series of educational and capacity-building sessions on topics such as activism and feminism, including LGBTQI+ activism, the girls gained information and awareness of their rights and the skills necessary to take positive action.



The 24 supported projects under the special call covered the following themes:

- ▶ Youth participation in community activities in rural areas;
- ▶ Volunteering and solidarity actions at local, regional, national and international levels;
- ▶ Education on information, data and media literacy for children and young people;
- ▶ Access to quality services for mental health and well-being, opportunities for personal development for young refugees and all young people in and from war zones;
- ▶ Development of the competencies of youth workers and promoting the recognition of youth work;
- ▶ Combating all forms of discrimination, racism and exclusion, including its structural forms (combating anti-gypsyism, multiple discrimination and intersectionality, promoting Roma youth participation, social inclusion of young refugees);
- ▶ Youth employability and integration of Ukrainian young refugees into the job markets in the host communities;
- ▶ Human rights education;
- ▶ Peacebuilding and conflict transformation; Intercultural dialogue.

This chart shows the distribution of the Ukraine special call supported projects in terms of the priorities of the Council of Europe Youth sector.



Bookmobile: Ukrainian Tales on Wheels by Velodacha, Fiesole, Italy

This project responded to the needs of young Ukrainian refugees in Italy to maintain cultural ties with Ukraine and to integrate into the new host society. The NGO set up a mobile library of Ukrainian books and organised events and workshops on language, cultural identity and well-being for Ukrainian refugees in the Tuscany region. The project involved 320 young people and reached a total of 600.

Key achievements of the projects and benefits for young people:

- ▶ Transformation from passive observers to active citizens influencing decisions that affect their lives;
- ▶ Skills development of young people;
- ▶ Psychosocial support and resilience building;
- ▶ Networking and partnerships;
- ▶ Community building and social inclusion;
- ▶ Creating inclusive and safe environments;
- ▶ Production of education and training resources.

The EYF support helped the beneficiary organisations to:

- ▶ Ensure the existence of the project and the organisation in times of crisis;
- ▶ Support the sustainability and continuation of the project;
- ▶ Build capacity and improve performance;
- ▶ Increase visibility and reputation.



“Youth research group on Brain Drain” by 3.5 percent, Mukacheve, Ukraine

The project trained 40 youth workers in data collection and developed a national survey among young people on the brain drain and the presence of young people in the country. They reached a further 320 young people through local workshops. The project included capacity-building in social research for youth leaders; national research; presentation of results. The need for this project was explained by the lack of information about youth in the country, especially after the start of the war - brain drain was already an issue in Ukraine before the war, and more young people have left the country.



“Pathways to Collaboration: Cultivating Dialogue and Peace Education”, international activity by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM)

The project built the capacity of youth workers to develop appropriate youth work interventions to support war-affected young people in Ukraine. A four-day training course for 50 participants was designed to share best practices, build knowledge on project management and youth work, increase innovation in participating organisations and build capacity to engage in peacebuilding. Following the training, participants carried out local actions to adapt and multiply the results in their local contexts.

3. Mission and delivery



The Foundation empowers young people across Europe to effectively tackle the challenges they face in today's societies to stimulate positive change. Through robust support for youth civil society organisations and networks, the EYF promotes and facilitates partnerships that strengthen European democracy. Its activities play a crucial role in supporting the Council of Europe's efforts to assist member States in improving and developing youth policies in line with Council of Europe standards.

► Council of Europe's values promoted by young people and youth civil society

The EYF's funding aligns with the priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector, serving as a tangible and effective tool for promoting the Organisation's values, principles, and priorities among young people across Europe.

In 2023, the EYF supported projects focusing on the four key priorities of the youth sector: revitalising democracy, young people's access to rights, inclusion, peace and intercultural dialogue, and youth work. A significant initiative this year was the EYF's special call in support of young people from Ukraine.

The grants provided by the EYF offer young people valuable opportunities to engage with these priorities and deepen their understanding of human rights and democracy. These grants facilitate awareness-raising and the promotion of the Council of Europe's fundamental values, principles, and practices.

► Unique co-governance

Within the landscape of donors, the EYF stands out with its unique governance system, the Programming Committee on Youth. This Committee is distinguished by its inclusive structure, granting young people representing local, national and international youth organisations an equal voice in decision-making alongside government representatives. It is composed of 8 government representatives and 8 representatives of non-governmental youth organisations, each elected for a two-year mandate. The Committee is responsible for establishing and monitoring the EYF's programme and makes decisions on all grant applications submitted to the Foundation.

► Youth at the core

For a project to receive support from the EYF, it must be developed and implemented by, with, and for young people, addressing issues, needs, and challenges where youth is at the center of the project. The EYF specifically supports activities initiated and executed by youth-led civil society organisations.

► Reaching out to young people and communities

In all its grants, the EYF supports projects that actively engage young people, youth organisations, and the broader community, including other stakeholders. The EYF encourages youth organisations to adopt a strategic approach to social change, implementing measures that promote long-term impact through a multiplier effect at both local and international levels.

► Flexibility and open approach to grantees

The EYF maintains regular communication with beneficiary organisations throughout the grant application and implementation processes. After a project proposal is submitted, the EYF team may initiate communication with the applying organisation

to ask specific questions and provide support in clarifying the project proposal. To ensure successful project implementation, the EYF offers inception meetings for granted organisations, preparing them to manage the grants effectively and advising on good practices.

► **Volunteer Time Recognition**

In recognition of the value of volunteer work in youth organisations, the EYF has allowed grantee organisations to use volunteer time as co-funding for their projects. A document detailing the EYF's definition, specifications, and calculation method for Volunteer Time Recognition is available on the EYF [website](#).

► **Gender equality**

In alignment with the Council of Europe's gender equality strategy, the EYF encourages youth NGOs to consider gender equality and inclusion in the design and implementation of their activities. The EYF provides guidance to beneficiary organisations on how to mainstream gender equality throughout their actions. The EYF supports beneficiaries in developing youth work practices that create gender-sensitive and safe spaces for participants, ensuring gender diversity in project teams and participant groups as a priority across all EYF initiatives.

The EYF has developed a [specific thematic page](#) on gender equality in youth projects for organisations.

► **Focus on non-formal education**

During the year, the EYF focused its capacity-building work on non-formal education and emphasised the importance of integrating non-formal education or learning principles into the activities it supports. In 2023, the EYF supported the organisation of the Youth Department's training course on the essentials of non-formal education; a [thematic page](#) provides specific advice to organisations on this topic.

► **Inclusion and diversity**

Recognising diversity as a value and striving to ensure accessibility for all are at the core of inclusion and access to human rights. The EYF values an inclusive approach in the projects it supports.

In 2023, the EYF promoted a specific tool for youth organisations - the Toolbox on inclusive practices. The Toolbox is a result of a collaborative process involving representatives of youth organisations that provided concrete ideas on how to incorporate inclusive practices into international youth projects. It focuses on six areas of project management: finance, participants, logistics, online activities, team and atmosphere, programme and content.

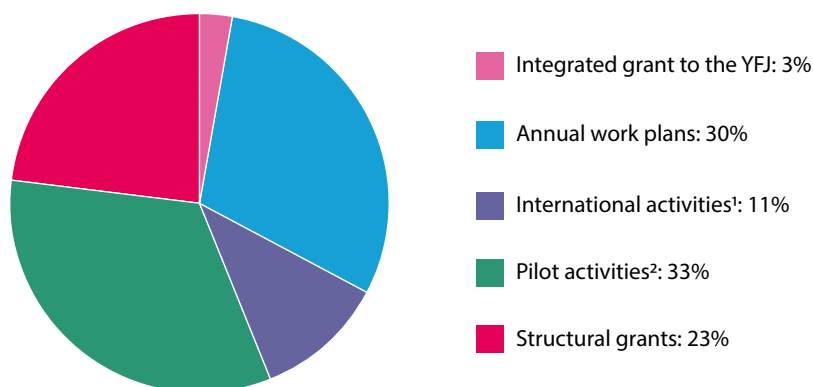
► **Sustainability in practice**

As a part of the Council of Europe's initiative to green the youth sector, youth organisations running EYF-funded projects have been encouraged to green their practices and adopt ways to ensure a lesser environmental impact of their activities. For a decade now, the Foundation has encouraged youth organisations to use the guidelines towards environmental sustainability in their EYF-funded project. For more information: www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/resources

4. Supporting projects and innovative practices in youth sector

In 2023, the EYF provided funding in grants to 123 youth organisations from 34 Council of Europe member States and one in Kosovo*. The total amount of grants awarded was €3 472 653 distributed to 22 annual work plans, 21 international activities and 84 pilot activities, as well as structural grants of 30 international youth organisations and networks, including the European Youth Forum.

The chart below presents the distribution of EYF funding by type of grants



In 2023, there was a 51% rise in the number of EYF grant applications as compared to 2022. 470 applications were assessed in 2023, with over 360 being for pilot activities, which is an 88% increase compared to the previous year. The total amount of the grants awarded to projects in 2023 was €2 571 625 compared to 2 672 282 in 2022.

Following the decision of the Joint Council on Youth, the EYF have initiated a special call for pilot activities for young people from Ukraine impacted by the war in November 2022. In 2023, the special call was expanded to include funding for grants to international activities. In total, during the year the Programming Committee awarded grants to 24 projects in the framework of the special call, comprising of 23 pilot projects and one international activity.

	Number of applications received	Number of granted projects for 2023	Grants awarded
Annual work plans	33	22	1 049 951
International activities ¹	39	21	369 664
Pilot activities ²	364	84	1 152 010
Structural grants	33	29	811 028
Integrated grant to the YFJ	1	1	90 000
Total	470	157	3 472 653

1 Includes one project received and granted in 2023 under the EYF special call for Ukraine.

2 Includes projects received and granted in 2023 under the EYF special call for Ukraine .

*All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations' Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Annual work plans

The total amount of grants supporting annual work plans in 2023 was €1 049 951 representing 40% of the total amount. The 22 supported projects included 56 international activities and 19 local actions, encompassing training sessions, workshops, campaigns, online work, tools development and publications.

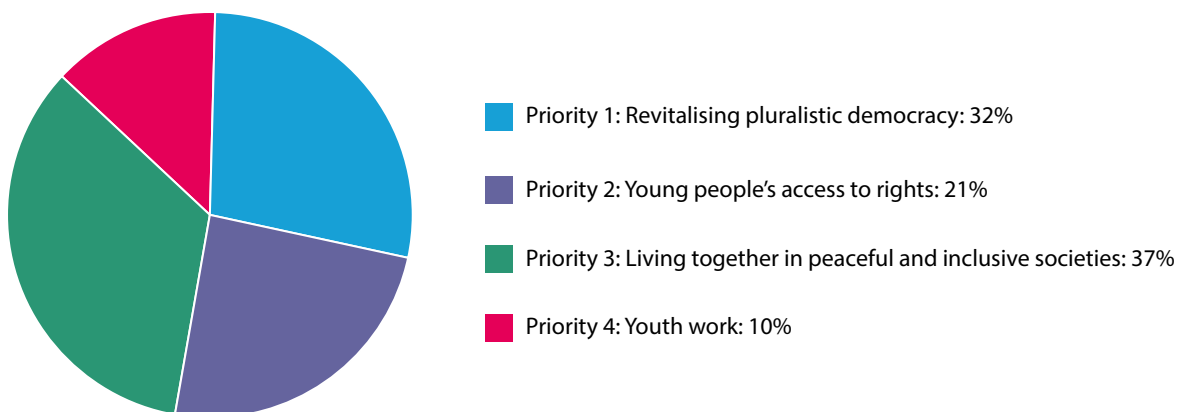
Out of the total funding allocated to annual work plans in 2023,

- ▶ 32% was used to support seven work plans focused on revitalising pluralistic democracy. These initiatives included actions on youth participation in political processes, expanding space for youth SCOs, and addressing the impact of the climate crisis and environmental degradation on young people and democracy.
- ▶ 21% was allocated to five work plans promoting young people's access to rights. These projects supported the implementation of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendations on young

people's access to rights and on access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods (ENTER! Recommendation). Two work plans supported education on information, data and media literacy with children and young people.

- ▶ 37% was dedicated to eight work plans promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. These plans focused on the inclusion of young refugees and their transition from childhood to adulthood, promoting intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict transformation, and mainstreaming inclusiveness, equality, and intersectionality in youth activities.
- ▶ 10% was allocated to two projects supporting the quality development and recognition of youth work and non-formal education and learning, along with their dissemination to member States.

The chart below illustrates the distribution of work plans according to the priorities of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.



Within an annual work plan implemented by international youth organisations and networks, an organisation can carry out several activities, such as international youth meetings and other types of activities, including local initiatives, workshops, campaigns and the development of tools. In 2023, the maximum grant for a work plan was €50,000. Following a decision of the Programming Committee on Youth in June 2023, the grant for work plan activities was increased from €50,000 to €60,000 for projects implemented in 2024 and beyond. The increase in the grant was due to the global increase in costs and prices resulting from the convergence of multiple crises.

International activities

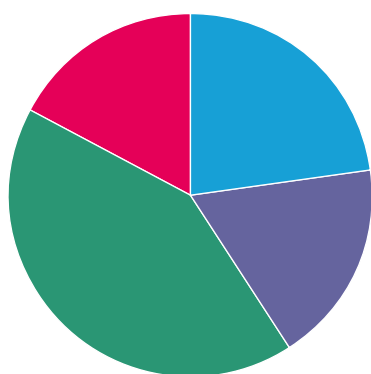
The total amount of the grants awarded was €369 664 which represents 15% of the total amount of grants to projects in 2023. The EYF grants were awarded to 21 international activities implemented in 2023. This included one international project –implemented by World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) - supported in the framework of the EYF special call for Ukraine.

International youth organisations or networks and national youth NGOs with at least three partners in other countries can apply for a one-off international activity. This can be a multilateral meeting of young people from at least seven countries that contributes to the work and priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector. Until June 2023, the maximum amount of an EYF grant for a one-off international activity was €20,000. Following a decision of the Youth Programming Committee in June 2023, the grant for international activities was increased from €20,000 to €25,000 for projects implemented in 2024, as well as for projects under the EYF special call for Ukraine in 2023. The increase in the grant was due to the global increase in costs and prices resulting from the convergence of multiple crises.

Of the 21 international activities awarded grants:

- ▶ 23% focused on promoting pluralistic democracy. These projects included efforts to increase young people’s participation in political processes, expand spaces for civil society organisations, and address the impact of the climate crisis on youth.
- ▶ 18% were dedicated to supporting access to rights for young people, with a focus on human rights education, media and data literacy, and addressing the effects of COVID-19.
- ▶ 42% centered on fostering peaceful and inclusive societies. These activities tackled multiple forms of discrimination, promoted inclusivity, equality, and intersectionality, as well as combated antigypsyism and encouraged Roma youth participation.
- ▶ 17% of the projects were related to youth work, aiming to enhance the quality, development, and recognition of youth work and non-formal education.

The chart below shows the distribution of these international activities according to the priorities of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.



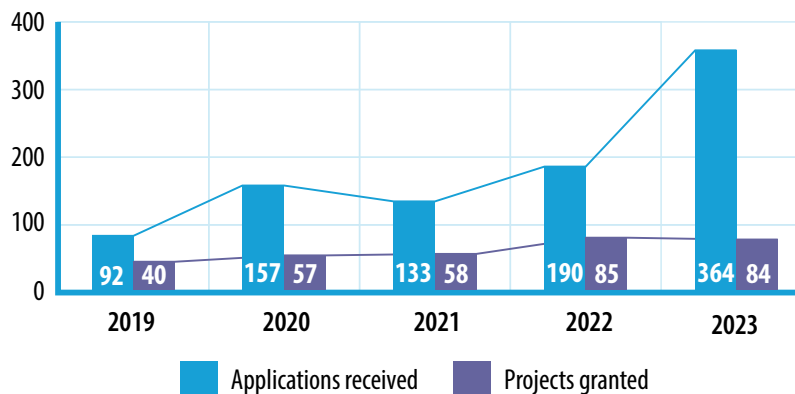
- Priority 1: Revitalising pluralistic democracy: 23%
- Priority 2: Young people's access to rights: 18%
- Priority 3: Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies: 42%
- Priority 4: Youth work: 17%

Pilot activities

In 2023, 84 project proposals were awarded grants, with the total amount granted reaching €1 152 010. This sum represents 45% of the total grants awarded to projects in 2023, when the maximum amount of a pilot activity grant was €15 000. The EYF secretariat received 364 pilot activity applications, including those responding to a special call for Ukraine.

The pilot activity grant scheme, established in 1999, was designed to promote co-operation with smaller organisations and networks, allowing for a rapid response to emerging issues identified by young people. A pilot activity, which must be prepared and implemented by a local, regional, or national youth organisations, is required to involve young people and incorporate a European dimension. The activity should be innovative, promote youth participation, have a clear local impact, foster intercultural dialogue and understanding, and align with the priorities of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

In recent years, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for pilot activity grants has surged significantly, resulting in a substantial increase in the number of applications received. The chart below illustrates the trend in applications and awarded grants from 2019 to 2023.



Structural grants

Structural grants for the period 2022 – 2023 have been awarded to 29 international youth organisations. The total amount of the awarded grants for 2022 was €675 857. At its last meeting in 2022, the Programming Committee on Youth decided to increase the EYF maximum amount of a structural grant in 2023, to compensate for increased cost and inflation. The EYF budget envelope was increased by 20% from €675 857 to €811 028 in 2023.

The two-year structural grants are open to international youth organisations and networks. This financial contribution allows the organisations to cover part of their general administrative costs for the running of their activities. To be eligible for an EYF structural grant, a youth organisation must have received a contribution from the Foundation for at least three international activities or have been funded within the annual programme of the European Youth Centre during the three years preceding the year for which the structural grant is requested.

Co-operation with the European Youth Forum (YFJ)

The YFJ is the largest platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organisations and uniting tens of millions of young people across the continent. The YFJ works to empower young people to actively participate in society, improve their lives and stand up for their rights. It promotes the rights and interests of young people in Europe through policy development, research, youth debates and advocacy.

The YFJ has observer status in the Joint Council on Youth, the co-managed political decision-making body of the youth sector. It actively participates in the work and meetings of the Joint Council and the Programming Committee on Youth and supports the work of the Advisory Council on Youth.

The YFJ is a key partner of the European Youth Foundation, supporting its efforts by disseminating calls for proposals, coordinating consultations with youth organisations and co-organising information sessions for international youth organisations. In 2023, the YFJ continued to support the development and implementation of Council of Europe standards in the youth sector, such as Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 on the protection of youth civil society and the promotion of youth participation in democratic processes.



Antje Rothmund, Head of Youth Department, Council of Europe, meeting María Rodríguez Alcázar, President of the Board of the YFJ and YFJ representatives (May 2023, Brussels)

5. Enhancing Council of Europe strategic priorities - democracy, access to rights, inclusion and youth work

All activities supported by the EYF link to the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector. The thematic priorities of the youth sector until 2030 are described in its Strategy 2030. The strategic priorities are defined by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ), which is the central co-managed political body of the youth sector, and adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making body. In the period 2022-2023 the strategic priorities relevant for the

EYF focused on:

- ▶ Revitalising pluralistic democracy
- ▶ Young people's access to rights
- ▶ Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies
- ▶ Youth work

The following chart shows the distribution of the EYF funding in terms of the youth sector priorities



Priority 1: Revitalising pluralistic democracy

Initiatives to promote young people's participation in political processes and decision-making at local level, to expand the space for youth civil society organisations and to promote their rights to freedom of assembly and association are the main themes of the 31 projects awarded. Some projects addressed the impact of the climate crisis and environmental degradation on young people and democracy, while others focused on youth participation in rural areas, involving minorities and vulnerable groups.

Activities supporting young people's capacity to develop and implement actions to revitalise democracy received 27% of the grants, i.e. a total of € 677 611.

Priority 2: Young people's access to rights

Several projects focused on understanding and addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people and the enjoyment of social rights, including physical and mental health. Projects included, inter alia, initiatives to enhance young people's capacities, advocacy skills and co-operation to support the implementation of the Committee of Ministers' recommendations CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights and CM/Rec(2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights, as well as the Youth Programme on Human Rights Education and the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Activities promoting young people's access to rights and advocating human rights and citizenship education accounted for 22% of the grants awarded, totalling € 565 401.

Priority 3: Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies

Of the 52 projects supported, around half addressed issues of discrimination, racism and exclusion, including combating anti-gypsyism, tackling multiple discrimination as well as promoting Roma youth participation and the social inclusion of young refugees.

Other projects enabled young people to promote peaceful societies by playing an active role in intercultural dialogue, peace-building and conflict transformation, volunteering and solidarity actions at local, national, regional and international levels, as well as promoting the inclusion and participation of young people in rural communities.

Youth initiatives promoting anti-discrimination, social inclusion and gender equality received 40% of the grants in total of €1 037 006.

Priority 4: Youth work

Most of the 14 projects funded supported access to and dissemination of quality development and recognition of youth work and non-formal education and learning in member States (e.g. through the Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres and the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio). In addition, some projects supported quality development and innovation (including digitalisation) and pursued the dissemination and implementation of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2017\)4](#) on youth work and the promotion of a European youth work agenda.

Youth initiatives promoting quality development and recognition of youth work received €291 608 representing 11% of the total grants.

6. Foundation activities

In order to promote effective co-operation with youth organisations and to strengthen the quality of their projects, the EYF carries out a number of support activities.

Training course “Quality development in pilot activities”

This first multilateral face-to-face training organised by the EYF in the post-pandemic context brought together 45 representatives of youth organisations from 25 countries in 2023, for a four-day training at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France. The main objective was to increase the capacity of local and national youth organisations to carry out quality youth projects that respond to the needs of young people in a given context, with innovative methodologies and a potential for multiplication.

The training was a space for participants to learn how to run successful projects with young people with a European dimension, and how to include a gender perspective and a human rights approach in their ideas. The course also allowed participants to connect with the work of the Council of Europe and to develop co-operation with other youth organisations.

In the final evaluation form, 86% of the participants stated that the activity exceeded their expectations and the main learning outcomes of the training related to knowledge and skills related to project cycle management.

Information sessions

Twice a year, in co-operation with the European Youth Forum, the EYF organises information meetings for international youth organisations based in Brussels, Belgium. The aim of the meetings is to provide an update on developments in the EYF and the Council of Europe’s youth sector, as well as to meet with NGO representatives to discuss their challenges and issues related to EYF grants. The 2023 meetings included training elements, networking and partnership-building sessions, and a consultation on the future of EYF grants. The EYF meetings in 2023 brought together more than 50 representatives of youth organisations.

In June 2023, the EYF organised a panel at the European Youth Event 2023 (EYE 2023) to promote funding opportunities for youth organisations and the co-management system in the Council of Europe youth sector, and to discuss with partners and

beneficiaries the importance of youth initiatives in the context of civil society support. Over 100 participants from local, national and international NGOs attended the interactive panel and engaged in lively discussions.



Pia Slogar, Chairperson of the Programming Committee on Youth and the EYF team at the European Youth Event (EYE) 2023

Throughout the year, the EYF continued to reach out to youth organisations and increase their understanding of the EYF grants through online information sessions. In 2023, seven online sessions were organised with the participation of over 300 youth organisations.

In-country training sessions

In-country training and information sessions are aimed at young people and youth organisations at national level. They are organised in close co-operation with national authorities responsible for youth in order to inform participants about the Council of Europe youth sector, such as the educational opportunities and tools available to young people, the EYF grant types and the application procedures and evaluation criteria. The in-country sessions also allow the EYF team to learn about the national context and the needs of local and national youth NGOs.

In 2023, the EYF held an unprecedented number of in-country sessions, in a deliberate effort to encourage youth organisations from interested countries to make use of EYF grants:

- ▶ 28-29 March, session for 20 youth workers and officials from municipalities working with young

people in the northern region of Portugal, organised in co-operation with the Portuguese Institute for Youth and Sport and the Braga Youth Centre, which has been awarded the Council of Europe's Quality Label for Youth Centres.

- ▶ 4-5 May, session for 45 youth workers and representatives of youth NGOs from the Republic of Moldova, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programmes and Activities, the NGO Millenium Training and Development Institute and UNFPA Moldova.
- ▶ 6-7 June, (online) session for youth organisations from Cyprus, in co-operation with the Youth Board of Cyprus, for 12 organisations.
- ▶ 20- 21 June, session for 22 youth organisations from North Macedonia, in co-operation with the Agency for Youth and Sport, the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility (Erasmus+), the Municipality of Strumica and the Europe House Strumica, in Strumica, North Macedonia.
- ▶ 20- 21 June, (online) meeting for 30 youth organisations from Germany, in co-operation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the German Federal Youth Council.
- ▶ 28-29 September, meeting for 20 youth organisations from Georgia, in co-operation with the Youth Agency, in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Training course on essentials of non-formal education

In order to support youth organisations in implementing their intercultural activities and to promote the values and standards of the Council of Europe, the EYF and the Education and Training Division organised a Training Course on Essentials of Non-formal Education, at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 6 to 11 February. The course brought together 35 facilitators and youth leaders, team members of study sessions in EYCs or international activities funded by the EYF.

Visits to projects

As part of its work to monitor and support youth organisations, EYF regularly carries out visits to the projects of grantee organisations. During the visits, EYF staff provide advice to the organisations, information on EYF grant requirements and discuss observations related to the quality implementation of the EYF grant. 17 visits were carried out in 2023.

Foundation Staff in 2023

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Marcio Barcelos

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Natalia Militello (until July 2023)

Project Officer

Sandrine Jousse (until July 2023)

Administrative Assistant



The European Youth Foundation supports international youth co-operation by providing financial support to European activities that promote peace, understanding and co-operation between young people of Europe and the world, in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member States, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member States have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

