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World Forum for Democracy 2023

6-8 November 2023, Strasbourg, France

Democracy = Peace?

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY 2023

YOUTH DELEGATION

Preparatory meeting:

4-5 November 2023

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg

Dates of the WFD:

6-8 November 2023

Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg, FR

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.

During the 2023 edition of the World Forum on Democracy the question in focus is "Can democracy guarantee and deliver peace?"

The return of war on the European continent caused such a shock that a renewed appreciation for peace, and worry for the welfare of democracy, has risen within the European and international communities. Armed conflicts, however, had never ceased to be a recurring threat in the world. The post Second World War vision of peace and prosperity, underpinned by democracy, never fully delivered. In the twenty-first century, the question is still open whether this vision can fulfill its promise. At a time when violence rages, inequalities are widening, and politics is polarizing - and when governments are struggling to cope with unforeseen events including climate change, pandemics and the rise of new technologies- now is the time to ask: can democracy deliver peace?

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

- *Democracy untended*

The idea that democracy is a guarantee of peace is widely shared, but is today under threat. Have democracies adapted themselves to face the risks which are themselves evolving? While some of the most terrible aspects of war remain, the nature of conflict has also changed with the use of drones, cyber-warfare and the deployment of nearly imperceptible propaganda across social media. For peace to be a real force to be reckoned with, it must itself be waged with conviction. But how? Should we not cultivate democracy in our daily practices, in education, the workplace, our civic, sporting life, etc? Shouldn't the values of democracy, and the institutions which support them, be closely reflective of the real experiences and aspirations of the citizens who cherish them? Women and children are too often the tragic face of war's devastation, but their voices are rarely heard in the political debates, peace negotiations and peace-building processes. If democracy and peace are processes or a way of life, then there is surely a need to cultivate the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for people to actively engage, participate and contribute to its survival. But how? Can we teach peace?

- *Peaceful Societies?*

Injustice and inequality are themselves a perpetual source of conflict. Democracies have delivered the highest standards for human and civil rights in our history. The impressive rise in living standards in the last decades has meanwhile been accompanied by rapidly growing income and wealth disparities. Social and economic rights are therefore now at the center of debates. In some democracies poverty is increasing, and many citizens feel that their societies are sliding backwards. Is this in and of itself, a threat to peace? Is the peaceful society not only a society without war, but also one where citizens live with the peace of mind that comes with security and opportunity? How do we get there? How to avoid that the wounds of the past become the source of injustice in the present; that remembrance serves not only to reduce conflict, but also to build durable peace? Can democracy's particular assets such as equality, citizen participation, the rule of law, freedom of expression, be put to better advantage in the waging of peace?

- *International communities for a Democratic Security?*

Economic, political and rights-based partnerships such as the European Union and the Council of Europe have been instrumental to ensuring peace for their democratic member states. So too have defence alliances. But when conflict rages in so many parts of the world, why hasn't the multilateral model succeeded more broadly? Should international organisations be redesigned? Is there a model for multilateral association which is both deep in its mutual obligations and broad in its inclusiveness and scope of action? Might the rise of cross-border communities of other kinds, often citizen-led and facilitated by technology, be another route to preventing conflict? The fact remains that democratic security is today the most decisive factor of peace; how to define it, build it and defend it?

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 of the Council of Europe will invite and prepare a delegation of young people to participate and engage with decision-makers and opinion-formers in a reflection on the question of "Democracy=Peace?".

The specificity of preparatory activity is that it combines highly intercultural activities in a non-formal learning setting with participation in a large-scale institutional event.

The core content of the Forum will consist of political talks and discussions about successful initiatives or actions implemented in different countries. 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 Forum, the selected participants selected will gather in Strasbourg two days before the start of the World Forum for Democracy to learn about the Council of Europe and its work with youth, to get to know each other, to develop their ideas, work together and prepare for the Forum with the guidance of an international team of trainers.

During this time, participants will be well informed about the setting of the Forum, about the programme with its different formats, such as Forum Talks, Labs and side events that will take place. Participants will be invited to choose their preference for attending. Together with the organising team of the Forum, the trainers' team will provide participants with all the practical information related to their participation in different parts of the programme.

All selected participants should arrive on Friday, the 3rd of November and depart on Thursday, the 9th of November. The preparation programme for the Youth Delegation is obligatory for all selected participants and will take place on Saturday and Sunday (4th and 5th of November) at the European Youth Centre prior to the beginning of the Forum on the 6th of November 2023.

Following 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. It is the participants' responsibility to verify before travelling that they respect the precautionary measures for the attention of all persons attending meetings of the Council of Europe available on this website (Precautionary measures to control COVID 19 and other respiratory infections) and that they meet all obligations in respect of travel from their place of departure to the location of the activity (including transit countries).

During the World Forum for Democracy

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

Altogether, the youth delegates should be active partners and contributors to the Forum, bringing in their own ideas and experiences. 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 2023, 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 democracy & peace;
- Be ready to share own challenges faced in relation to democracy & peace;
- Be ready to adopt a solution-oriented approach by bringing in new ideas and visions on the question of democracy & peace;
- 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 3rd of November and departing on the 9th of November).

The youth delegates will be chosen on the basis of these criteria, which will be assessed based on an analysis of the online form and the video submitted by applicants. 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 submit complete applications, consisting of 2 parts:

1. An online application form that must be completed via this link:
<https://youthapplications.coe.int/Application-forms>
2. A short 1-minute video that must be posted on an online platform (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, etc) that can be easily accessed with a link attached to the online application form (*see instructions on the last page*). This video should tell us about the applicant's thoughts on democracy & peace and what should make us choose them to attend this particular edition of the WFD. If the link to the video is not attached to the application form and/or is not accessible with the link you provide, the application will not be considered. For security concerns regarding video sharing, the secretariat should be contacted at the latest 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 **during the first week**

of September 2023 if their application has been accepted or rejected, and if they have been put on the waiting list.

Please note that selected participants requiring a visa to travel 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 **12th of July 2023, 13:00 CET (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 well in advance 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 preparation and World Forum for Democracy) can be reimbursed. The payment will be made by bank transfer after the 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, the 3rd of November and departure on Thursday, the 9th of November). Participants will be accommodated at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg (EYCS). You will be requested to share a room.

The EYCS is 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 available in the rooms.

TECHNICAL NOTE ON HOW TO UPLOAD A YOUTUBE VIDEO

Use the following instructions to send us your video. **In view of the high number of applicants expected please note that if your video is not viewable or accessible your application will be refused. Please therefore check in advance that your video can be viewed.**

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. You must copy the URL address of the video in your online application form. Links to videos sent separately will not be considered. Application forms not containing a link to a viewable video will not be considered.

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 **(Wednesday 12th of July, 13:00 CET (1 p.m.) Technical problems will only be dealt with until 1pm on 12/7. After this time no technical support will be available.**

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 are my thoughts about Democracy & Peace and why should I be chosen to attend the World Forum of Democracy on the theme of "Democracy=Peace?"