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Strasbourg, 7 July 2020

**CAN DEMOCRACY
SAVE THE
ENVIRONMENT?**

WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY

COUNCIL OF EUROPE, STRASBOURG
16-18 NOVEMBER 2020

www.wfdemocracy.org

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

**WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY
YOUTH DELEGATION**

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg
Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

Preparatory meeting:
14-15 November 2020

Dates of the WFD:
16-18 November 2020

Background information

The World Forum for Democracy is **a unique platform** for political decision-makers and activists to **debate solutions to key challenges for democracies worldwide**. By identifying and analysing experimental initiatives and practices, the Forum highlights and **encourages democracy innovations** at the grassroots and their transfer on a systemic level in order to strengthen the foundations of democratic societies. The Forum thus **contributes to the evolution of democracy** towards more participatory and inclusive structures and institutions.

The 2020 World Forum for Democracy will debate the issues and generate new ideas for tackling the environmental crisis we face today.

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The theme of the 2020 edition of the World Forum for Democracy is **“Can Democracy Save the Environment?”** Our societies have been tested by an extreme and unexpected global challenge in 2020, but while an essential battle is fought against the Covid-19 pandemic, humanity’s greatest existential threat looms ever larger. Environmental damage and climate change have not gone away. The poisoning of our land and pollution in our air and water is still killing plants, animals and humans alike. Rising temperatures and sea levels are on course to render lands uninhabitable and force people to leave their homes and seek new lives. The time to act is now!

Yet recent polling indicates the highest ever recorded levels of dissatisfaction and mistrust with democracy as a system of government. Its response to a whole series of recent challenges – economic, pandemic, and indeed environmental – have disappointed millions of people. Many are questioning the capacity, competence and even legitimacy of democratic governance to address their greatest needs.

Some of the key challenges that will be faced at this edition of the World Forum for Democracy are:

- *National governments, international organisations or the citizen: who is setting the pace?*
- *What governing style is best placed to tackle the environmental challenge?*
- *Public or private: what role for which sector?*

The core content of the Forum will consist of discussions about successful initiatives and actions, which have real-life initiatives as a starting point. General guiding principles will then be drawn to encourage and support future policy responses and field action. In this context, the Youth Department will invite 50-60 young people to participate and engage with decision-makers and opinion-formers in a reflection on the question of Democracy and Environment.

The specificity of this activity is that it combines a non-formal education and highly intercultural activity with participation in a large-scale institutional event

Preparing for the World Forum on Democracy

To best prepare for the World Forum, selected participants will gather in Strasbourg two days before the start of the World Forum to learn about the Council of Europe and its work with youth, to get to know each other, to develop their ideas, plan their actions and work together with the guidance of an international team of trainers.

During this time, participants will be informed about the different labs and side events that will take place during the World Forum and will be invited to choose their preference for attending. They can contact the organising bodies which will implement the initiatives (labs) to receive further information about their structures.

All selected participants should arrive on Friday 13th November and depart on Thursday 19th November. The youth preparation meeting will take place for all participants on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th November in the European Youth Centre before the World Forum begins on the 16th of November 2020.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic there may be restrictions in the travel for some applicants. The Youth Department is currently studying the possibility of some participants taking part in a remote way if they cannot travel to France.

During the World Forum for Democracy

During the World Forum, the youth participants will join the different labs and side events. Participants may be given particular roles in the labs and side-events according to their interests and competences (rapporteurs, moderators, audience...).

Altogether, the youth participants should be active partners and contributors to this World Forum, bringing in their own ideas and initiatives. Beyond the labs and side-events, the participants may organise parallel activities to make their voices heard and present their visions on fake news and democracy.

Profile of participants

In order to be selected and participate in the World Forum 2020 democracy and information, youth applicants should:

- Be aged 18-30 (exceptions can be made in special cases);
- Be able to communicate and work in English;
- Be actively involved in civil society democracy initiatives;
- Be motivated to contribute to developing new ideas on youth and democracy;
- Be ready to share own challenges faced in relation to media, fake news, information and its effects on democracy;
- Be ready to adopt a solution-oriented approach by bringing in new ideas and visions on the question of environment and democracy;
- Be available to participate fully in the World Forum for Democracy and the preparation process beforehand (i.e. arrive in Strasbourg on the 13th November and depart on the 19th November). The youth representatives will be chosen on the basis of these criteria and a video to be submitted. The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the above-mentioned profile, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Application, procedure and selection of participants

All candidates must apply in 2 parts:

1. An online application form should be completed via this link:
<https://youthapplications.coe.int/Application-forms>
2. A short 1-minute video should be posted on YouTube or another video platform that can be accessed easily, with the link attached to the online application form (see **instructions** below). This video should tell us what it is that should make us choose you to attend this particular WFD. If the link to the video is not accessible the application will not be considered. If for reasons of personal security candidates do not wish to post on a public platform then the secretariat should be contacted one week before the deadline at WFDYouth@coe.int.

The Youth Department and its team of trainers will select up to 60 participants on the basis of the profile outlined above. The selection will also take into account balance between genders, geographical regions, different types of experiences, organisations, institutions and projects. A waiting list may be established. Candidates will be informed if their application has been accepted or rejected, and if they have been put on the waiting list on 11 September 2020.

Please note that selected participants requiring a visa to come to Strasbourg will need to start visa procedures immediately after being informed of their selection.

Deadline for applications

The application form including the video link must be submitted on-line before **Tuesday 28 July CET 13:00 (1 p.m.)**. In case of technical problems with the use of the platform, please send an e-mail to youthapplications@coe.int. For any other questions please send an e-mail to WFDYouth@coe.int. You are strongly advised to apply before the deadline in order to check that your registration is complete and to solve any possible technical problems. Incomplete applications will not be accepted, and applications received after the deadline, for any reason, will not be accepted. You should receive a reply about your application before Monday 7 September.

Financial and practical conditions of participation

Working language

The common working language of the event will be English. Candidates must be able to use English independently in order to be able to work and communicate efficiently.

Travel expenses

Travel expenses and visa costs will be reimbursed upon presentation of the relevant receipts, according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire event (pre-Forum meeting and World Forum) can be reimbursed. The payment will be made by bank transfer after the World Forum. Prepaid tickets for travel can only be arranged in exceptional and justified cases.

Accommodation

Board and lodging are provided and paid for by the Council of Europe (arrival on Friday 13th November and departure on Thursday 19th November). Participants will be accommodated at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg (EYCS). You might be requested to share a room. The EYCS is fully accessible to young people with disabilities and ready to adapt to young people's special needs in order to ensure full inclusion and quality working conditions. Wi-fi is provided in the rooms.

TECHNICAL NOTE ON HOW TO UPLOAD A YOUTUBE VIDEO

Use the following instructions to send us your video¹. **In view of the high number of applicants expected you should please note that in case of technical difficulties in viewing the video your application will be refused. Please therefore make sure that your video can be viewed in advance.**

On YouTube:

1. Create a google account if you do not already have one at <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>
2. Go to youtube.com
3. Click the Upload link at the top of the page.
4. Select the video you'd like to upload from your computer. You can also record a video from your webcam, or create a video slideshow.
5. Once the upload is completed YouTube will notify you that your video is done uploading and processing
6. ADJUST YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS: When you upload a video, it should be set as a "Public" video, which means that anybody can view it.
[if you have problems with having a public video you should find a way of sending it separately]
7. Copy the URL address of the video in to your online application form.

If you do not wish to use YouTube please use another accessible platform.

All videos should be sent with the application within the time limit **(Tuesday 28 July CET 13:00 (1 p.m.))**

Content info

Applicants must reply to the following question with a 1-minute video and insert the link to the video on the on-line application form

VIDEO SUBJECT:

Why should I be chosen to attend the World Forum of Democracy on the theme of whether democracy can save the environment?

¹ Please keep in mind that your video might be chosen to be used on the Forum's social media communication platforms during the World Forum for Democracy. Therefore, you should be clear, inspiring, honest and creative! Enjoy...