

9 January 2018

Call for applications for young people to take part in the 2018 edition of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' "Rejuvenating politics" initiative

As part of its "Rejuvenating politics" initiative the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will invite one young person per member State to:

- come to Strasbourg (France) **to take an active part, as a youth delegate, in its 34th (27-29 March) and 35th (6-8 November) sessions**
- **develop their own grass-roots project back home** (under the Congress' aegis)

APPLICANTS	CONTACT
The deadline for submitting completed applications to the Congress of the Council of Europe is 15 January 2018, at the latest Submit your application	Dolores Ríos Turón Head of the Table Office Congress of Local and Regional Authorities E-mail: congress.youth@coe.int

What is the Congress?

The Congress is a pan-European political assembly, its 648 members hold elective office (they may be regional or municipal councillors, mayors or presidents of regional authorities) and represent over 200,000 authorities in 47 European States. Its role is to promote local and regional democracy, improve local and regional governance and strengthen authorities' self-government. It meets in session twice a year.

Like other political assemblies, such as national parliaments or local/regional councils, the sessions are formal gatherings where the Congress members examine reports, hold thematic debates and adopt recommendations.

To learn more about the Congress, please see [link1](#).

The Congress and youth participation

Since October 2014, the Congress has invited young people from different backgrounds – youth activists, youth workers, students, young politicians – to take part in its sessions, to have their say in the debates and to exchange with Congress members on the issues on the agenda.

Since 2016, as an integral part of their participation, youth delegates have been required to develop their own projects at local and regional level in between the sessions.

To learn more about youth delegates in the Congress please see [link2](#).

To learn more about how the Congress sees the participation of young people at local level please see [link3](#).

Participating in the Congress' work for one year

Being a youth delegate for a year is a unique opportunity to gain international experience, become a part of a diverse group of young activists, network and make an impact by stimulating the debates

from a youth perspective thereby highlighting and strengthening the Congress' commitment to youth empowerment.

1. Participating as a youth delegate in the sessions

Firstly, the youth delegates will sit in the hemicycle, alongside the Congress members for both sessions. A one-day preparatory session, run according to non-formal education principles and a welcome evening will be organised prior to each session. **Youth delegates must commit to taking part in the whole of the two 2018 sessions: from 25 March and 4 November (18.00) until the debriefing sessions on 29 March and 8 November (17.00).** An optional farewell evening will be organised on 29 March or 4 November.

2. Developing and implementing projects between the sessions

Secondly, between March and October, youth delegates will remain involved in the work of the Congress. They will be required to develop a local or regional project related to the Congress' priorities or to the session themes for 2018. For this, they will have the support of the trainers in the form of mentoring sessions to develop and assess their ideas. While the Congress will not provide funding for project development, it will provide youth delegates with an introduction letter to act as a visiting card in their dealings with local or regional authorities and may provide information material. There may also be possibilities for some of the youth delegates to participate in other events organised by the Congress outside Strasbourg such as its committee meetings, seminars or conferences.

Aims and objectives

By inviting a number of young people to take an active part in its 34th and 35th sessions the Congress aims to give young people an opportunity to give their opinions about all the issues being discussed directly to the local and regional elected representatives.

The specific objectives are to:

- involve young people directly in all aspects of the Congress' work;
- make young people aware about the Congress' work and the tools it has developed to support youth participation;
- discuss with young people how local and regional youth participation can be boosted;
- bring the youth perspective to all thematic debates within the Congress;
- motivate the youth delegates to multiply the information and experience acquired during the sessions on their return home in particular through the development and implementation of their own projects at local and regional levels;
- share information about existing models of youth-led structures and motivate young people to spread the word about the Congress' work;
- promote co-operation between members of the Congress and youth delegates;
- show national delegations the importance of officially including more young people as members.

Programme

The entire youth delegate programme is compulsory, youth delegates who do not take part in one or more of these aspects will be replaced by their national substitute delegate.

Compulsory activities include:

- participation in online preparation with the trainers prior to each session;
- full attendance during both sessions (which included the preparation day on the eve of each session and the evaluation meeting on the last afternoon of each session);
- availability to hold several Skype meetings (April – September) with trainers to prepare the youth project;
- implementation of the project between March 2018 and mid-September 2018.

Profile of participants

The youth delegates should meet the following criteria:

- be open, committed and motivated to develop and strengthen dialogue between young people and elected representatives at local/regional level;
- be between 18 and 30 years old;
- have been resident in one of the Council of Europe member States for a minimum of five years and live in the country which they will represent for the duration of their participation;¹
- be active in youth work at local and regional levels;
- be available to engage in the **whole** of the activity including the preparation of grass-roots projects;
- have an interest in actively participating in policy making at local and/or regional levels;
- be able to multiply the information obtained during the session on their return home;
- speak English fluently.²

Application procedure and selection of participants

Those wishing to apply to take part in the 34th and 35th Congress sessions must do so by means of the application form enclosed. **Participation in only one session is not possible.**

Applicants must also submit a short video, via YouTube, of no more than 30 seconds, to support their application. The link to the video (title should contain only the applicant's name and country) should be sent together with the application.

The deadline for submitting completed applications is **15 January 2018**.

The youth delegates will be selected by a selection panel which includes the Congress' Spokesperson on Youth, the youth trainers and two members of the Council of Europe's Advisory Council on Youth. The panel will ensure that the selected applicants represent a balanced group with regard to gender, cultural background and experience.

Applicants will be informed of the results of the selection procedure by **mid February 2018**.

Travel, subsistence and accommodation

The youth delegates' travel and subsistence expenses will be covered by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities according to the Council of Europe's rules.

Accommodation will be provided and paid for by the organisers, in single-occupancy or shared rooms according to availability. The organisers cannot cover the cost of accommodation elsewhere.

¹ In line with the provisions of the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (CETS No.144).

² During the non-formal sessions organised alongside the official debates and committee meetings, the working language will be English.