



DDP-YD/ETD (2022) 164

Strasbourg, 23 June 2022



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

**WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY
YOUTH DELEGATION**

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

Preparatory meeting:
5-6 November 2022

Dates of the WFD:
7-9 November 2022

Background information

The World Forum for Democracy ([World Forum for Democracy \(coe.int\)](http://WorldForumforDemocracy(coe.int))) 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 2022 World Forum for Democracy, the tenth edition, will debate the issues and generate new ideas for tackling the democratic crisis we face today.

By identifying and analysing democratic 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 theme of the 2022 edition of the World Forum for Democracy is **“Democracy: A New Hope?”**.

Thirty years ago, many people believed that the spread of democracy was as inevitable as it was desirable. Those days are now far behind us. Instead, the public and policy-makers have watched as the spread of democracy has slowed and, by some measures, gone into reverse. Those who believe that democracy is the best way to govern – and those who do not – know that democracy is in distress. Many wonder if it will survive. Others are determined that democratic decline is neither inevitable nor irreversible. The 10th World Forum for Democracy intends to get to the heart of what has gone wrong. It will look for the key contributing factors to democratic decline, consider how these might be addressed, and explore what kind of democratic future is desirable, and possible, in the interests of people across the world.

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

- *S.O.S. Democracy in distress*

One recent study¹ suggests that people are increasingly trusting of governments and experts to manage the most pressing issues facing their societies. However, they are also losing faith in the capacity of representative democracy to deliver more broadly. The implication is that democracies may be unravelling from within. Wars, oppression, and human suffering around the globe is making clear just how dangerous the loss of democratic values can be for a society, for a country and its neighbours, and for the broader international community. To understand we need to examine the evidence, on everything from respect by for institutions and the rule of law through to civil society participation and voter turnout. We also need experts, activists and participants to tease out the different causes of the strain. Are deepening social, cultural and economic divides fraying people’s trust? Are democratically elected politicians failing to address citizens’ concerns? Are traditional democratic models and processes simply too slow or inefficient to keep up in our fast-paced, tech-driven modern world? This is an opportunity to take a look at

¹ Bennet Institute for Public Policy - Cambridge: The great reset - public opinion, populism and the pandemic – Jan. 2022 <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/great-reset/>

the full range of challenges and their root causes.

- *Can we swing back the pendulum?*

If we are to avoid defeatism, we need to harness the energy and ideas required to address the weaknesses that have emerged in our democracies. No stone should be left unturned. We need to ask questions about the role that our cultures, identities and education might play in revitalising democratic life and citizenship. We need to think about how we can change democratic structures and institutions so that they address people's priorities – and are seen to address their priorities. We need to ask not just how government should adapt, but what role we might expect business, communities, civil society, individuals and the international community to play. The influence of each of these has changed over recent years, sometimes beyond recognition. So, whose responsibility is it really if we want to reboot democracy?

- *Democracy defended – from decline to renaissance*

History does not end, and though democracy is down, it is not out. Most people still believe in this system – count on it – but might not feel its relevance or impact directly in their lives. Where once there was local, civic activity, now there is a globalised world where our social, professional and commercial lives exist largely online, and often seemingly beyond the realm of democratic accountability. Should we change this? Can we change it? Is it possible that the relentless rise of the Internet, Artificial Intelligence and the Metaverse can conform to democratic principles? Might they in fact hold the key to making democracy fit for purpose in the twenty-first century? The international, rules-based order has had limited effectiveness in preventing democratic backsliding and its consequences, how could the Organisations and States promoting democracy address this? This 10th World Forum will look to what our ambitions should be for democracy today, over the next ten years, and far beyond.

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 Information.

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.

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.

Preparing for the World Forum on Democracy

To best prepare for the World Forum, the participants selected will meet online for an introduction to the Forum and later 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 4th November and depart on Thursday 10th November. The youth preparation meeting will take place for all participants on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th November in the European Youth Centre before the World Forum begins on the 7th of November 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there may be restrictions in the travel for some applicants and specific sanitary protocols might apply in the Council of Europe premises.

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 democracy.

Profile of participants

In order to be selected and participate in the World Forum 2022, 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 democracy;
- Be ready to adopt a solution-oriented approach by bringing in new ideas and visions on the question of democracy;
- Be available to participate fully in the World Forum for Democracy and the preparation process beforehand (i.e. online preparation and onsite presence in Strasbourg arriving on the 4th November and departing on the 10th 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, as well as 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 **during the first week of September 2022**.

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, 2 August 2022 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.

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 during the dates of the activity (arrival on Friday 4th November and departure on Thursday 10th 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 2 August 2022 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 in the on-line application form

VIDEO SUBJECT:

What is my hope for a new democracy and why should I be chosen to attend the World Forum of Democracy on the theme of "Democracy: A New Hope?"

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...